

Town of Fairhaven

Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting for <January 30, 2014>at the BPW Administration Building, Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

Members in attendance:

Chairman-John Roderiques, Robert A. Furtado, Scott Fernandes, Padraic Elliot, Kathi Carter, Lisa Plante, John Mota

Member absent:

Therese Szala

Meeting was covered by government access television. Member of the press was not present.

Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. Announced that the meeting was being recorded by government access TV. Chairman has to be notified if anyone else present is recording the meeting by video or audio.

Motion made by Scott to accept the minutes from January 23, 2014. Seconded by John M.
Vote: Unanimous

- The Chairman passed out updated FY15 Article 4 spreadsheet, FY15 School Dept. budget, and a letter from the Historical Commission explaining their budget and request for a replacement roof.
Chairman explains that the Historical Commission will be in next week to explain their requests.
- Chairman states that not many Town departments have requested appointments before the committee.
The Treasurer, Rec. Center, Police, Fire, School Dept., and Veterans Agent have requested appointments.
- Chairman states that we will be meeting on February 13th, the night after the STM.
- Chairman and committee discuss the Draft of the Articles for the May ATM.
 - BPW is recommending Bridge Street for reconstruction.

- GASB 45: Administration is recommending \$ 75,000. Not sure if that amount is possible this year.
 - Request for a Revolving Acct. for the Wind Turbines. This would be a mechanism for taking in money from NStar and paying the developer.
 - Workmen's Comp. seeks \$ 19,593.37 for part of a 3 year assessment.
 - Typical Revolving Accounts that appear every year for various departments.
 - Historical Commission requests are up this year, as well as seeking \$ 8,000 for replacement of the South side of the Academy roof.
 - 4 Articles have been listed from the Town Government Study Committee.
 - Fire Dept. seeks \$ 5,100 for a new copy machine.
 - Fire Dept. seeks \$ 161,252 for a new roof.
 - Fire Dept. has grant matching Articles for a new ladder truck and firefighter gear.
 - Sewer Dept. & Water Dept. both have multiple Articles.
 - Chairman states that he knows of an Article put forth by the School Dept. for replacement of floor tiles at the Hastings Middle School.
 - This would bring the total for Articles to approximately \$ 750,000. Mr. Osuch has carried \$ 450,000 for Articles in his projections.
 - The school floor could be done in stages if needed.
 - Question of spending money on the Fire Dept. roof without knowing if the building is going to be replaced at some time.
- Discussion of the Article 4 spreadsheet:
 - Lisa questions #21 Engineering \$ 2,000.
Chairman explains that this money is used for engineering work for street acceptances. In FY14 the Selectmen chose to use the money for a study of the Oliver Street chicane.
 - John M. questions the amount in #5 Data Processing.
Chairman advises committee look at detailed breakdown in the budget.
 - Pat questions the Selectmen's request for -2%, 0%, +1%, & +2% budgets and how they reached their spending figure of \$ 45,000,000.
 - Chairman states he knows of another Article for the May STM within the ATM that will request \$ 16,000.
 - Lisa questions budget numbers across the board and why some departments have no reductions.
 - Kathy questions Town Hall Phone.
Chairman states that they are trying to set up a category to centralize the phone costs.
 - Pat questions the \$ 45,000,000 spending figure and asks if the -2% budget hits that figure.

- Committee has a problem with so many blanks on the spreadsheet at this time. It makes it difficult to formulate a budget. There should at least be estimates in place at this point.
- Kathy asks why no decreases in some budgets.
Chairman states that the committee asked for 0%, +1%, +2%. The -2% was asked for by the Selectmen and was driven by their desire to put \$ 300,000 in a Capital Planning Fund.
Chairman states that the bylaw and plan should be in place before putting the money towards it.
- Stabilization Fund: We will have to see how the budget goes before deciding on a number.
Something should be added every year.
- Town Insurance: Is driven by the market.
Chairman does not expect an increase in Health Insurance this year.
- Discussion of the Reserve Fund.
Chairman won't support Reserve Fund Transfers for Salary shortfalls unless it is an extreme emergency. Depts. need to manage their OT.
- Bob questions Highway Dept. requesting funding for a Sewer Jet Rooter. Should this be in the Sewer Dept. budget.
Chairman will request information.

7:52 PM. Chairman calls recess. Back in session @ 7:55 PM.

- Chairman will try to fill in the blanks in the budget himself before the next meeting.
- Fire, Dispatchers, & School Unions still haven't settled for FY15 yet, which adds to the guess work.
- Chairman was hoping to have more information on the Articles for the ATM, for tonight's meeting. The TCSC Articles will have an effect on Town finances.
- Scott questions how cuts will be spend between the "Big 4" depts. and Town Hall.
 - Chairman states that he will look at any plan put forth by the administration.
 - Replacing existing out going staff with replacement staff at a lower rate is not a change, it just delays the financial problems.
- Discussion of the Rec. Center:
 - They are not self-sufficient now, but are trying.
 - Committee will look at how the after school program is working.
- Chairman explains to John M. how the Reserve Fund works.

- It is for extraordinary and unforeseen budget shortfall circumstances.
- Chairman states that some people view it as a secondary budget.
- John M. questions how the Veterans Services are handled.
 - Chairman explains that towns are size are required to have a full time Veteran's Agent. The agent's salary and office expenses are not recoverable from the State.
 - Benefits to veterans are income based, and include health insurance, fuel assistance, medical payments.
 - Eligible expenses are reimbursable @ 75% from the State on the following year's Cherry Sheet.

- Pat motions to adjourn @ 8:11 PM. Seconded by John M. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado
Finance Committee Secretary

(accepted 2-6-2014)