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Town of Ludlow, Massachusetts
Finance Committee

Minutes of November 19, 2025

Meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Tony Sanches, Susanne Boyea, Michael Kelley, Mike Kelliher, Aneta Lombardi, Chad Mullin, and Bill Nicoll

Members Absent: Matias Goncalves

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Nicoll asked about G/L codes being over expended.

Mr. Strange stated that there were issues with not having a full staff in his office and his Executive Assistant was doing the job of two people.

Ms. Allen stated that as soon as something like that is brought to their attention, they correct it right away now.

Mr. Kelliher asked why the police dispatcher overtime is overextended by 173% already.

Mr. Strange stated that there is a dispatch 911 grant that offsets that expenditure.

Ms. Allen explained that once the Treasurer/Collector's office receives the money and sends the information to accounting, then they post the batch. The Police Department will then need to request to move the money to the correct account. That way it will not be reflected as a negative at year end.

Mr. Kelliher stated that Emergency Management Services are all 194% expended already.

Ms. Allen believes there was an error in using a purchase order, but it will be corrected.

Committee agreed to have two members assigned to the School Committee Budget Sub Committee.

Mr. Nicoll would like a schedule for the upcoming subcommittee meetings.

Mr. Mullin suggested that FINCOM meet with all the departments and get their current state as well as their projections.

Mr. Strange stated that that is the way they've always done it, however most departments don't have much change. He also explained that the level 1 budget from the departments is complete. They met with the IEC today and the new growth came in at \$1.2 million, and the town only budgeted for \$574,000, which is what the previous growth was in the past five years. This will leave approximately \$620,000.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Kelliher thanked Ms. Cincone for her service over the years.

Moved by Mr. Kelliher to nominate Mr. Mullin as Vice Chairman, seconded by Mr. Kelley. Vote 8-0. All in favor.

Mr. Strange stated that there is absolutely a surplus in the insurance line item and room to cut.

Mr. Sanches stated that the town is spending \$2 million in free cash but getting \$5 million.

Mr. Strange stated that 3-5% of free cash should be kept put in the account annually.

Mr. Kelliher asked if they can fine tune what they're allocating for line items in the budget that are heavy to try and close the deficit and still stay within reasonable free cash.

Mr. Strange stated that it's up to him to advocate for the town by increasing the local receipts and decreasing the health insurance. He believes the town is in great shape. However, he believes that retirement and health insurance eats up all of the new growth.

Mr. Strange also suggested putting a policy in place to put a freeze on purchases to tighten the budget.

Mr. Sanches asked why Mr. Strange wouldn't put that in place regardless.

Mr. Mullin suggested that the Town Administrator be the last stop for any purchase orders that are being submitted.

Moved by Mr. Kelliher to approve and sign the October 15, 2025, meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Mullin. Vote 8-0. All in favor.

Mr. Sanches stated that there wasn't a quorum at the October 21st meeting, so they do not need to sign those minutes.

Mr. Sanches asked Mr. Strange to bring them up to date for the Treasurer/Collector's position.

Mr. Strange stated that Mr. McNutt resigned two weeks ago and he was sorry to see him go because it is such a big job. Mass Munifin is a great consultant, and they are making sure they don't fall behind. They are hoping they will find someone good and they can hit the ground running. The job will be posted until it is filled.

Mr. Sanches asked about the \$3 million outstanding in collections and what happens with that now?

Mr. Strange stated that the notices were sent out and they will still be collecting the money. They did find out that the first excise tax was only \$45,000 but that's as far as they got so far.

Mr. Sanches asked if they could get the numbers as to what was collected before the January meeting.

Mr. Strange stated that he will have to talk to Mass Munifin because they have to post the payments and then reconcile it and that is where they got behind. This was part of the confusion, when the taxpayers don't pay, then a demand gets sent, if they still don't pay then a warrant gets sent from our third-party collections, Jeffrey & Jeffrey. There weren't any notifications sent out due to turnover in the Treasurer/Collector's office and when Ryan saw this, he sent out the demands. This was for Real Estate and Excise taxes for FY24 & FY25. One small batch from FY24 Excise taxes were never sent out either.

Mr. Nicoll asked if they could find someone that recently retired from another town that may want to help out?

Mr. Strange stated that he is not sure that would work for them.

Mr. Sanches stated that at Town Meeting they approved a Finance Manager, and the way it was explained was that that person would take the role of the Treasurer/Collector if necessary. He also asked if Ms. Allen, Town Accountant, was now the Finance Director?

Ms. Allen explained that she has not been officially given that role yet. She also explained that she cannot take on the role of Treasurer/Collector because there has to be checks and balances in each of the departments. They will still need a Treasurer/Collector in that position. She can train the staff but will not be able to do the Treasurer/Collector's duties.

Mr. Sanches stated that at the meeting prior to the town meeting these questions were asked and these are not the answers that were given then.

Mr. Strange agreed and stated that Ms. Allen will be overseeing the two departments but will not be able to actually reconcile on the Treasurer/Collector's side.

Mr. Nicoll asked if there was someone else that interviewed that was a runner up and was still available?

Mr. Strange stated that Mr. Mullin did great at his interview.

Mr. Sanches asked if it should be separated into two different positions because it is such a big job?

Mr. Strange stated that Ryan could have gotten it but it's overwhelming at first. Ryan was learning everything by himself with only one staff member and once they have a fully functioning staff, it won't be so overwhelming.

Mr. Sanches asked how many staff they had when they had a separate Treasurer and a Collector because it didn't seem like they had these types of issues.

Mr. Strange stated that they had the same number of people and that they always had issues which they are trying to fix now.

Ms. Allen stated that a lot of the Treasurer/Collector duties overlap. In the future, as long as the Treasurer/Collector has the proper knowledge, it will work better being a combined position.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter from Dolly Cincone was discussed and Mr. Sanches thanked Dolly for everything.

Letters from LPD Chief, there is nothing further to discuss tonight.

Moved by Mr. Mullin to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Nicoll. Vote 8-0. All in favor.

AS Chairman

Ausanne M. Boyce

C. Mull

Ludlow Finance Committee