

Town of Fairhaven

Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting for <April 17, 2014>at the BPW Administration Building, Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

Members in attendance:

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

Member absent

Padraic Elliott

Town of Fairhaven:

Marc Jodoin- EMA Director

Robert J. Espindola- Chairman Board of Selectmen

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 April 10, 2014. Seconded by John M.
Vote: Unanimous

- Chairman notes the lack of baked goods at this evening's meeting.
- Chairman states he has received 1 Reserve Fund Transfer request from EMA for Heat, Light, & Power in the amount of \$ 500, and 1 Reserve Fund Transfer request from EMA for Electricity in the amount of \$ 400.
 - Chairman states there was no back-up information included with the requests.
 - Chairman notified Mr. Jodoin that he needed to present back-up info and was invited to tonight's meeting.
 - Committee will wait to see if he arrives.

- Chairman reminds the committee the Precinct meetings will be Wednesday night, April 30th.
- Chairman advises we will need to meet on May 1st.
 - Chairman states the Fire contract has been settled.
 - Chairman has received no specific information, as of yet.
 - Chairman states that even with the Finance Committee bylaw concerning contracts, we still have a good faith obligation to Town Meeting, to make a recommendation.
- Discussion of Articles:
- Article 25- Information Technology Advisory Committee

Mr. Jodoin arrives. Chairman calls a recess @ 7:11 PM to make copies of information. Back in session @ 7:18 PM.

- Mr. Jodoin states he currently has a gas bill in the amount of \$ 139.37. When this bill is paid, it will leave April, May, and June.
- Chairman asks why Mr. Jodoin is planning on \$ 120/ month for April, May, & June.
- Discussion of building use.
- Mr. Jodoin states the building was used the same amount as last year.
- Chairman states he knows the building was used more this year.
- Mr. Jodoin brings up the mistake he made in his budget preparation again.
 - Chairman states that the larger budget was formulated the 1st year they occupied the building, because they had no history to go by.
 - Chairman states the building is not supposed to be used as a community center.

7:27 PM. Mr. Espindola joins the meeting.

- Chairman brings up discussion of the fire alarm on the building. Asks why EMA would consider spending on the fire alarm, when the building needs a new roof.
- Chairman feels building should be on auction block with the school buildings.
- Chairman states if the cold weather was the cause of the high bills, every department would be experiencing the same issue.
- Chairman instructs Mr. Jodoin to not submit any Reserve Fund Transfer requests in the future without proper documentation, or the amount requested filled out.
 - Scott motions to transfer \$ 260 to EMA- Heat, Light, & Power. Money is limited to NStar Gas bills only. Seconded by Terry. Vote: Unanimous

- Chairman presents Reserve Fund Transfer request for Electricity in the amount of \$ 400.
- Chairman asks Mr. Jodoin how long they have had the light at 65 Mill Road.
 - Mr. Jodoin states it has been up several months.
 - Mr. Jodoin states he didn't ask for the light to be put up.
 - Mr. Jodoin states there are 2 meters on the building, 1 for the EMA and 1 for the Water Dept.
 - Mr. Jodoin states the light was put up and tied into the EMA meter.
- Chairman questions Mr. Jodoin not knowing about the light installation.
- Chairman states that he understands the DPW told Mr. Jodoin to move the EMA's stuff or pay for a light.
 - Mr. Jodoin denies knowledge of this.
- Chairman states he will call the DPW tomorrow and ask them.
 - Mr. Jodoin states that originally the light was on 24 hours a day.
 - Mr. Jodoin states he then had the DPW put the light on a motion sensor.
 - Scott motions to transfer \$ 80.39 to EMA Electricity. Seconded Terry. Vote: Unanimous
- 7:46 PM. Mr. Jodoin leaves the meeting.
- Mr. Espindola presents the Selectmen's Article 26- Capital Planning
 - Mr. Espindola explains that the Article is a combination of the DOR recommendations for Capital Planning and the Town of Mattapoissett plan.
 - Committee includes a member with business & financial experience, and a member with construction management experience.
 - Committee would also include the Town Finance Director and the Town Administrator in nonvoting roles.
 - Mr. Espindola states this committee makeup works well in Mattapoissett.
 - Mr. Espindola presents a sheet with quotes of support from business community people he has spoken to.
 - The Capital Planning Committee would be a recommending body.
 - Terry asks why the Finance Director, with direct knowledge of all Town finances, is only a nonvoting member.
 - Chairman states that the Capital Planning Committee is "the tail that wags the dog". States what works in Mattapoissett may not work in Fairhaven.
 - Mr. Espindola states that the town officials have been in office for years and we have no Capital Plan now.
 - The committee would be an additional resource to help the process.

- Chairman questions why the School Department has a representative, but no other dept. does.
 - Mr. Espindola states the schools have large expenditures to maintain the buildings.
- Chairman asks, if that is the case, than why not the DPW or other departments.
- Chairman states the bulk of the work will not be done by the committee.
- Mr. Espindola states the department heads would put the projects together.
- Chairman states he has a problem with citizens bringing the projects forward. Citizens shouldn't decide on the projects.
- Mr. Espindola states citizens would decide to spend the money wisely. Find most efficient way to spend the money. The committee can be redirected by Town Meeting.
- Chairman states the decision needs to be made on what needs to be done, not simply what they want to do.
- Mr. Espindola states he hasn't researched any communities, other than Mattapoissett.
- Chairman states he has advised Mr. Espindola that he is not endorsing the Mattapoissett plan.
- Mr. Espindola states he does endorse the Mattapoissett plan.
- Chairman states he is not picking on Mattapoissett. He just feels it will not work in Fairhaven.
- Mr. Espindola states he feels it has a chance to succeed in Fairhaven.
- Chairman states he doesn't want to see citizens-at-large on the committee.
- Lisa asks if there will be a monetary cost associated with this committee.
- Chairman states at some point the committee will have a budget. Compares it to the budget of the Planning Board or Board of Appeals.
- Terry states she has no problem with someone from the Schools on the committee. She feels there should be someone from each department on it. It not, take the school rep. off.
- Mr. Espindola states he could remove the 3 citizens-at-large. Where do you draw the line? Mr. Espindola feels you need someone from the business community on.
- Chairman states he feels they should all be citizens residing in Fairhaven.
- Mr. Espindola agrees.
- Terry feels those vying for the money shouldn't be on the committee.
- Mr. Espindola reads from the DOR Capital Planning Guidelines.
- Chairman states that done correctly the committee could work. Chairman states you need the right people on the committee. Chairman states that having people that are vying for the money, on the committee, is a good thing.

It breeds trust and communication between departments.

- Terry again states her belief that if you have 1 department represented, you should have all.
- Chairman states that you could have a school representative, DPW, and general government.
- Chairman states he doesn't want a fifteen member committee.
- Kathi states she thinks there should be a residency requirement for lines 2, 3, 4, & 5 in the section explaining the committee makeup.
- Mr. Espindola states that they could specify residency.
- Mr. Espindola states the DOR guidelines have a member of the Finance Committee on the committee.
- Chairman states they would have to change the Finance Committee bylaw first. Chairman states he doesn't believe you should sit on a committee that you are going to have to make a recommendation on.
- More discussion about the makeup of the committee.
- Mr. Espindola states he has no problem being part of the committee for the long term.
- Chairman states he can't see this working in the long term.
- Scott questions all capital improvements going thru the committee. States this will change a lot. All capital Articles would go thru committee.
- Mr. Espindola states that is the way it would work.
- Chairman states there is nothing wrong with this. Finance Committee would still review all items.
- Terry clarifies that TM still has to approve all spending.
- Chairman states we need some kind of a plan.
- Mr. Espindola states he is willing to make changes. He wants this to succeed.
- Chairman states that this kind of work should start right after TM. Once budget season starts, people don't have time to devote to this type of work also. States that of all the government changes proposed, this one would be more easily modified afterwards. More so than the items requiring special legislation.

8:35 PM. Mr. Espindola leaves the meeting. Chairman calls a recess. Back in session @ 8:40 PM.

- Back to Article 25- IT Advisory Committee
 - Discussion of the size of the committee.
 - John M. states the town could hire an IT consultant.
 - Kathi asks why not have a full time IT person on staff.

- Chairman states at some point someone needs to decide what it would take to tie the whole town together.
- Some decisions have to be made on an administrative level.
- Changes in data processing department should have been made years ago.
 - Terry motions to recommend Indefinite Postponement. Seconded by Scott.
Vote: Unanimous
- Scott feels there should be a smaller committee.
- Chairman states that the government belongs to the people, but people can't run the government.
- Chairman states he never got a reference from the TGSC on where this fits into the Town Code.

- Article 31- Restructuring the Board of Public works
 - Chairman states he feels the TA has too much power over the DPW.
 - Chairman states he feels there is confusion in town about a strong TA.
 - Chairman states he feels the TA should have control over the day to day operations.
 - Chairman asks why have an elected board with no power.
 - Chairman states she has no problem abolishing the BPW.
 - Chairman states some saw this as a compromise.
 - Chairman states if they are to act as a citizens complaint board, they will advocate for the citizens with no concern for the budget.
 - Bob asks if the TA Article passes and this doesn't, will the TA not have control over the DPW?
 - Chairman states the TA Article is an executive secretary on steroids.
Chairman states we need a strong TA.
DOR report is driving everything, but people are not following the guidelines.
 - Scott feels too much power is given to the TA and nothing to the Board.
 - Terry motions to recommend Indefinite Postponement. Seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous

- Chairman states that luckily we have a good BPW Superintendent. We need a better structure
- Chairman states the TA Article and the BPW Article should have been written as 1 Article.
- Chairman states the TGSC is having 1 more public hearing tonight, and still may make changes.
- No one from the public is supporting a middle ground for the BPW.

- Discussion of the STM.
- Article 1- Town Charges
 - Still waiting for a better Veterans number.
 - Chairman makes it clear we are not proposing coming up short for the Veterans. We are just waiting for the most accurate number.
- Article 6b. CPC Town Hall Table Restoration Project
 - Terry motions to recommend Indefinite Postponement. Seconded by John M.
Vote: Unanimous
- Article 13- West Island Defibrillator
 - Chairman states he is tempted to recommend IP and force the BPW to amend their budget in the Annual TM.
 - Chairman states that TM will have enough on its plate with other changes, that day.
 - Bob asks if the beach permit money goes to the department or the general fund.
 - Chairman states it goes to the general fund.
 - Terry asks if someone will be trained for the device.
 - Chairman states it is automatic and will be used by the lifeguards.
 - Terry motions for \$ 1,245. Seconded by Scott. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 16- Union Wharf Land Exchange
 - Committee stills needs explanation of this.
- Discussion of Article 17 again.
- Terry asks if there is money to do the HMS floors.
 - Chairman explains there is money available.
 - Chairman believes this should be done to maintain the school.
- Kathi motions to adjourn @ 9:26 PM. Seconded by Terry. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado
 Finance Committee Secretary
 (accepted 4-24-2014)