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TOWN OF LUDLOW

*Town of Ludlow, Massachusetts*  
*Finance Committee Meeting*

Minutes of April 15, 2026  
Meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Chad Mullin, Susan Boyea, Michael Kelley, Mike Kelliher, and Aneta Lombardi

Also Present: Marc Strange, Town Administrator and Mr. McBride, Chair – Recreation Commission

Members Absent:

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Committee Reorganized

**Moved by Mr. Kelliher to nominate Mr. Mullin as Chairman, seconded by Ms. Lombardi. Vote 4-0. All in favor.**

**Moved by Ms. Boyea to nominate Mr. Kelliher as Vice Chairman, seconded by Ms. Lombardi. Vote 4-0. All in favor.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

Committee to review current fiscal YTD Municipal Expenditures:

Mr. Kelliher explained that the Treasurer/Collector's office is now \$282,000 in the hole and there is still a quarter to go. He asked Mr. Strange if he is still planning on closing that with an interdepartmental transfer?

Mr. Strange stated that there should still be enough in the school insurance line to do that.

Mr. Kelliher stated the Collector's general expenses should be 75% expended right now and they are running about 89% currently, which is a little concerning. The other one that will need to

keep a close eye on is the IT department, which is 94% expended for capital expense and 95% for general expense expended with a quarter left to go.

Mr. Strange explained that most of it is the police station after hours and that is an additional fee. He will let CMD know nothing until after July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Kelliher said the community center is 96% expended for energy and repairs and maintenance.

Mr. Mullin asked if the town is now at the point where no they are going to say no new purchases or at least it has to be on a need basis because we are now 89% expended.

Mr. Strange stated they have not instituted a spending freeze as of yet, but he will take a look into it. He thinks they should be able to get through the rest of the year without any issues.

Mr. Kelliher stated that they would like to minimize the transfers this year.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Mullin explained that Mr. McBride is joining them to discuss the Recreation Director position.

Mr. McBride introduced himself and stated that the Recreation Director is something they had been trying to put into place for several years now. Due to budgetary reasons, they have been unable to do that. Their long-time clerk retired last year, and they also lost their administrative assistant at the golf course, and they did some restructuring to fold those two positions together. Recreation has always been one position, which is a LATOSS position. They really didn't have any managerial responsibility. Historically when we look at the parks and the recreation side of things, there was a parks and recreation department in the early 90's. These were then split and this has caused a lot of finger pointing and other issues. This is an opportunity to make an investment in our community and our parks through creating this position. He stated that a lot of the youth sports have diminished in our community. This position will help grow these sports again. This will also help with obtaining grants. Currently they provide before and after school programs and aquatics with the Thompson Pool. The past few years, the department hasn't been able to provide adequate staffing for Haviland Pond either and that is a missed opportunity. He thinks if they enhance that side of things, it will be a better impact for the community.

Mr. Kelliher asked if there are specific sports that Mr. McBride will be targeting?

Mr. McBride explained that one of the things they will task this individual with if it is passed at town meeting and filled, they will be tasked with reaching out to the various youth sports organizations that are still in town and active and have been struggling for a number of years with numbers and see how they can help support them and make it easier to grow and maintain numbers. It may be managing the signups or the insurance riders. One example would be lacrosse and getting that program off the ground. The committee has ideas, but they will leave it up to the person they hire to capture some new growth.

Mr. Mullin asked what is different about this year, seeing in years passed the budget wasn't feasible?

Mr. McBride stated that this year isn't much different as far as the budget but because they combined some positions and now this is a level of necessity. If this position does not get approved, it is going to have a lot of impact on the community.

Mr. Mullin asked who is going to report to the Recreation Director?

Mr. Strange explained that it will depend on whether or not the article passes at town meeting to reorg the recreation commission and the rec department. If it passes the rec director will report directly to the DPW Superintendent. If that fails, the rec director will report directly to the rec commission.

Mr. Mullin asked who will be reporting to the rec director directly?

Mr. McBride stated they will have one year-round part-time clerk and between five and seven year-round seasonal employees for before and after school program. They will have the summer camp counselors, the lifeguards at the pool and lifeguards at the pond. There will be a total of around 40 seasonal employees.

Mr. Kelliher asked if they established a lacrosse rec league, for example, would there be some fees associated with this?

Mr. McBride said they would definitely have to have some fee-based structure put in place and those fees and structures would be figured out when they got to that point. Unless there was a grant in place.

Mr. Kelliher asked how this is going to work with the two different silos having a plan in place?

Mr. McBride stated that it is going to depend on whether the two entities are merged at the town meeting. In recent years, the DPW has been much more willing to collaborate. If the article fails and the recreation stays separate from the parks, the full time director will have to collaborate with the DPW. He is confident that they can work well with the DPW moving forward either way.

Mr. Mullin asked what requirements the rec director will have to have?

Mr. McBride stated that they will have to have some level of experience with recreation management but with the budget, it will probably be someone early on in their career. This person will essentially have to build that department from scratch.

**Moved by Mr. Kelliher to open the FY27 budget public hearing at 6:31 p.m., seconded by Ms. Lombardi. Vote 4-0. All in favor.**

Mr. Strange stated that he didn't really come with too much prepared today. The level II budget was sent over and that was approved by the Select Board. The only change that was made, was the addition of \$30,000 for the Pond Committee. They were previously funded by 40R funds and other sources and now they would like to have their own budget line item. The other additions came from IT. The annual contract with CMD expires June 30<sup>th</sup> and the cost went up about \$3,000. The cost of the Microsoft 365 licenses jumped up to \$48,000 from \$25,000. The new software for the servers in town hall was \$11,000 and the email security program is about \$8,000.

Mr. Kelliher stated that it looks like they are still about \$100,000 north of the excess levy capacity, which is good.

Ms. Lombardi asked how much the school is getting?

Mr. Strange stated the school is getting 3%.

Mr. Kelliher stated that the non-availability of free cash at town meeting seems to be the biggest issue now. In level II there is still \$100,000 for fin com reserve, \$100,000 for building infrastructure articles, \$300,000 to transfer to stabilization, which we're pulling out of stabilization?

Mr. Strange stated that he didn't have a chance to update that and he also needs to update the five-year capital plan, which also shows the free cash usage. The board will discuss and formerly vote on May 5<sup>th</sup>. They will back out those free cash allocations and then they'll have to create a temporary document for stabilization that shows what the expenditures are.

Mr. Kelliher stated that he is hesitant to pull any more money out of stabilization than they absolutely have to. He would even look at capital to see what is time-sensitive to see if there is anything else that can wait until October. There are no guarantees what is in free cash until it is certified. There is a little left over from last year, but the town needs to be careful with that and maybe take a look at capital and see what can be held off on.

Mr. Mullin asked what the committee would like to do with the budget?

Mr. Kelliher said he would approve the current level II budget contingent upon free cash being certified or the removal of all non-essential free cash expenditures from the budget.

Mr. Strange stated that the Select Board will be discussing and voting on May 5<sup>th</sup> and with respect to the operating budget and the free cash usage, they are different articles. So, you could vote to recommend the operating budget and then withhold or whatever on article 11, which I think is capital and then there is a series of others.

Mr. Mullin stated that we would take the stance of recommendation to approve the operating budget only.

Mr. Kelliher suggested waiting until after the Select Board goes through and takes no action on the articles and then Finance Committee can do the same.

Mr. Strange stated that he spoke to CLA, which is the third-party accounting consultants, and they said it will absolutely be before June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Mullin stated that the next meeting will be Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. and asked Mr. Strange to reserve the room.

**Moved by Mr. Kelliher to close the public hearing at 6:42 p.m., seconded by Ms. Boyea. Vote 4-0. All in favor.**

**Moved by Mr. Kelliher to sign the meeting minutes of March 19, 2026, seconded by Ms. Boyea. Vote 4-0. All in favor.**

**CLOSING COMMENTS**

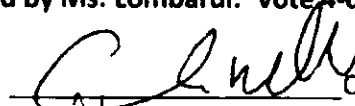
Mr. Mullin read the correspondence.


Ms. Lombardi asked how overtime looked for the police and fire?

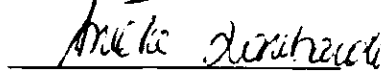
Mr. Kelliher stated that the overtime didn't look too bad this year.

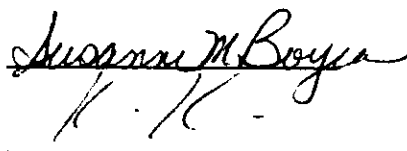
Mr. Mullin congratulated Mr. Sanches on the Select Board victory and wished him well and also wanted to thank Ms. LaDuke at the DPW for the work she does in getting the Finance Committee ready for their meetings.

**Moved by Mr. Kelliher to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Lombardi. Vote 4-0. All in favor.**

  
Chairman







Ludlow Finance Committee