

Town of Fairhaven

Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting for <April 2, 2015> at the BPW Administration Building, 5 Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

Members in attendance:

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

Town of Fairhaven:

Jeffery Osuch- Executive secretary

Wendy Graves- Collector/Treasurer/Finance Director

Anne Carreiro- Town Accountant

Town Government Study Committee

Phil Washko- Chairman

Bernard Roderick

Richard Griffiths

Mark Badwey

Siobhan Henebury

Dick Douglass

Brian Wood

Board of Selectmen

Robert Espindola- Chairman

Charles Murphy

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 March 26, 2015. Seconded by Pat.

Vote: Unanimous

- Mr. Osuch distributes copies of the updated Article spreadsheet, and an updated Article 4 spreadsheet, updated draft of the STM within the ATM Warrant & spreadsheet, and a Ambulance Fund breakdown sheet.
- Also distributed by the Chairman, but not acted on, where Reserve Fund Transfer requests from Selectmen, Highway Department, Water Department, and Sewer Department.
- Meeting with the TGSC.
- Discussion of Article 29- TGSC- Information Technology Assessment
 - Mr. Washko distributes copies of emails between him and one of the IT assessment companies.
 - Mr. Washko states the Town is in need of an IT Assessment. We need to know what we have and what needs to be replaced.
 - Chairman asks, if the Selectmen have voted against the Article, why should we recommend it
 - Mr. Washko states the Article would direct the Selectmen to do it.
 - Chairman states Town Meeting cannot direct the Selectmen to do something they do not want to do.
 - Discussion back and forth about whether the study is needed or not.
 - Selectmen Espindola states they would have loved to do it this year, but it is not a priority this year.
 - Chairman states we are not going to tie up money the Selectmen are not going to spend.
 - Scott motions to Recommend Indefinite Postponement. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- Discussion of Article 31-TGSC- Fin Com Restructuring
 - Mr. Washko states they have studied other towns and felt 7 members were appropriate, appointed by the moderator, all at large.
 - Chairman states he feels there should be a geographical requirement with the appointments.
 - Mr. Washko states he feels the Moderator will see that the geographical balance is addressed.
 - Chairman asks what they consider "qualified".
 - Mr. Washko states they have left that up to the Moderator, to allow him to fill gaps in "viewpoint and education".
 - Lisa questions the education and viewpoint statement.
 - Chairman states that 13 members isn't working now, isn't opposed to the number or the Moderator appointing. More discussion of no geographical requirement.

- Chairman states the TGSC omitted the Moderator from the Term Limit Article, but gave him all the power over the Fin Com.
- Discussion of the Moderator having power over the Fin Com and what has happened in other communities.
- Chairman states the Precinct Chairperson appointments aren't working now. States it used to be the job of the Precinct Chair to actually go out and recruit people for the position.
- Discussion of the appointing authority controlling the committee.
- Discussion of Article 33- Town Meeting Bylaw Change
 - Mr. Washko states that looking at all other town committees, a 50% quorum is the norm.
He states they are planning on amending the required quorum, on TM floor, to 40%.
 - Chairman asks how increasing the quorum would increase attendance? Brings up other communities that have issues making a quorum.
 - Mr. Washko states that 100 people out of 429 is insignificant.
 - Mr. Douglas states that vacating seats after 3 missed meetings should increase attendance.
 - Chairman states he would have rather seen the size of TM reduced. Feels an increased quorum will cause problems with holding meetings. Will cause adjournments.
 - Discussion of small turnouts for general elections.
 - Chairman states more money should be budgeted for TM if this passes, because additional meetings will have to be held.
- Article 32- TGSC- Term Limit
 - Chairman states Fin Com will not make a recommendation on this. There is no money connection.
 - Scott motions to Yield to Petitioner. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- Pat wants to clarify the TM quorum issue. The current quorum is 100 and this would increase it.

7:34 PM. TGSC leaves the meeting.

- Meeting with Anne Carreiro- Town accountant:
 - Chairman reminds committee we discussed the assistant's position at the last meeting. States that this department needs to be looked at, at some point, to possibly update staffing and equipment levels.
 - Scott motions for the following amounts:

a. Salary	\$103,230
b. Purchase of Services	\$90
c. Supplies	\$200

- d. Other Charges/Expenses \$970
- e. Capital Outlay \$00
- All amounts seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous

7:38PM. Chairman calls a recess. Back in session @ 7:45 PM.

- Chairman states the Selectmen have voted 2 to 1 in favor of the additional position for the ambulance.
States the need can be argued either way.
We will have to revisit the vote on Article 13- Ambulance Stabilization Fund.
 - Chairman and Mr. Osuch run down the numbers on the Ambulance Fund breakdown sheet.
 - Chairman recommends that we at least establish the Stabilization Fund and put the remaining \$48,771.96 in it.
 - Unanimous motion and unanimous second to rescind the previous vote for Article 13. Vote: Unanimous
 - Pat asks where the extra money for the position is coming from now.
 - Chairman states we should be backing \$150,000 out of the Ambulance Fund, for the new ambulance.
If the amount is taking out at the beginning of the year, the position won't work.
 - Lisa states in past years we were told too much has been taken out of that account.
 - Chairman states they have been overspending for years.
 - Pat mentions the issue of receipts coming in less than projections.
 - Chairman states that the Selectmen that voted for it will have to explain if the position doesn't pay for itself.
 - Ms. Graves states if the Ambulance Fund goes into the negative, it will come off of the free cash.
 - Pat states that we never saw an accounting of the 3rd ambulance covering it's expenses.
 - Chairman states the ambulance service is bringing in more money but is also costing more.
 - Scott motions for \$48,771.96 for Article 13- Ambulance Stabilization. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 5- FY16 General Fund Capital Plan
 - E. Police Pick-up Truck
 - Pat states he did speak to the Police Chief.
 - Chief states 3 years ago they used to have an Expedition truck that they were able to use to transport larger items. They no longer have that truck.
 - Chief states they need the space to transport evidence, traffic cones & barriers, etc.

- Pat thought of having a vehicle that could serve both purposes, but it doesn't seem like that is possible.
 - The committee thanks Pat for his research.
 - Scott motions for \$36,928 for Article 5e. Police Pickup Truck. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 8- Capital Stabilization Fund
 - Scott motions for \$400,000. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 33- Town Meeting Bylaw Change
 - Chairman states he doesn't see the need to change the quorum. Will make it difficult for the afternoon session. We haven't been close to 50% in the afternoon, in years.
 - Pat questions the TGSC lowering the amount to 40% on TM floor.
 - Chairman states we are voting on what is given to us now.
 - Chairman states that a town with an Open Town Meeting requires only 100 for a quorum.
 - Discussion of missing meetings and publishing names of members that miss meetings.
 - Scott motions to Recommend Indefinite Postponement. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 31- TGSC- Fin Com Restructuring
 - Chairman states the Moderator appointing with no geographical requirement, makes the Moderator position a very powerful one.
 - Scott motions to Recommend Indefinite Postponement. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- The committee returns to Article 4
 - 2. Selectmen
 - Scott motions for the following amounts:

b. Salary-Other	\$337,858
c. Purchase of Services	\$8,037
d. Supplies	\$4,175
e. Other Charges/Expenses	\$4,565
f. Capital Outlay	\$7,500
 - All amounts seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
 - 6. Treasurer
 - Scott motions for the following amounts:

a. Salary and Wages	\$186,743
b. Purchase of Services	\$8,930
c. Supplies	\$700
d. Other Charges/Expenses	\$2,811

- e. Capital Outlay \$00
 - All amounts seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- 10. Town Collector
 - Lisa asks about the increase in postage.
 - Ms. Graves states she is sending out reminders for late bills.
 - Scott motions for the following amounts:
 - a. Salary and Wages \$119,706
 - b. Purchase of Services \$28,800
 - c. Supplies \$4,700
 - d. Other Charges/Expenses \$2,672
 - e. Capital Outlay \$00
 - All amounts seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- #20. Legal Expense
 - Discussion of rate increase.
 - Chairman states we have a higher legal expense than other towns.
 - Scott motions for \$135,000. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- #25. Police Department
 - Chairman asks the Selectmen why they are cutting \$6,000. Asks if they will supplement it if they run short at the end of the year.
 - Selectman Espindola states the Police Chief has said he can make it.
 - Chairman states the Fire Chief has not lived within his Salary budget in years.
 - Selectmen Espindola states the Selectmen are trying to cut spending.
 - Pat asks how the Chief is going make do with the cut.
 - Selectman Espindola states that the Chief says he has 4 new recruits coming on and can make it with the cut.
 - Chairman states the committee will support it if no more is approved at the end.
 - Selectman Murphy states that he will not support refusing the Police if they need more at the end of the year.
States the Chief has said he would do his best.
 - Chairman states he knows the Police Chief will but the Fire Chief won't.
 - Pat asks, if we fund this, will we go over the spending figure?
 - Chairman states we are taking more out of the Ambulance Fund.
 - Bob asks if the schools are getting their money back also.
 - Chairman states we will get to that.
 - Scott motions for the following amounts:
 - a. Salary and Wages \$2,877,395
 - b. Purchase of Services \$105,924
 - c. Supplies \$62,400

- d. Other Charges/Expenses \$2,796
 - All amounts seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
 - Chairman tells the Selectmen, if they are not going to hold them to a number, then it is not a true budget.
- #26 Fire Department
 - Chairman states Fire Chief hasn't lived within his overtime budget in years.
 - Discussion of using the Selectmen's reduced amount.
 - Pat asks if adding a position will reduce the overtime.
 - Chairman says no, because the chief stated the new position was a daytime position to allow the firefighters to get work done that was not getting done.
 - Bob asks if we go with the lower amount, will we hold them to that amount of salary.
 - Chairman states he never makes his salary figure.
 - Scott motions for the following amounts:

a. Salary and Wages	\$1,947,625
b. Purchase of Services	\$75,621
c. Supplies	\$60,134
1. Gasoline	\$20,600
d. Other Charges/Expenses	\$6,450
e. Capital Outlay	\$9,000
 - All amounts seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- #39 Sewer Division
 - Scott motions for the following amounts:

a. Salary and Wages	\$927,456
b. Purchase of Services	\$238,600
c. Supplies	\$148,000
d. Other Charges/Expenses	\$00
e. Capital Outlay	\$93,666
f. Sludge Disposal	\$220,000
 - All amounts seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- #42 Elementary/High School
 - Chairman states the cut back was made just to hit a number.
 - Pat states it is the smallest increase, by percentage.
 - Chairman states we are still at 80% of estimated receipts and 85% of surplus revenue, which is a huge accomplishment.
 - Chairman states we are getting closer and closer to net school spending.
 - Scott motions for \$18,737,194. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous

- #43 GNBVRT High School
 - Bob states that he has the appearance of a conflict, because he is on the advisory committee for the carpentry department, but he is allowed to vote.
 - Scott motions for \$2,213,868. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
 - Chairman states that this number may not be hard and fast.
- #51MA Employment Security
 - Scott motions to revise the previous vote of \$125,000 to \$115,000. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous

9:07 PM. Chairman calls a recess. Back in session @ 9:19 PM.

- Moving on to the Special Town Meeting:
 - Article 9- Non-Union Personnel Review
 - Selectman Murphy and Wendy Graves present the Article.
 - Ms. Graves states that people have been coming before the Personnel Board to have their job reviewed, and she is afraid of people moving out of their level and throwing off the matrix.
 - Selectman Murphy feels it is important to have this done when the TA comes on board.
 - Chairman asks if they have a list of employees that will be reviewed.
 - Ms. Graves states she could get it to him.
 - Chairman states he thinks there are some positions that do not need to be done- life guards, call fire fighters, etc.
 - Selectman Espindola says the number of positions included is stated at the bottom of the 1st page of the proposal passed out by Selectman Murphy.
 - Chairman states the Article should read "not to exceed \$8,000".
 - Selectman Murphy states he would like to get the job descriptions done for the TA.
 - Chairman asks what happens if the employee is deemed to be overpaid?
 - Selectman Murphy states the TA would handle that.
 - Selectman Espindola states that people have come before him for reclassification, and he has wanted to hold off until he could see "the big picture". He states he has cut other things that were important to him in order to get this done.
 - Chairman discusses Wellness Program.
 - Pat refers to the DOR report, and this being done by the TA and the department heads. Asks if this is "putting the cart before the horse".
 - Chairman starts a discussion about the IT Assessment.

Passes out a sheet with opinions from committee member John Mota, who is in the IT business.

- Selectman Espindola discusses consulting services for the IT issues.
 - Bob asks if once the job descriptions are done, will this settle the matter and everyone will have to live with them?
 - Selectman Murphy states that someone shadows the employee to see what they actually do throughout the day.
 - Chairman states the review will not get done unless we spend the money.
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- Chairman thanks the 2 Selectmen for attending the meeting.
 - Selectman Murphy states he should have presented the review proposal to the committee last year.
 - Chairman states the Selectmen did a good job on the budget, but must keep with the numbers in the upcoming years.

9:51 PM. Pat motions to adjourn. Seconded by John M. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado
Finance Committee Secretary
(accepted 4-9-2015)