

**Finance Committee Meeting
October 23, 2024**

Attendees

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

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

On a motion by Mr. Kosier, seconded by Mr. Gladstone, the October 9 committee meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

The October 11 Sales Tax report was reviewed. The report indicates a decrease of .9546% which is down relative to last year. Mr. Kosier noted the decrease equals one percentage point in the budget.

Mr. Merrill reported the draft budget has gone back out to Department Heads for final review. Once reviewed, the tentative budget will be disseminated to the Board and a public hearing will be scheduled for the November 26th BOS meeting. Mr. Cetta confirmed that Mental Health would not request a change in their budget amount for professional psychiatric fees, and he stated that MH would most likely have three more budget adjustments for additional people going to those facilities before the end of this year.

Treasurer's Office – Beverly Shields

Mrs. Shields brought up Mr. Marshfield's statement that was published in the newspaper about his frustration with the delay in tax foreclosure sales and said she agreed that this is a problem. She stated that she brought a solution to the committee July 24 to pay an outside attorney to do the records search. The matter was discussed in executive discussion, and it was decided not to sign the agreement, rather the committee approved financial support for the County Attorney's Office to hire the additional help needed.

Mrs. Shields noted that her office has a good track record with foreclosure searches having but two errors in 27 years and over 17,000 searches. She said their record has been good and these records are all ready to go, the same as they have done for years. With this delay, the sale will not be held until May. Mr. Marshfield expressed that the committee has to rely on what she reports to them and what the County Attorney tells them, and they are very frustrated that there hasn't been an auction. Mrs. Shields agreed and said she very much shares this frustration. Mr. Marshfield stated the Town of Hamden has parcels that should have been sold years ago; these properties are sitting there running down and wasting away and it's that way all over the county. Mr. Gladstone agreed, and said it's costing towns money. Mrs. Shields agreed and said she has asked to move forward with this sale and change the way searches are done with the next sale.

County Attorney Merklen joined the meeting, and she confirmed that the committee opposed hiring outside legal counsel for the foreclosures. Mr. Merrill stated they initially felt if outside abstractors could do the searches and with her offer that it could be done in-house, then they did agree to that so she would sign off.

In reply to Mr. Merrill, Mrs. Shields said they are re-searching all the parcels as requested by the County Attorney's Office. Mr. Marshfield said they had requested that the Treasurer's Office send the searches to the CA as they are done, and none have been submitted since they asked over a month ago. Mrs. Shields confirmed the next auction is for 2019 foreclosures. She reiterated that 2019 foreclosures are ready to go right now but the CA will not sign off until the Treasurer's Office search the properties all over again.

Mr. Merrill called for an executive session for legal counsel regarding foreclosures.

Committee reconvened in regular session.

There were three not-prefiled resolutions: DPW BA transfer funds, MH BA transfer of funds, and payment of audit.

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

Upon a motion the meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.