

Town of Fairhaven

Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting for <February 27, 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, Therese Szala, Lisa Plante, John Mota

Town of Fairhaven:

Jeffery Osuch- Executive secretary
Anne Carreiro- Town Accountant
Carol A. Brandolini- Town Collector
Delfino R. Garcia- Assistant Assessor
Wendy Graves- Treasurer/Director of Finance

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

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 the meeting by video or audio.

Motion made by Scott to accept the minutes from February 20, 2014. Seconded by Terry.
Vote: Unanimous

- Mr. Osuch passes out updated FY15 spreadsheet, updated Warrant for the Annual May Town Meeting, updated spreadsheet for the ATM Articles.

- 7:03 Ms. Carreiro discusses the Town Accountant's budget:
 - Salary line includes the 1/2% & 1% raises.
 - Phone is removed and postage is increased.
 - Scott asks if she goes to the Amherst conference every year. She states yes. She gets mileage, but there is no room expense.
 - Having answered the committee's questions, Ms. Carreiro leaves the meeting at 7:08 PM.

- Ms. Brandolini discusses the Town Collector's budget:
 - August 1, 2014 is Ms. Brandolini's retirement date.
 - Question of who will be Collector after that.
Mr. Osuch states that the Selectmen are negotiating with Ms. Graves.
 - Terry questions the Senior Clerk position listed with no employee name.
Mr. Osuch states that when the Director of Finance takes over the Collector position, this would be a full time clerk to assist her.
 - Terry asks if we are allowing money for it.
Chairman states that this is another year with no plan in place.
 - Terry questions the increase in postage.
 - Chairman asks if the Town pays 1st class rate.
 - Ms. Brandolini states that she mails 51,000 pieces at the bulk mailing rate and 3,100 pieces at the 1st class rate.
 - After running the math on the number of pieces mailed and the rate, the numbers do not match those listed for past years.
It is thought that some of the postage may be in contracted services.
Chairman will get the year to date figure.
 - Pat questions the \$ 500 increase in preprinted forms.
 - Ms. Brandolini states that the contract is up on June 30th and she is expecting an increase.
 - Chairman asks if she has obtained a quote or is it just a guess?
 - Ms. Brandolini states that it is an educated guess after running the office for 25 years.
 - Chairman states that shortfalls in the budgets, after approval, will not be made up from the Reserve Fund.
 - Scott asks if the person assuming the Collector position had input with the budget process.

Ms. Brandolini leaves the meeting at 7:38PM.

- Assistant Assessor Delfino Garcia discusses the Assessors budget:
 - Chairman asks if the recent 1/2%, 1% increases are included.
Mr. Garcia states that the new salary number should be \$ 142,382.
 - Mr. Garcia states that he looked back 5 years, at the Professional Gatherings, to see which ones were most worthwhile. He states he is taking a course in Amherst in August.
 - Pat questions the charge in Purchase of Services for MLS.
 - Mr. Garcia states that in the past he was using his personal MLS service as a Realtor to do Town research.
 - Terry asks if this information could be obtained for free from the Registry of Deeds.

- He states that they use the service to obtain details about properties that have sold. The assessors don't always have access to the homes' interiors.
Mr. Garcia says that the Registry of Deeds only provides the legal description of the property.
- Pat asks about the seminars and which staff members go. He asks Mr. Garcia if he could provide a breakdown of the seminars. Mr. Garcia will provide.
- Ms. Graves discusses the Data Processing budget:
 - Chairman asks why Purchase of Services is up.
 - Ms. Graves states that it is for Contracted Services. She added up all the present contracts for FY15.
 - Pat asks if they are the same contracts as last year.
 - Ms. Graves states that some may have been in other categories last year.
 - Capital Outlay is the same as last year \$ 19,200.
 - Ms. Graves states that this is for computer replacements as well as a new server for the Rec Center and the COA.
The email server also needs replacement.
 - John M. asks about the Town having their own email server.
 - Chairman discusses the state of the Town's IT program.
States that IT is currently the responsibility of the Director of Finance because when computers were starting to be used in municipalities, they started in the Finance office first.
 - Terry asks why is there then \$ 5,000 for replacement computers.
 - Ms. Graves states that this money is used for computers or printers that have to be replaced during the year, other than the ones on the replacement plan.
 - Explanation of the difference between the computers and the servers.
 - John M. asks if he could have a count on the number of computers the Town has and the number of email addresses.
 - Pat asks if they are having problems with the present servers.
 - Terry questions the printer maintenance.
 - Ms. Graves states this is for the big printers at Town Hall.
 - Chairman questions how much mail goes through the Pitney Bowes postal machine.
 - Ms. Graves says it is used quite a bit.
 - Terry questions the copier maintenance.
 - Ms. Graves states that is for the 3 large copiers at Town Hall.
 - The 1 in the Selectmen's office comes out of their budget.
 - John M. questions the Bill McCaffery Consulting charge.
 - Ms. Graves states that this is the Town's IT service person.

- Chairman states that the Town should have an in-house IT person.
 - IT budget for a town this size should be higher for the equipment to run efficiently.
 - Ms. Graves states that they have set up a training area in Town Hall and are getting the staff more trained on the computers.
 - Mr. Garcia states that the Patriot System Software is finally being used to its full potential.

- Discussion of the Treasurer's budget
 - Chairman questions the salary increase.
 - Ms. Graves got a bump in salary when her contract was negotiated.
The rest of the staff got the 1/2% and 1%.
 - Supplies has \$ 300 related to the digester project.
 - Chairman questions if that was included in the associated costs.
 - Professional Gatherings is up.
 - Chairman states he feels this is important because the accounting and tax laws are always changing.
 - Terry questions getting mileage to make bank deposits.
 - Chairman and Mr. Osuch state that it is standard practice and has to be done.

- Discussion of the Personnel Board budget:
 - John M. asks what the Board's function is.
 - Chairman and Ms. Graves explain that the board is a recommending board to the Selectmen.
They recommend rates and policies for non-union and non-contract workers.
 - Question of what Supplies are spent on.
 - It is explained as employee record folders and time cards.
 - Chairman states that time cards don't belong in that budget.
 - Question of Dues and Prof. Gathering.
 - Board belongs to MMPA.

- Discussion of Unemployment:
 - Chairman states this number cannot be set until we know if there are going to be layoffs.
 - Mr. Osuch states that the Town has spent \$ 65,000 on Unemployment for the 1st 6 months of FY14, for the school dept.

- Discussion of FICA:
 - Number has been raise to \$ 321,000 because of the recent raises.

- Chairman states the importance of having enough in this category.
- Discussion of Debt:
 - Chairman asks Ms. Graves if the numbers are correct. She says yes.

8:47 PM. Chairman calls a recess. Back in session @ 8:52 PM.

- Chairman runs down future appointments:

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| March 6th | Police |
| March 13th | BPW |
| March 20th | Schools |

will try to get Fire for the March 27th
 will try to get Natural Resources for March 20th
 also needs to schedule Mr. Roth for CPC Articles

- Chairman states the big issue before the Finance Committee now is what the spending figure is that the Selectmen are going to use.
 - Chairman states that the vote the Selectmen took for \$ 45,000,000 still stands.
 - There was discussion of changing to \$ 44,602,158.
- Chairman states that he intends to make cuts based on priority, if needed.
- Finance committee is a recommending body and should have a complete budget from the Selectmen by now.
- Chairman asks Mr. Osuch if Shellfish Propagation had money left last year.
- Discussion, at length, between Mr. Osuch and Chairman about Mr. Osuch's Surplus Revenue strategy.
- Discussion of using wind revenue money.
- Discussion of \$ 42,000 needed for the Ladder Truck Grant.
- Capital Planning discussion
- Chairman states the committee will get the work done when we have the number from the Selectmen.
- Discussion of other Towns' budget process.

- Pat motions to adjourn @ 9:35 PM. Seconded by Terry. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado
Finance Committee Secretary

(accepted 3-6-2014)