

**Acton Water District  
Finance Committee Meeting**

Zoom Meeting

April 5, 2024  
10:00 am

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**Members present:** William Guthlein, Ron Parenti, and John Petersen  
**Members absent:** None  
**Others in attendance:** Christine McCarthy

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**William Guthlein called the meeting to order 10:05 a.m.**

**Public Remarks/Comments**

- None

**Review of 2024 Annual Meeting**

- Committee members agreed that John's summary of the District's financial status was well received, and that FinCom should request that the Commissioners allot more time for this presentation next year.
- Bill noted that following the Annual Meeting several members of the audience requested that in the future a more complete description of each article motion should be given and that motions be projected so that they can be read during the discussion.
- Ron noted that there appeared to be confusion as to the relationship between the vote on the budget, which occurs early in the meeting, and articles that ask the voters to approve expenditures and monetary transfers later in the meeting. He recommended that a clarification of the logical sequence of the articles be provided in the FinCom presentation.
- Bill emphasized the importance of explaining the budget in terms of the uses of the expenditures and the sources of funding.

**Review Annual meeting warrants from other Water Districts**

- Prior to the meeting Christine provided information about annual meeting warrants used in several other water districts in Massachusetts, including Dracut, Chelmsford, Grafton, Lynnfield, and Lunenburg. She noted that in most cases the article sequence was similar to that used by the Acton Water District, although the terminology used might differ.
- John recommended a complete review of the wording of the article motions, which is important to perform this year since the District's legal counsel has changed. He also supported the idea of incorporating an explanation of sources and uses in each spending article.
- John recommended a reorganization of the article motions into a more logical sequence, and the inclusion of a table of contents at the beginning of the warrant. He also suggested that each article include a statement of the vote recommendation made by the Commissioners and the FinCom.

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- Christine agreed to work with John to transmit FinCom’s recommendations regarding the wording of the articles to the District Manager, and include legal counsel in that discussion. The outcome of those discussions will be reviewed at the next FinCom meeting, which will likely be scheduled for a date in May.

**Discuss Finance Committee goals for FY 2025**

- Bill reviewed the comments made earlier in the meeting and noted that the members had agreed that it will be important to review the wording and order of the Annual Meeting articles and expand FinCom’s presentation at the beginning of the Annual Meeting.
- John recommended that the members review the organization of FinCom’s annual report, and suggested that the report include an introductory section that would summarize project status and expenditures from the prior year.
- Ron noted that that if passage of all the articles on the Annual Meeting warrant is used as a measure of success, that goal has been achieved almost every year. However, the District should make voter education an important secondary goal of these meetings and in this area, improvements can be made.
- John expressed his hope that in the future the reports of FinCom, the Commissioners, and the District Manager would be better coordinated and follow a common organizational structure.

**Update on progress of water rate study group**

- The water rate study group members include Matt Mostoller, Barry Rosen, and John Petersen. Unfortunately, this group did not have an opportunity to meet prior to this FinCom meeting, so there was no progress to report.

**ADJOURN**

John moved, Ron seconded, and it was:

**VOTED unanimously** to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ronald Parenti

*Documents used: FinCom meeting include the agenda and a list of links to recent Annual Meeting agenda used by neighboring towns.*