



# TOWN OF MENDON

## Finance Committee

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## MEETING MINUTES

Michael Krager, Chairman  
Nicholas Ciantra, Vice Chairman  
Billy Haddad, Clerk  
Mike Ammendolia  
Jesse Curll  
John Hodgens  
Ron Zammuto

**Meeting Date:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025  
**Time Called to Order:** 6:35 PM  
**Time Adjourned:** 10:35 PM  
**Location:** Town Hall - Main Meeting Room  
**Meeting Chair:** Michael Krager  
**Recorder:** Billy Haddad

Member:	Present <sup>1</sup>	Remote <sup>2</sup>	Member	Present	Remote
Michael Krager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	John Hodgens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nicholas Ciantra	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jesse Curll	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mike Ammendolia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Billy Haddad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ron Zammuto	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Topic Name:	Finance Committee Attended the Select Board Meeting
Summary:	<p><b>Budget Presentations</b></p> <p>The overall budget presentation provided a comprehensive view of the town's financial planning. Topics included careful revenue forecasting—with special emphasis on investment returns, state aid, and local receipts—and the need for flexibility given the historical volatility in returns. The discussion stressed that while the numbers were not set in stone, conservative estimates and contingency measures were in place to ensure a balanced budget amid fluctuating external factors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Revenue Flexibility:</b> Budget proposals account for varied investment income due to economic and interest rate changes.</li><li>• <b>Good Faith Estimates:</b> Local receipts and state aid estimates are treated as “good faith” figures, with adjustments allowed as market conditions change.</li><li>• <b>Contingency Planning:</b> Reserve funds and potential borrowing measures were discussed as safeguards in case revenue projections fall short.</li><li>• <b>Process Improvements:</b> There is a call for distributing meeting collateral at least 72 hours in advance to allow adequate time for review and preparation.</li></ul> <p><b>Council on Aging:</b></p> <p>The Council on Aging budget presentation focused on the operation of the senior center and other aging-related services. Presenters outlined the diverse programs offered—ranging from transportation and meal services to social and wellness</p>

<sup>1</sup> If “Present” contains an “x” that person was physically present.

<sup>2</sup> If “Remote” contains an “x” that person participated remotely according to 940 CMR 29.10(5) a through e as approved by the Meeting Chair.

activities—and emphasized the crucial role these services play in reducing social isolation. In addition, challenges such as understaffing, heavy volunteer workloads, and the need for improved dissemination of meeting materials were addressed.

- **Service Delivery:** High call volumes and significant use of the van service demonstrate robust demand for transportation and outreach.
- **Program Range:** Activities include nutritional programs, wellness clinics, recreational and educational events that foster community engagement among seniors.
- **Staffing and Volunteer Efforts:** The operation relies heavily on both dedicated staff and committed volunteers to maintain a high level of service.

#### **Conservation Department:**

The discussion in this section addressed how the Conservation Department is working to update and improve its operations. The commission is reviewing its fee structures and permit processes to ensure they reflect both current regulatory requirements and practices in neighboring towns. There was also a strong emphasis on aligning staff compensation with market standards through merit-based adjustments and on leveraging grants to fund trail and environmental projects.

- **Permit and Fee Review:** Updates to conservation permit fees and performance standards are underway to better align with state guidelines and local realities.
- **Staff Compensation:** Proposals for merit-based increases and restructuring of nonunion positions aim to close gaps compared to similar departments regionally.
- **Grant Applications:** Ongoing efforts include applying for grants related to trail design, invasive species management, and broader environmental initiatives.
- **Benchmarking:** Comparisons with neighboring towns' fee structures (for example, Bellingham's approach) were discussed to ensure competitiveness and fairness.

#### **Mendon / Upton Regional School District (MURSD):**

A comprehensive presentation was given on the school district's budget, detailing enrollment trends, state aid adjustments, staffing levels, health insurance arrangements, and the impact of out-of-district tuition. The discussion stressed that most of the district's expenditure was on salaries and that even small percentage changes—such as a 9% increase in teacher health insurance premiums or lane-change adjustments—have significant ripple effects across the overall budget. It also covered projected enrollment trends and areas requiring targeted fiscal intervention, such as additional English-language support.

- **Enrollment & Staffing:** The district's enrollment has stabilized around 2,072 students with over 400 staff members, but the challenge lies in matching staffing levels with growing needs, especially for non-English learners.
- **Revenue Sources:** State aid, out-of-district tuition reimbursements, and federal grants (including Title I, II, and III funds) were discussed as key revenue streams with some uncertainty in year-to-year allocation.
- **Health Insurance and Labor Costs:** There was detailed discussion of recent changes in teacher health plans, the impact of lane-change

	<p>stipends on overall payroll, and comparisons to past contracts with high-deductible options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Major Facility Upgrades:</b> Items discussed included roof replacements (with detailed cost comparisons and breakdowns), HVAC system updates, and athletic field reorientations (including irrigation system overhauls).</li> <li>• <b>Fiscal and Debt Considerations:</b> The conversation covered the method of splitting debt assessments between towns (e.g., using enrollment or property values as benchmarks) and the planned use of “bind anticipation notes” to cover borrowing costs.</li> <li>• <b>Transparency and Explanation:</b> There was a strong call for clear communication to the public about how such large figures—as seen in multi-million-dollar projects—are derived, including detailed breakdowns by square footage and equipment needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Decisions Made:</b>	<p>A motion was made by Jesse and seconded by Ron to have the board draft a letter to the town representatives regarding issues tied to Chapter 70 and Transportation funding.</p> <p>The motion was unanimously adopted.</p>
<b>Actions to be Taken:</b>	Attend future budget meetings and sign the letter that was adopted.
<b>Related Documents:</b>	<p>Budget Presentation for Select Board 3.12.25</p> <p>Fiscal Budget Notes 3.12.25</p> <p>COA Outreach Admins Job Description FY21</p> <p>2024COA Service Stats Final</p> <p>5.2.25 ATM Draft Warrant</p>