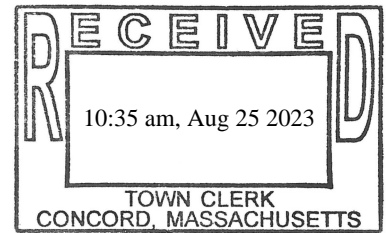




**Town of Concord**  
**Meeting of the Finance Committee**  
**Minutes of Meeting – May 25, 2023**  
**Hybrid Meeting**



**Members Present:** Margaret Briggs, Parashar Patel, Quazi Sadruzzaman, Karlen Reed, Kathy Cuocolo, Dee Ortner, Suresh Bhatia, Lois Wasoff (remote), Christine Reynolds, Lyndsey Lis, Eric Dahlberg, Jon Garofalo, Greg Guarriello, Amrith Kumar (remote), Don Kupka.

**Others Attending:** Gail Dowd, Kaari Tari (remote)

**Call to Order:** Ms. Briggs called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**Public Comment:** Ms. Hartman from the Select Board will be the liaison from the Select Board to the Finance Committee. Won't be at every meeting because there's a conflict with the Board of Assessors meeting but will be in contact with the officials that are elected tonight and anyone else who has anything they want to let me know. I will be sharing our common concerns. Thank you.

**Item 4. Discussion and approval of Committee Assignments:** Slate of nominations include Parashar Patel – Chair, Eric Dahlberg – Vice Chair, Lois Wasoff – Guidelines Chair, and Lyndsey Lis - Guidelines Vice Chair, Dee Ortner as Clerk and Don Kupka – Vice Clerk. Make a motion to approve - voted unanimously.

Committee Assignments – Talked about last year, cutting back the number on committee liaisons; cut out four or five committees that we decided were not necessarily key to having liaisons. Assigned liaisons to the committees.

**Item 5. Annual Town Meeting debrief: (Carmin Reiss) - did not sign in.**

**Item 6. Update from Chair's Breakfast:** Monthly breakfast for the chairs for the various committees. Mr. Patel provided a quick summary of the reports from the various committees. Numerous conversations focused on annual town meeting participation rates and what can be done to make them better. Nothing was discussed officially.

**Item 7. Review letter to Concord Bridge:** Mr. Patel noted that the Letter to the editor did not receive any feedback. Ms. Reed questioned the purpose of the letter. Mr. Patel responded that the intent was to help educate folks in terms of what we do and why we do it. A discussion on how to convey information effectively ensued.

**Item 8. Discussion of mailing Finance Committee Annual Report to all residents:** After town meeting caught some chatter on social media, residents asking why we mail out the Annual Report. In the by-law, the report must be mailed out five weeks ahead of Town Meeting. Questions and comments regarding the process for getting this changed and how the residents could attend the meeting remotely arose. The topic was flagged for further discussion. Ms. Tari, Town Clerk stated that the warrant is mailed out to every household and that within the warrant it could be stated where finance committee report copies are available. The cost to print and mail the Finance Committee Report ranges between \$15,000 - \$25,000 dollars. Further discussion on changing the process continued.

**Item 9. Review of Finance Committee Practices/Objectives during FY2024:**

Ms. Dowd stated that the goal would be to have the meeting posted online one week before the meeting and to send out email meeting invites. When posting the agenda, I would include a link to meeting invite. A packet of meeting contents would be to send out to the Finance Committee members two days before the scheduled meeting – one link for all documents. The Committee discussed correspondence deadlines, updating the website with current packets as well as meeting minutes.

**Item 10. Potential Topics/Objectives for FY2024:** Public Comments: The agenda now includes a section at the beginning of the meeting to give people an opportunity to voice what they'd like. Over the course of the year, the Committee plans to take votes following our discussions together with hearing from the public before we vote.

Education: Communicate more consistently between the Finance Committee and the School Committee. Learning more about consequential votes and information is critical to understanding and transparency going forward. Ideas and suggestions for informing others included page summaries on the Finance Committee website.

Communication: Effective communication strategies and opportunities, such as a potential space in the Concord Bridge for a Finance Committee column, were discussed. Subcommittee members include Ms. Wasoff, Mr. Patel and Ms. Ortnier.

Open conversation: The Committee engaged in an open discussion on the two or three top issues to focus on throughout the year. Ms. Briggs stated that what did not work last year was the adoption of the guidelines. Ms. Ortnier's focus is all about communications – inviting different departments along with the Town Manager to better understand what the town is doing and what the future needs are. Ms. Reed addressed proposition 2 ½ and identified that the expenditures over 300 hundred thousand need a closer look. Other comments addressed the following: educate more on what the Finance Committee does, make clear that the public is welcome to attend meetings and actively participate, and meet with the Facilities Director to know the plan on the Town.

**Item 11. Review Administrative Processes:**

Propose a process such as putting together all the notes in PowerPoint by topic and draft objectives and then circulate for input. Discuss at next month's meeting.

**Item 12. Discuss Future Meeting Dates:**

- The CFO will send out meeting requests on the calendars for all dates. If they are changed or modified, the CFO will be the person changing those meetings.
- Mr. Patel proposed a capital plan primer on how the process works.
- Middle of July is the deadline to finalize our annual plan. July 13<sup>th</sup> meeting is scheduled to address Town transfers, if needed, by July 15<sup>th</sup>.
- End of July meeting scheduled with the School Committee to educate the Finance Committee members on how their budget process works. Provide an overview on guideline process.
- Define the type of information we want from entities, as we start thinking about next year's budget.
- August 11<sup>th</sup> informational, send out information letters.
- Middle or end of August training, ask Hilltop Securities to come in share their perspectives on Bond offering.
- August meeting 17<sup>th</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup> voted yes for August 24<sup>th</sup>.
- September 21<sup>st</sup> meeting first opportunity for the schools and the Town to come with their estimated 24 Revenue scale and projected. 25.

**Item 14. Public Comment:**

Linda Escobedo hopes the select board will be ready for that early date you set for joint meeting. Mary nodding her head yes. No other public comment.

**Item 15. Correspondence:**

Most of the correspondence shared as part of the Chair Breakfast. The committee volunteer appreciation event also was mentioned.

**16: Adjourn:** Ms. Briggs announced meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Giovino, Office Administrator