

Board of Finance Meeting—February 12, 2018 Citizen Questions and Responses

Why is the Board of Selectmen budgeting \$60,000 for electricity (2018-2019) for the new municipal office complex when the first bill for the building was \$4,000?

The budgeted amount is a baseline established by analyzing the electricity usage of the schools. The first bill received was during the construction process and not occupancy. Adjustments will be made if necessary.

Why is the Town going to receive STEAP grant money for the Harris property?

The State approached the Town to inform us that we may be eligible for reimbursement of funds expended with the grant that was rejected at referendum. We are in the process of pursuing these funds.

Is the Town utilizing bank sweep accounts?

The use of sweep accounts has been discontinued.

Will the Board consider responding to questions within two weeks of the Board meeting?

The Board of Finance has developed and will continue its process for responding to questions in order to ensure responses that are complete and accurate, and that every citizen has the opportunity to learn what is happening with our Town's municipal finances.

Where on the Town's website will responses to questions be posted?

The questions and their corresponding responses will be posted with the agenda and minutes of each meeting.

Are we eliminating the Circuit Breaker and Veterans tax abatement programs?

The Circuit Breaker and Veterans tax abatement programs are not being eliminated. The State has eliminated funding for the Circuit Breaker program. The Town is required under State Statute to provide the program.

Did the Board of Finance provide any guidance to the Boards of Selectmen and Education with regard to spending increases? Is there a budget number that the Board of Finance would support?

The Board of Finance provided the following guidance to both Boards in developing their budgets: analyze every expense, justify any increase and seek opportunities for increasing revenue. We are very sensitive to maintaining the character and the services of our town, while minimizing tax increases.

Is there an analysis of the Grand List following revaluation that provides insight as to the 1.8% increase?

The Board of Assessment Appeals has requested an analysis from the Town's revaluation vendor Vision Appraisal. This information will be made available once it is received.

What is the expected increase for the 2018-2019 budget?

The Boards of Selectmen and Education (as of February 12, 2018) are still working on the development of their budgets.

There was an article in East Haddam News that indicated that the Board of Education was asking for a 2.0% increase and that the Board of Finance asked them to raise it to 2.25%.

The article should have stated that the Board of Education Budget and Planning Subcommittee is in the process of reviewing the proposed Board of Education budget and that a suggestion was made to increase the budget from 2.0% to 2.25%. The Board of Finance does not take any action on the budget until it has been approved by the Board of Education.