



Town of Wayland Massachusetts

Finance Committee

- Nancy Funkhouser
- Cherry C. Karlson
- Thomas Greenaway (Chair)
- Carol Martin
- Gil Wolin
- David J. Gutschenritter
- Bill Steinberg

REVISED AGENDA

Wednesday, March 26, 2014, 7:00 P.M.
Wayland Town Building

Note: Items may not be discussed in the order listed or at the specific time estimated. The meeting likely will be videotaped for broadcast by WayCAM and may be recorded by others.

- 7:00 Call to order
- 7:05 Public comment & committee members' responses to public comment
- 7:15 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Review
- 7:20 Finance Director's Update
- a) FY14 Turnback & Revenue Estimates
 - b) Unreserved fund balance, stabilization, and other reserve fund balances
 - c) Wastewater cash position
- 7:30 Attend Selectmen's Warrant Hearing
- 9:00 FY2015 Omnibus Budget: reconsider, discuss & vote final capital budget
- a) Reconsider water capital request
- 9:15 Discuss & vote recommendations on Annual Town Meeting articles
- a) Article 14: Repost Framingham End of Stonebridge Road
 - b) Article 17: Improve Transfer Station Access Road
 - c) Article 29: Withdraw from Minuteman
 - d) Article 30: Minuteman Amendments
 - e) Others
- 9:45 Minutes
- a) October 16, 2013 Wolin
 - b) January 27, 2014 Wolin
 - c) February 18, 2014 Karlson
 - d) February 24, 2014 Wolin
 - e) February 27, 2014 Karlson
 - f) March 3, 2014 Martin

10:00 Chair's Update

- a) Discuss and vote draft statement/article on budget recommendation (draft statement attached to Revised Agenda)
- b) Items the Chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed at the meeting
- c) Proposed upcoming meeting dates and topics
 - (1) Annual Town Meeting
 - Thursday April 3
 - Monday April 7
 - Tuesday April 8
 - Thursday April 10
 - Wrap-up and recap: April 21
 - (2) Wastewater: How we got here and how best to fix the problem
 - April 21, May 12, June 9
 - (3) FY14 Closeout
 - June 9
 - (4) Long-range planning, FY16 guideline process, and other summer projects
 - May 12, June 9

10:30 Adjourn



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Release on March 27, 2014

Finance Committee Budget Recommendation

The Wayland Finance Committee is pleased to recommend a budget to Annual Town Meeting that pays for our valued services and meets our financial obligations. We urge you to read the Warrant and plan to attend Annual Town Meeting beginning April 3 at 7:30 pm at the High School.

Our operating budget fully funds the School Committee's budget request, including the proposed elementary school reconfiguration. We recommended funding almost all of the town-side budget requests submitted by the Board of Selectmen and other boards, including the Fire Department's request for the first new firefighter position since 1970.

Our capital budget is supported by a long-term capital improvement program and many years of planning. Overall, our capital budget reflects a solid assessment of our needs, removing or delaying requests that are not essential or ready.

Over the past four years, the Finance Committee and Town Meeting cut taxes and minimized tax increases by approving tighter expense budgets and demanding better revenue estimates. Assuming our FY15 budget passes, our general fund expense budget will have increased less than two percent a year since FY12, lower than the rate of inflation.

Furthermore, we deliberately drew down our free cash reserves to offset the operating budget each year from FY12 to FY14. Our free cash reserves helped Wayland taxpayers bridge the gap created by the recession and its aftermath.

As part of an agreed strategy worked out by petitioners, the Finance Committee, and Town Meeting in 2011, 2012, and 2013, we all knew that taxes would have to go up eventually. Town Meeting had a choice: raise taxes a bit each year as spending increased (less than the rate of inflation, as it turned out), or pay for the increased spending later.

We learned from Special Town Meeting in 2011. In 2012 and 2013 the Finance Committee recommended—and Town Meeting chose—to bridge operating deficits with free cash and pay for the increased spending later. Last year we reached the bottom end of our free cash policy range. Now is later.

This year, we recommend a budget that would increase property taxes by about 10 percent over last year, which is more than the 3.5 percent increase in the expense budget. The reason for this difference is the gap left by the free cash we no All of us engaged in town government and Town Meeting knew this day was coming. Almost no-one in Wayland has called for any service cuts, let along the drastic cuts required to sustain last year's property tax levy.

We respectfully ask taxpayers not to look only at this year's proposed tax increase. Those who focus on this year alone miss the bigger picture:

- *Look back:* If our recommended budget passes, the tax rate will have gone up less than one percent per year over the past four years, and we get to pay for the four-year increase at the back end, in FY2015, just as Special Town Meeting wanted in 2011.
- *Look forward:* After this catch-up year, we project that our tax levy will grow at only about 2-3% annually over the next three fiscal years, in line with current inflation expectations.

The Finance Committee takes the long view. We urge members of Town Meeting to do the same.

Again this year, we saw continued savings after years of hard work controlling health care expenses. Thanks in large part to healthcare changes for employees and retirees, not only do our current healthcare expenses continue to run lower than our peers and

nationwide averages, but our annual actuarial obligation to fund Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) remains much lower than it was in past years. The OPEB Committee built on this success, proposing to fund OPEB this year at no current cost to Wayland taxpayers. We support the OPEB Committee's proposal.

Wayland residents should be proud of our town's finances. The bond market prices our debt as among the safest in the world, and our auditors gave us another unqualified opinion on our most recent financial statements, as usual. Wayland's finances are sound in large part because of the hard work of our town officials, employees, volunteer board members, and committed residents.

We are lucky to live in a town where so many people care so much about local government. Make your voice heard. Read the warrant, attend Annual Town Meeting, listen carefully, and please support our recommended budget. Your vote matters.

DRAFT