

**TOWN OF POMFRET
BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING AGENDA
MONDAY, JANUARY 8, 2024 @ 6:30 PM
POMFRET COMMUNITY CENTER**

In Attendance: M. Huoppi, J. Corey, N. Reingold, K. Sapp, E. Sistare, B. Riley, M Cummings, M. Nicholson, Chris King and Marshall Deane from King, King, and Associates; **Absent:** D Thompson

- I. Open Regular Meeting** – meeting opened at 6:33 pm
 - A.** Approve minutes of December 11, 2023 – J. Corey made a motion to approve the minutes with one correction. K. Sapp seconded. All in favor. Two abstentions – E. Sistare and N. Reingold.
 - B.** Items to be added to the agenda. - none
 - C.** Citizen’s Participation – none

- II. New Business** – Presentation of the FY2023 Audit for the Town. – C. King and M. Deane gave a short presentation about the Town Audit, summarizing the process, results, and highlights. A State Single Audit was required because of expenditures of state assistance: \$3.5 million total assistance of which \$2.99 million is Educational Cost Sharing and Special Education cost reimbursement. A Federal Single Audit was not required because less than \$750,000 of federal funds were expended. The General Fund balance of \$3,108,390 (an increase of \$414K over prior year) is due to an increase in market rate of investments, more than anticipated property tax revenues and building fees, and less than anticipated expenditures in public works and education. Uncommitted fund balance in General Fund is \$2,999,518, 22% of budgeted expenses. Q and A plus general discussion followed.

- III. Current Business**
 - A.** Board of Education Report – B. Riley said the Board of Education has a special meeting to discuss the EChip health insurance option and decided it was not right for them. They will look into possible state partnerships with other towns. M. Cummings announced the State is adopting a new policy where children must have turned 5 by September 1 in order to enter kindergarten. One third of the current kindergarten class would not have been able to enroll under this policy, so it is unclear what the kindergarten enrollment will be in the fall. Parents can file a waiver asking for an exception for their child. PCS will start offering wrap around services in March.
 - B.** Board of Selectmen Report – M. Nicholson said they have used ARPA funds to purchase a new truck for the public works department. A project at the Community Center will add more floor space by removing the stage. The Town will be advertising for a new recreation director due to B. Gagnon’s impending retirement.
 - C.** Board of Finance Report
 - 1.** Tax Collector’s Report – Tax collections are slightly lower than a year ago. P. Gaumond said it is due to tax escrows coming in late and the increase in car taxes. In October there were 804 delinquent accounts, mostly motor vehicles, compared to 698 in October 2022. This factor can explain why 26 families are getting free weekend food and ¼ of the school population is applying for free lunch. P. Gaumond hears the same request from residents who come in to pay their taxes: don’t raise our taxes.
 - 2.** General Fund Revenues and Expenditures – No concerns

3. Discussion of Expectations for FY2025 budget – The current bus contract is expiring, and the only bid has come from the current provider. M. Huoppi asked M. Nicholson if Pomfret or Rectory School have made donations in lieu of taxes. Pomfret School donated around \$30,000, but the amount has to be confirmed. There are 19 students from Pomfret School who attend PCS. The per-pupil cost is approximately \$18,000, which totals \$342,000. Private schools and other non-profits are exempt from paying property taxes, so the rest of the taxpayers are picking up the cost. M. Huoppi would like to meet with officials from Pomfret School to make them aware of the tax burden. M. Cummings was asked to provide the number of students who are home-schooled or attend private schools. General discussion about budget impacted by increase in cost of living, not raising the mill rate, and amount of money in surplus. The Board wants the BOS and BOE to present budgets that include what they feel is needed to run the Town and school. Once the Board sees those figures, they will have a better idea of what to recommend in terms of affordability, budget cuts, and taxes.

IV. Other Business - none

V. Correspondence – none

VI. Citizen's Participation – none

VII. Adjournment – E. Sistare made a motion to adjourn. J. Corey seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Margie Huoppi, Chair
Acting Secretary

Approved: _____