



## OBSERVER REPORT

**Finance Committee (Fin Com) November 14, 2022**  
**Mary Alley Building**  
**Format: Hybrid**

LWVM Observer – Katharine Redmond

Members Present: Alec Goolsby, Pat Franklin, Cameron Staples, Timothy Shotmeyer, Terra Samuels, Michael O’Neil, Molly Teets, Eric Knight, Michael Janko  
Guests: Thatcher Kezer

1. Alec Goolsby welcomed new committee members, Eric Knight and Michael Janko.
2. By unanimous vote the committee elected the following officers for this budget year: Alec Goolsby (Chair), Pat Franklin (Vice Chair), and Cameron Staples. (Vice Chair).
3. FY24 Budget Schedule:
  - Fin Com will send out a request to all town departments to submit their proposed FY24 budgets the week of December 12.
  - Select Board will review the collected budgets in early January
  - State of the Town Meeting: January 12
  - Fin Com liaison meetings: January – March 3
  - Full Fin Com review and approval of all budgets in meetings scheduled for 2/13, 2/27, 3/13, and 3/27
  - Warrant Night: April 3
  - Town Meeting: May 1
4. ClearGov Budget Software overview by Town Administrator, Thatcher Kezer
  - The position of Town Finance Director, vacant since early 2022, has not been staffed yet. Meanwhile, Thatcher is filling in assisted by John McGinn. John is working for the Town as a part time consultant performing financial duties such as preparing and filing required reports to the Department of Revenue.
  - Additionally, the Select Board has contracted ClearGov Budget Software to modernize and improve the Town’s budgeting systems and to enable more efficient means of building operating, personnel, and capital budgets. It will take a several months to get the new system up and running and for the current year. It will run alongside the town’s traditional budget process. The software is cloud based and each member of Fin Com will have their individual logins. They will

not be able to change data in the system, but they will have the ability to run what-if scenarios, a valuable planning tool.

- The Initial cost of the software is \$28,433.33 and there will be an annual fee of approximately \$38,000.

5. FY 23 Transfer request: The committee unanimously approved the request to transfer \$28,433.33 - the ClearGov “on boarding” fee - from the Fin Com Reserve Fund to the Fin Com IT budget line.

6. FY23 Town Meeting Article 44 (Open Meeting Law Compliance) Study Committee: Pat Franklin Fin Com/Article 44 liaison

- The committee was formed to report on and calculate the costs of implementing Article 44
- It has identified 6 possible locations for use by groups subject to open meeting laws: Mary Alley building, Abbot Hall, The Jacobi Community Center, Abbot Public Library (including its interim location at the Eveleth School), Marblehead High School, and the Marblehead Municipal Light Department.
- In the spirit of brainstorming for the committee’s liaison, Pat, Fin Com members discussed possible costs including one-time infrastructure needs for each location, equipment/technology costs, periodic maintenance of equipment and software, training, identifying, and paying staff to facilitate/manage the technology at meetings, costs of video recordings and their storage, etc. Just a few of the many reflections expressed by Fin Com members included the possibility of having tech savvy MHS students get involved in facilitation; of the need to consider folding costs into the FY24 budget process; of the concern that it would be problematical to expect to have July 1, 2023, as a starting date if the new warrant is approved at Town Meeting.
- There was also considerable discussion about adopting requirements for open meetings which might exceed Massachusetts law. What would the implications be?

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44

Please note that the minutes of Article 44 Study Committee meetings will be posted on the Town website under “Minutes/Agendas”