

Town of Fairhaven

Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting for <April 18, 2013>at the BPW Administration Building, Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

Members in attendance:

Chairman-John Roderiques, Robert A. Furtado, Scott Fernandes, Kim Hyland, Kathi Carter, Therese Szala, Colin Veitch, Dawn Devlin, Sid Martin, Phil Washko, Padraic Elliot

Town of Fairhaven:

Jeffery Osuch- Executive secretary
James A. Cochran- Veterans Agent
John Rogers, Jr.- Emergency Management

Meeting was covered by government access television.

Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Announced that the meeting was being recorded by government access TV. Chairman has to be notified if anyone else present is recording.

Motion made by Kim to accept the minutes from April 11, 2013. Seconded by Sid.

Vote: Unanimous

- Meeting with James Cochran- Veterans Agent, to discuss his Reserve Fund Transfer and Special Town Meeting Article.
 - Discussion of the benefits available to veterans and their dependents.
 - Vets don't have to be disabled to receive benefits. Vets living in Massachusetts, spouse of vets, any child disabled before the age of 18 are eligible. Vets must have served 6 months or more service not including training.
 - Vets receive benefits to bring them to 200% of the poverty level.
 - Eligible vets receive \$ 2,000 towards burial.
 - Mr. Cochran is bound by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 115 and CMR 108.
 - Fairhaven has more vets or vets' spouses enrolled because of the large percentage of elderly housing.
 - Jobless vets can receive benefits if they follow Mr. Cochran's procedures for job hunting.
 - Fairhaven must pay benefits to vets enrolled in school, while school is on break.

- Vets are referred to the Veterans Agent by Coastline Elderly and the VA.
- Disabled vets eventually go on SS Disability, but they will receive benefits from the town while that process is ongoing.
- Costs have gone up because of increased clients, increased burials, increase in insurance costs, and increase prescription drug costs.
- Fairhaven will be reimbursed by the State for 75% of the benefits it pays out. Reimbursements are close to a year behind payment.
- Client eligibility is closely monitored by the State.
- There is really no way to anticipate how many clients the office will have in a given year.
- Chairman presents a Reserve Fund Transfer from the Veterans Agent seeking \$ 5,400 for Benefits for the month of April.
 - Money is needed because of 2 new clients and 2 burials this month.
 - Scott motions to transfer \$ 5,400 to acct. #01-543-00-5770-567 Benefits. Seconded by Kim. Vote: Unanimous
- 7:35 PM. John Rogers- representing the EMA speaks on Article #21 on the ATM. (Scott leaves the room during discussion.)
 - The Emergency Management Agency seeks \$ 4,000 to purchase 100 cots to be used at the emergency shelter when needed. Selectmen are recommending \$ 2,000.
 - Discussion on the Article:
 - Cots will be stored at the EMA building on Sconticut Neck Road.
 - Cots in question are recommended by the Red Cross and have a 250 lb. capacity.
 - The EMA has 8 cots now.
 - During the last storm Fairhaven had 11 people at the shelter. Dartmouth had 49, New Bedford had 59 and Acushnet had 29 people at their respective shelters.
 - The new Wood School is the primary shelter once construction is complete.
 - Discussion of the elderly housing in town and need for shelter. Chairman explains it is not the Town of Fairhaven's responsibility to provide emergency shelter for the Housing Authority.
 - Sid motions for \$ 2,000. Seconded by Phil.
 - Pat motions for \$ 1,000. Seconded by Terry.
 - Vote on Sid's motion for \$ 2,000: Motion passes 6-4-1 with Kathi, Terry, Kim, & Pat opposed, and Scott abstaining.

7:59 PM. Chairman calls a recess. Back in session @ 8:05 PM. (Scott returns to the meeting)

- Chairman advises that some unions may be settling. Committee may have contracts to discuss next week.

- Discussion of areas where the Fin Com and the Selectmen have different recommendations:
 - Finance Committee stands by its recommendations for Legal, Cultural Council, and Personnel Board.
 - Legal will be over budget this year, but not necessarily next year.
- The committee stands by its recommendations for the Road Work Article #8.
- Mr. Osuch is recommending using \$ 35,000 from The Reserve Fund for Veterans Services.
- Discussion of the need to meet on the week of the Precinct meeting.
 - Possibility of meeting Tuesday, Wednesday, or at 6:00 PM. Thursday the night of the Precinct meeting.
- Discussion of Article #9b Rogers School Study. Committee will recommend at Town Meeting.
- Discussion of Article # 4 and 5:
 - Committee is still waiting to see what the final motions will be at TM.

- Kim motions to adjourn @ 8:35 PM. Seconded by Sid. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado
Finance Committee Secretary

(accepted 4-25-2013)