

Winthrop Finance Commission Minutes

Date: Thursday, May 8, 2025, at 6:00pm

Attendees: TOW: Sarah Johnson (SJ), Meredith Hurley (MH), Steve Calandra (SC), Scott Wiley (SW), John Goodwin (JG)
FC: Brent Farrell (BF), Karin Chavis (KC), William Gault (WG), Matt Gorzkowicz (MG), Hannah Belcher (HB), Joe Hanlon (JH), John Macero (JM), Max Tassinari (MT), John DaRos (JD), Shannon Poulos (SP)
Absent: None

Meeting called to order at 6:02 pm by MG.

Rollcall vote completed by KC. All present except individuals noted above. All present members that attended prior meetings approved minutes from 5/1.

The focus of the meeting will be on the discussion and review of the (1) public health department, (2) fire department and (3) police department budgets.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

- Additional officers have become recovery coaches
- Aesthetic upgrades completed in police station and preventative maintenance (roof, façade, etc.)
- Seeking to internalize training programs to reduce reliance on outside providers
- Requested capital improvement dollars to address one side of building
- Secured funding for active shooter (Urban Area Safety Initiative) training
- Parking ticket process has been automated and resulting in increased ticket issuance
- Component of salary increase related to Quinn bill requiring additional compensation related to college degrees – of 36 officers, 25 are part of the program
- Currently down ~4 officers from full roster, which are not included in the current budget
- Planning to consolidate certain line items in budget to accurately reflect actual expenses
- Carried 2.5% increase in salaries related to potential collective bargaining agreements
- Fleet of vehicles has consistently been upgraded over time (1 new vehicle per year)
- Chelsea is joining regional dispatch which will reduce cost, new facility underway
- Police chief is now assuming responsibility for harbormaster role / department
- New system related to fee generation implemented related to waterway fees, excise taxes, etc.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

- With new fire department facility, just completing basic repair / maintenance on existing facilities
- Active shooter training has been a focus
- New engine scheduled for delivery at end of calendar year
- Cost to replace ladder truck is \$1.8MM with 4 year delivery timeline, currently in production line with no requirements to purchase
- Chief is retiring (notice provided today) and will occur in next few months
- Temporary solution being crafted for collapsing floor issue (\$1MM+ if permanent)
- Moving EMS services in house is best way to provide the best service to town residents, also reimbursement rates will likely result in profitable operations
- Currently 1 open firefighter position – issue still remains with firefighters taking MassPort positions, roughly \$50K in annual compensation delta (\$65K vs. \$115K in starting compensation)
- Potential for five new vacancies due to retirement, aging out, etc. Firefighter academy has increased speed of process (reducing wait time from 6 months to 3 months)

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

- Reimbursements are key to financial sustainability, insurance companies become more involved.
- 600 outreach visits completed in calendar year 2024.
- Four police officers involved in health department outreach.
- Secured new Chevy Tahoe paid by federal government, with removable signage and ancillary services (portable vaccination, emergency response materials, etc.)
- Resource coordination team noticing in uptick in care for elderly – especially related to dementia – with no familial ties to provide care
- Demand for vaccinations has decreased
- Losing potentially, at minimum, \$600K in grant funding by the end of June. Potential deficit of \$300K related to personnel.
- Losing emergency related funding (\$150K) to provide hotel stays, burner phones, etc. for clients
- 6.5 FTEs, most of which are funded via state grants except director and program director and some part time work
- \$285K, if grant funding does not get renewed, needed to level fund department – does not include \$117K (with \$42K for 2026) in police department funding
- 200% increase in opioid fatalities due to counterfeit pharmaceuticals
- Students at Boston University have identified a list of grants to potentially apply for – focus on foundations as grant sources

Various discussion points amongst the members included:

- \$100K remains in the Compensated Absence Fund. Some entries to draw from the account pending for a significant amount. Expected request for more funds from Free Cash.
- Request for teacher salaries and comparison between 2025 and 2026
- Golf Club as of February 19, 2025 a Water/Sewer balance of \$213,893.24 and interest of \$37,267.24. As of April 1, 2025 their lease payment was only paid until December 31, 2024. The lease payment is \$1250.00/ month or \$15,000.00/year.
- 10 Somerset had \$190,000.00 liened to their real estate bill from outstanding water. Lien is done in December. They also now have a balance of \$57,000.00 from one quarter of billing.
- MG to circulate prior year presentation / financials

MG motioned to adjourn; MT seconded. Approved by all present members.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 pm.