

Town of Fairhaven

Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting for <May 1, 2014>at the BPW Administration Building, Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

Members in attendance:

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

Town of Fairhaven:

Jeffery Osuch- Executive secretary

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 24, 2014. Seconded by Terry.

Vote: Unanimous

- Mr. Osuch passes out copies of the new signed Fire Contract, the prior contract with addendums, and the Memorandum of Agreement.
- Chairman passes an explanation of the Mattapoisett WWTP Contract, from Vincent Furtado.
- Chairman states the Fire Contract has been totally restructured and reformatted.
- Chairman states for the record and for the benefit of those watching the meeting on TV, the Finance Committee is receiving these documents, for the first time, 2 days before Town Meeting.

Chairman calls a recess @ 7:04 PM. to make copies. Back in session @ 7:09 PM.

- Chairman starts going over items left on the STM.
- Article 1

#1. Veteran's Services, b. Purchase of Services

- Chairman distributes 2 letters from the Veteran's Agent, in reference to this category.
- Discussion of now moving \$ 30,000, with \$ 25,000 transferred from Other Charges/Expenses and \$ 5,000 from surplus revenue.
- Chairman questions the estimates changing every 2 weeks.
- Committee makes it clear they would support making up any shortfall from the Reserve Fund Account.
 - Scott motions to reconsider Article 1, #1. Veteran's Services b. Purchase of Services and amend previous vote to \$ 30,000 with \$ 25,000 transferred from FY2014 appropriation for Veteran's Services Section 41.d, Other Charges/Expenses and transferring \$ 5,000 from Surplus Revenue. Seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous

- Article 12-Town Government Study Committee Continuation

- Discussion of the TGSC survey and budget for FY15.
- John M. relays that he set an email to Mr. Washko, and received a reply.
- While John M. doesn't have a physical copy of the email with him, he reads it from his phone.
- In the email, Mr. Washko replies that they are still compiling the results of the survey. The survey was used to gauge the areas that needed study. When the needs were determined, the data discovery phase was suspended in order to work on those areas.
- Mr. Washko also states that the money was used for the survey and legal expenses. Mr. Washko expects more legal expenses this year because they are expecting a greater number of Articles.
- Pat asks if the committee needs to be reappointed.
 - Chairman states they are a TM committee and are in effect until TM dissolves them.
 - Chairman states it would take a formal Article to dissolve them.
- Chairman states the Selectmen should be pushed to form a Charter Commission.
- Lisa states that John M.'s questions didn't seem to be answered and they don't have anything to show us.

- Article 16- Union Wharf Land Exchange

- Chairman states he is not happy with the status of this but he doesn't want to lose the grant.
- Terry questions waiting for the appraisal and why it hasn't been done yet.
- Chairman states if the Article fails he doesn't want to hear from anyone on this committee if more money is needed for repair or demo of the building.
- Chairman states, to the Town's defense, you can control only so much of a negotiation.

- Lisa asks for clarifications that the value of the swap has to be made equal.
 - Chairman states yes. Town will get money for the difference.
 - Mr. Osuch reads the formal motion.
 - Chairman states there may be people that will argue about this anyway.
 - Mr. Osuch states he believes the grant will go away if not used within 2 years.
 - Chairman states he believes it would take \$ 10,000 in land court to settle this otherwise.
 - Scott motions to recommend Adoption. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 17-Demolition of School Portables and 87 Main Street
 - Mr. Osuch states the number has been corrected to read 87 Main Street instead of the original 89 Main Street.
 - The committee thanks John M. for saving 89 Main Street.
- Committee moves on to the ATM.
 - Article 4, #6 Treasurer a. Salaries and Wages
 - Chairman states the Treasurer has settled her contract to take over the Collector duties and this is the amount settled on.
 - Scott motions to reconsider the prior vote for \$ 182,475 and amend to \$ 183,708. Seconded by Terry. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 12- Waste Water Treatment Contract Amendment
 - Scott motions to recommend Adoption. Seconded by Terry. Vote: Unanimous

7:37 PM. Chairman calls a recess to make copies. Back in session @ 7:45 PM.

- Article 26- Capital Planning Committee
 - Chairman distributes the latest version. Chairman states that this would be a bylaw.
 - Chairman states he believes this is workable.
 - Pat states that it doesn't look much different from the last version.
 - Chairman states, because it is a bylaw, it can be "tweaked" over time.
 - Scott states he supports it.
 - Chairman states, you can have any plan, but the plan is to have people abide by the time frames set by it.
 - Kathi asks the Chairman to explain the term "place holder" for the viewing public.
 - Chairman states it is holding a spot on a Warrant without actually having any language for the Article.
 - Pat points out that Section S-2 only makes reference to Town Administrator.
 - Mr. Osuch will recommend adding "or executive secretary".

- Discussion that the committee recommendations would still go in front of Town Meeting.
 - Discussion of whether trucks and police cruisers would fall within the Capital Planning Committee.
 - Pat asks if the committee would present to the Selectmen or to Town Meeting.
 - Chairman states it would work the same as presently. The committee would come before the Selectmen and the Finance Committee.
 - Terry asks if these items would come before Article 4 at Town Meeting.
 - Chairman states no, not necessarily.
 - Pat asks again about replacing police cruisers and ambulances at intervals, as we do now.
 - Chairman states it could be worded to replace them at the same intervals as we do now. It would be easy to incorporate it into the plan.
 - Kathi asks if we have any more information about the nonvoting members mentioned in Section S-2 A.8.
 - Chairman states, if they don't have a vote, what difference does it make.
 - Terry asks if the Water and Sewer Enterprises would be part of the Capital Plan.
 - Chairman states yes, but the funds would be from the separate enterprises.
 - John M. asks about an operating budget.
 - Chairman states there is no budget now, but they will need an operating budget.
 - Chairman states it would be money worth spending.
 - Discussion of inventory of the Town equipment assets.
 - John M. asks about a town asset tag system.
 - Mr. Osuch states the 1st motion read will be - move to wave the reading of the amended motion for the record.
If TM doesn't want to deal with the changes, the Article will be passed over.
 - Kathi asks again why they have no budget.
 - Chairman states it is not set up yet.
 - Scott motions to recommend Adoption subject to rectifying the issue with section S-2. Seconded by John M. Vote: Motion passes 7 to 1 with Terry opposed.
- Discussion of the Fire Contract
 - Chairman states this is the 1st contract that he has ever seen laid out in alphabetical order.
 - Terry questions if it was done to make it easier to find sections.
 - Mr. Osuch explains that salaries have the same increase as the other unions -1/2%, 1%, 1%.

- Mr. Osuch states that the EMT Paramedic stipends will increase \$ 1,000 the 1st year, \$ 500 the 2nd year, and \$ 500 the 3rd year.
The EMT Basic will increase \$ 500, \$ 500, \$ 500.
- The stipend is now added to the base salary over the course of the year. That means it is included in overtime, sick leave, vacations, etc.
- Discussion of wages and increases each year.
- Discussion of OT on a stipend.
- Pat asks why the EMT's were focused on so much.
 - Chairman states because of the money the ambulance is bringing in.
 - Mr. Osuch states it is because of the Police getting the Quinn Bill money.
 - Chairman states the EMT's get paid to take their training.
- Chairman states this is why we should fund the floors and doors.
- Mr. Osuch states the lion's share of the money to fund the increase will come from the Ambulance Fund.
- Chairman states the Ambulance Fund was originally set up to fund equipment needed for the ambulances.
- Chairman states if employees are feeling entitled to the money their dept. brings in, the building commissioner should be making \$ 250,000 a year.
- Chairman states this is another example of why the Town needs a labor council. The Selectmen should be taken out of negotiations.
- Chairman asks Mr. Osuch about the bylaw for contracts.
 - Mr. Osuch states the contracts are supposed to be available 10 days before TM.
- Terry asks if we are only able to vote the contract up or down.
 - Chairman states if you vote anything other than \$.00, you are agreeing to the terms.

8:45 PM. Chairman calls a recess. Back in session @ 8:49 PM.

- Chairman states we are meeting at 8:00 AM. the morning of TM. Asks Mr. Osuch when the Selectmen can meet with us to explain the reason for accepting the contract.
 - Mr. Osuch states that Mr. Murphy was the Selectman who negotiated the contract.
He states he will ask the Selectmen to meet at 8:15 AM.
- Mr. Osuch goes over the changes on the Memorandum of Agreement.
- Chairman states when you add it up, it is approximately 4% increase for the year.
- Pat asks what the Town received from this contract.
 - Mr. Osuch states that items #11 - #16 on the MOU were items the Fire Chief wanted.
- Pat asks what if we vote \$ 0.
 - Chairman states that the 1/2, 1, 1% would probably be automatic, because the other unions got it.

- Chairman states the language is already done.
 - Chairman also states he believes the stipend language would also be awarded.
 - Terry states once the contracts are signed, we have no options.
 - Chairman states it would go to arbitration and the Fair Labor Council.
 - Mr. Osuch states that if the parties agree on the language, the Fair Labor Council will not get involved.
 - Pat states he feels like the money is double dipping.
 - Chairman doesn't like the OT on the stipend.
 - Mr. Osuch states that all future hires have to be either an EMT or Paramedic.
 - Kathi asks, then why is the stipend required?
 - Mr. Osuch gives the history of the stipend and paramedic program.
 - Chairman states it is another case of once in the contract, you can't get it out.
 - Pat states the stipend is a 20% increase and asks about the waving of the bylaw.
 - Chairman states it is up to TM to wave the bylaw.
 - Lisa asks about TM's choices with the money only, if the contract is done.
 - Chairman states it could go back to the table to negotiate then the Fair Labor Council.
 - Mr. Osuch reads from the section referring to the appropriation.
 - Bob clarifies, with Mr. Osuch, the increase to the ATM numbers.
 - Kathi discusses the contract negotiation process and finding a new procedure.
 - Chairman states this is why the Town needs to use labor council. Selectmen should not be involved.
 - Pat again asks about voting a lower figure.
 - Chairman states you would accept the contract and then be short of manpower, which would raise the overtime.
 - Chairman states if you vote a lower figure you are accepting the contract, and he doesn't want the shifts to run short.
 - Pat brings up the 3rd ambulance.
 - Chairman states there should be a true cost analysis.
 - Most of the 3rd ambulance runs are for just transports.
 - Chairman states you can't take everything out of the Ambulance Fund for operations.
 - Mr. Osuch states we used to hold \$ 50,000 each year, to build up for the ambulance purchase after 5 years. Last year and this year it is down to \$ 45,000.
- Chairman advises members to look over contract.
 - If it goes to arbitration, it could take 2 years.

- Discussion of the Ambulance Fund again.
 - Discussion of government changing, because it is not sustainable.
State Aid is getting lower and lower.
 - Discussion of the Finance Committee moving to take the TGSC Articles out of order.
 - Scott brings up the Personnel Study on the STM.
 - Chairman states it doesn't belong on the STM.
 - Mr. Osuch and the Chairman discuss meeting with the Selectmen on Saturday morning.
 - Chairman states at least the Fire Contract will give us some financial stability for a couple of years.
Not happy, but what can we do.
 - Members state they are tired of hearing that.
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- Lisa motions to adjourn @ 9:41 PM. Seconded by Terry. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado
Finance Committee Secretary

(accepted 6-12-2014)