

**Finance Committee Meeting  
April 24, 2024**

Attendees

Committee: Art Merrill, Wayland Gladstone, Wayne Marshfield, George Haynes, John Kosier,  
Joe Cetta, Eric Wilson, Tina Molé  
Staff: Beverly Shields, Penny Bishop

Mr. Merrill called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

On a motion by Mr. Gladstone, seconded by Mr. Kosier, the minutes of the April 10 committee meeting were unanimously approved.

The April 12 Sales Tax report was reviewed. The report indicates a slight decrease of 4.2293% compared to the same time period last year. The March 31, 2024, Bank Balance report was reviewed. The final report of approved encumbrances for 2023 was reviewed. The Year End Transfers report was reviewed. In reply to Mr. Marshfield regarding several transfers to OFA, Mrs. Bishop explained that Delaware Opportunities had billed for amounts over their contracts and not budgeted. In order to pay the invoices, funds were transferred from accounts that had a surplus rather than being pulled from the fund balance.

Mr. Marshfield surmised that with the passage of the new state budget, the county would be at a disadvantage on foreclosures. If there is a surplus, we have to find the previous owner, but if we lose money on the sale, that's too bad. He said he also believes that the longer foreclosure properties are held, the more it will cost the county.

Mrs. Shields stated her office is keeping track of all expenses related to foreclosures so they can recover those costs including administrative fees, taxes, penalties, interest, and supplies. Mr. Merrill said there would be a foreclosure sale this fall and ideally in 2025 they will have two sales, one in the spring and another in the fall to get back on track. In response to Mr. Cetta, Mrs. Shields said there are usually 60 to 70 properties in a foreclosure sale, although generally there are 700 to 800 properties at the start of the process. Mr. Marshfield opined the market is still very strong. He noted equalization rates in the county are dropping which indicates properties are bringing more on the market.

Mr. Merrill mentioned a 4-page summary statement put out by Harry Weiss on the impact of the state budget. Ms. Molé noted she participated in a Zoom meeting regarding the impact of the state budget for counties. Mr. Marshfield said there would be a slight increase in CHIPS funding. Mr. Merrill stated it would be ideal to get CHIPS funding more timely since the state changed the allowance from five years to ten years. Mr. Cetta noted that change affected towns, as the County DPW has already been going by the ten years. Mr. Merrill also stated that AIM funding will remain the same.

Ms. Molé reported that contracts are being prepared to add four additional security guards. There will be guards at 97 Main Street, 99 Main Street, and the Old Jail in Delhi, and at DSS South in Walton bringing the total guards on duty to six. She said there will be some reimbursement from Public Health, Behavioral Health, and Social Services.

Mr. Marshfield reported that Social Services is returning \$1,593,373 to fund balance; \$945,000 of this amount is due to an unexpected increase in the foster care block grant. He shared that DSS does not expect their budget to be affected too much by the new state budget.

Mr. Marshfield commented that the Governor plans to close five more state prisons. Ms. Molé said the Governor would have to close all five prisons by March 30, 2025, or the legislature takes that power away from her. Mr. Merrill stated that closing those prisons would mean additional state board-ins at minimum security facilities. Ms. Molé expressed that closing prisons has a big impact on those communities. Agreeing, Mr. Kosier elaborated that when youth facilities closed years ago, crime increased in the counties at that county's expense.

The audit was the only not-prefiled resolution.

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

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