

**April 2, 2024
Board Of Finance
Public Hearing
Weston High School Auditorium**

Summaries of the budget are available at the Public Hearing. A copy of the detailed budget is available for public inspection in the office of the Town Clerk. Selections of comments are not direct quotes of speakers.

Present: Board of Finance Chairman Michael Imber, Vice Chairman Jeffrey Farr, Theresa Brasco, Chris Bryant, Amy Gare. Also present First Selectwoman Samantha Nestor, Selectman Tony Pesco, Selectman Kerem Dinlenc, Finance Director Rick Darling, Town Administrator Karl Kilduff, DPW Director Larry Roberts, WPS Superintendent Lisa Barbiero, WPS Finance Director Phillip Cross, Weston residents. Absences for BOF members Rone Baldwin & Jeffrey Goldstein. Approximately 40 people were in attendance. Public Hearing called to order at 6:02 pm by Chairman Imber.

Mr. Imber welcomed attendees and reviewed the process for the Public Hearing on the proposed Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget. A brief presentation by First Selectwoman Nestor was reviewed prior to public comment. Presentation reflected revisions by the BOS and BOE in collaboration with the BOF. Revaluation year with 38.40% growth, total budget \$75,989,772 compared to the FY 23-24 budget (\$85,840 increase). Net increase and grand list growth will result in a 23.92 mill rate. Projected fund balance and revenue projections discussed. Projected fund balance/revenue projections discussed.

Mr. Imber invited members of the public for commentary:

Michelle Liguori, Georgetown Road expressed concern for the senior community to be represented in the budget, requesting an increase for seniors.

Richard Wolf, Homeward Lane discussed temporary portables. In March 2020 the FOC noted a life span of portables was projected for five years. Request for the BOS/BOF/BOE to come up with a plan for facilities owned, rather than spending on temporary projects.

Carl Urbania, Merry Lane requests removal of the WVFD appropriation for a new fire engine stating that the FD has over 9 million in their 501c. Requests that FD fund 50%.

Alex Staehely, Lords Hwy discussed revaluation year concerns and that it was used for increased spending. Budgets reflect large increases in the BOS budget going up, road repairs, capital budget for BOE up 28%, Town 27% before roads are being paved. Closer to a 4% increase not 2%.

Armando Llaza, Hidden Spring Dr. would like to see where the budget is going to be reduced. Requests TOW looking at reductions and tax payer relief and to look at opportunities to allocate reductions.

Amy Sanborn, Old Hyde Rd. commented on the HR hire request in the budget. TOW Administrator job description is to serve as HR Director. DPW facilities additional hires also discussed, added transfer station employee, assistant at DPW. Also discussed the Annex stating that the building committee should review.

Jasmine Kazakov, Old Field Lane discussed many new young families in Weston. Requests later meetings and more communication for Public Hearing.

Monica Staehely, Lords Highway expressed the need for young families to be represented and communication.

Annalise Ferrara, Lyons Plain Rd discussed concern for increases in budget for tree warden, solid waste, water, social services, etc. Discussed tax foreclosures and tax relief for elderly. Discussed class sizes, fewer enrolled students yet maintaining same sections per grade. Class size and school administration should be reduced.

Lisa Flanagan, Merry Ln is concerned about the town hall staffing requests. 10% increase in town hall this year. The town has not been underserved. Staffing at schools has not been reduced. Concern over the budget never decreases because of salaries and staffing.

Chris Kimberly, Broad Street. Discussed increases in the budget and employee hire requests at town hall. Discussed concern for portables, questions unused spaces at schools for employees to use.

Bill Flanagan, Merry Lane - discussion on budget increase and cost overruns. Asks for slowdown, spread out over five years.

Susan Baron, Old Hyde Rd. Requests bringing in other special education from other schools to bring in revenue.

Kerry Quimi, Calvin Rd expressed support of the budget.

William Weiss, Eleven O'Clock Rd discussed the mill rate, budget negotiations etc all from this year's revaluation. The 42% increase is due to debt cap. Concerned that the next assessment could be different.

Amy Sanborn, Old Hyde Rd - Tecton discussion. The building committee has close to 60 projects that are not in the budget.

Andrew Palladino, Goodhill Rd - Thanked the BOS/BOE/BOF. Commentary on support of grant projects.

Alex Staehely, Lords Hwy discussed prioritization for reduction in budget. Fund balance discussed. What is it going to be used for in the future? Discussed high taxes and the need to reduce taxes rather than increase to attract people to move to town.

Jasmine Kazakov, Old Field Lane discussed the town demographic of young children and a growing population of seniors. Discussed lack of town amenities for youth and seniors.

Armando Llaza, Hidden Spring Dr. discussed prioritization and impacting the future. Supports the idea of diversifying a source of revenue.

Kerry Quimi, Calvin Rd supports sidewalks.

Susan Baron, Old Hyde Rd discussed sidewalks concern and shoveling. Discussed concerns over many people that will have to shovel the sidewalk. Discussed footprint of sidewalks being that it only services a small portion of people.

Travis Worrell, Birch Hill Rd commented on grants and matching funds that are needed for granted projects as well as funds needed for future upkeep.

Lisa Flanagan, Merry Lane commented on a shift away from school building renovations to discussion of town hall expansion.

Mr. Imber asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Mr. Farr, seconded by Ms. Gare
Meeting adjourned 7:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Shawn Amato, Clerk of the meeting