

# *Town of Fairhaven*

## *FINANCE COMMITTEE*

Minutes of the Meeting for < **October 25, 2012** > at the BPW Building, Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

Members in attendance: Chairman- John Roderiques, Kim Hyland, Kathi Carter, Scott Fernandes, Sid Martin, Therese Szala, Pat Elliot, Dawn Devlin, Colin Veitch, Padraic Elliot, Bob Furtado, At 7:10 pm Kevin Costa joined the meeting. Not present- Ted Silva (resigned).

Meeting was covered by local TV with members of the press present.

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

The chairman announced that anyone recording the meeting needed to let him know if anyone is recording the meeting.

The chairman noted that Ted Silva has given his notice of resignation from the finance committee. The chairman noted how much appreciation he had for Mr. Silva and the years that he spent as secretary and his aid to the committee will be missed.

Sid Martin “volunteered” to take minutes of the meeting.

Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and Kim motioned for approval as written and Colin seconded.

General discussion was held on the budget process for the coming year and this discussion will continue at the next meeting. It was noted that under 30B a \$1,500 cap had been placed to have all purchased items reviewed by the Secretary of the Board of Selectman prior to purchase. It was noted by at least one member of the committee that this is an expensive practice at this low cap level; the chairman stated this could be discussed at a later date.

At 7:13 pm the chairman decided to attempt to start the meeting with the department heads who were in attendance at the meeting. The meeting was stopped to look for additional seats. At 7:16 pm the meeting restarted.

Restarted the discussion with the department heads, the following items were discussed:

1. Overseeing board for each department must approve all reserve fund transfer requests.
2. Call fincom chairman with information to determine if there is a need to attend the meeting. The chairman felt he could determine fairly accurately whether the department head would be needed at the fincom meeting.
3. Dropping off a request on Wednesday or Thursday before the meeting is not acceptable.
4. Kim pointed out that the expense should be “extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances. The Chairman explained that extraordinary or unforeseen could not be just that they were forgotten or overlooked issues at the time of budgeting.
5. The reserve transfer request should be needed, not just wanted.
6. If there is an alternate source of funding other than the reserve transfer funds that should be utilized. Examples would be gift fund or other fund when the requested is \$100 or \$300 or other relatively small amount.
7. The chairman offered to answer any questions.

The discussion then turned to Budgets:

- 1) The Chairman noted that the state report may have some effect on how we perform the budget process.
- 2) The department heads should already be working on their budgets for next year.
- 3) The salaries should be calculated based on steps and levels that are known now.
- 4) Expenditures for new items or replacement items must be provided. The Finance committee needs to be informed as early as possible.
- 5) When preparing the budget avoid forgetting items. This may be a clear statement, but often the committee finds that errors are made in forget ones own salary or other items that should be obvious.
- 6) Determine what the multiplier is for the year, it will be 52.X, check with accountant if this information has not been conveyed to you.
- 7) Get documentation. Have basic information for estimates available so that the committee can be sure that your estimate “is in the ballpark” and doesn’t come up short or tie up cash.
- 8) Be on the lookout for the finance committee letter from the chairman. People ask what letter? Look for it in your mail slot.

Hearings with the finance committee:

- 1) Invitations will be for the middle of February and for the first few weeks of March. Come to the meetings if you’re concerned about your budget.
- 2) Budget is sent to the Selectmen for the review. This should be for a level service budget.
- 3) If there is a benefit to the town of some item, bring it up during the budget process so that the need is known.
- 4) Everyone needs to work together to make the budget process work.

- 5) The finance committee is willing to listen to reasons that cuts should not be made in a budget.

There was a long discussion about the need to use a typewriter to prepare a budget. Various solutions were discussed that would allow an electronic submission. The Chairman stated he had an abacus in his car if anyone needed one.

There was a break at 8:16 pm to clear the room. The meeting resumed at 8:25.

There was discussion regarding Ted Silva's resignation. How much his services will be missed and the process of selecting a new candidate. This will be a hard position to fill.

There was discussion regarding the special town meeting on December 4, 2013 and that the driver for the meeting is GNB Voke expansion.

There was discussion of the raises planned in contracts for next year. There was clarification regarding the 1% raise on the last day of the fiscal year.

The various items proposed for the STM were discussed:

- 1) Digester, this is the last \$196K needed to fund a settlement agreement.
- 2) North St. not accepted technically, and needs to be prior to work being proposed to the street.
- 3) Article 9 could be funded by the Waterways account.
- 4) Deadlines of Article at 4:30 pm this past Thursday, unfortunately other articles may be added.

At 9:00 pm Kim was nervously shuffling as it was obvious that the meeting was continuing. Even though he was breaking a sweat he was careful not to call for adjournment.

The chairman noted we would want to see Concom, DPW, Fire, Harbormaster, Voke and Mr. Roth prior to the Special Town Meeting so that the finance committee can offer opinions and guidance.

Theresa would check out a street that is on the STM and report status back to the committee.

Next meeting is November 8, 2012.

With great relish Kim called for adjournment at roughly 9:14 pm which was seconded gladly by Padraic.