

**Finance Committee Meeting
February 28, 2024**

Attendees

Committee: Art Merrill, Wayland Gladstone, Wayne Marshfield, George Haynes, John Kosier,
Joe Cetta, Eric Wilson

Absent: Tina Molé

Staff: Penny Bishop

Mr. Merrill called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

On a motion by Mr. Marshfield, seconded by Mr. Gladstone, the draft minutes of both February 14 and February 22 committee meetings were unanimously approved.

The final sales tax report for 2023 was reviewed. The report indicates an overall increase in sales tax revenue of .4469 percent compared to last year. Mr. Merrill remarked that 2022 sales tax revenue was above normal and 2023 exceeded the 2022 revenue even with the reduction in gas sales tax collected. He indicated the reduction in gas tax equated to about \$225,000 per quarter, which is almost 2% of the county budget. Mr. Haynes said it would be nice to see a breakdown of where specifically the sales tax is being generated.

The year-end transfer report for the contingency account was reviewed. The balance of the contingency fund is \$79,430.94 with one audit remaining. Mr. Merrill stated that although this balance is lower than normal, it shows that contingency is being used as designed. Contingency helps avoid overtaxing to pad the budget. The committee has guided departments to make their budget lines tighter, and if they run close on their budget lines, these funds are available for use. He noted there were a lot of budget adjustments last year due to increased prices as well as salary negotiations. Mrs. Bishop added that her office has made several transfers from contingency to pay 18B legal aid vouchers due to the state increasing rates from \$60 and \$75 per hour to \$158 an hour effective April 1. She noted there is one more payroll to post, and contingency funds may be needed to cover the increased costs of health insurance. She stated departments have been transferring funds within their budget whenever possible.

Mr. Merrill presented three not-prefiled resolutions: payment of audit as well as two from Legislative. One is to authorize the hiring of two database clerks for DMV offices in Deposit and Margaretville. In reply to Mr. Marshfield, Mr. Merrill said the state would not contribute for the positions which need to be filled to meet the state's minimum staffing requirements. Mr. Wilson remarked the state also keeps 90% of the revenue. The second is a resolution to authorize a temporary full-time assistant DA position.

In answer to Mr. Marshfield, Mr. Haynes explained that Resolution No. 31 for today's Board meeting is not new money. It is to transfer funds from the restricted fund balance for the DPW complex. Mr. Cetta and Mr. Haynes confirmed they are still within the budget and not overbudget. In reply to Mr. Marshfield, Mr. Haynes stated the Administrative Offices in Delhi cost approximately \$6 million to build. *The square footage of the 3-story building is 4,726 per floor for a total of 14,178 square feet.*

Regarding Resolution No. 32 for the homeless shelter, Mr. Marshfield explained that this was the third time they went out to bid on the project. The first time it was bid, the cost was favorable, however, the project would be over half a million dollars and had to be rebid according to the Wicks Law. The second time they rebid was the wrong time of the year; there was one bid for \$1.4 million. This is the third time and they received four bids, and the total cost will be under \$1 million. Mr. Gladstone stated the insurance claim for the home that was lost is \$600,000, and Mr. Marshfield confirmed the county has received approximately \$460,000 of the insurance claim.

Mr. Marshfield stated the SDG link has been added to the Hamden Town website. You can find taxes, assessments, and oodles of information for any municipality.

Mr. Merrill indicated that once the numbers for 2023 have been finalized, the committee will be tasked to allocate funds into reserves, for example set aside for building O&M. He stated the unassigned fund balance has grown a little each year, and the Office of State Comptroller prefers the funds be assigned. Mr. Merrill noted that several years ago, the Town of Colchester put FEMA funds into a reserve account for future emergencies.

Mr. Marshfield informed the committee that the cost to stabilize the Soldier's Monument will be close to the \$500,000 allocation from the ARPA funds. He said he does not expect to reallocate very much of that funding after all.

Travel, equipment, and fill vacancy requests were approved as presented.

Upon a motion the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.