

Town of Fairhaven

Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting for <March 16, 2017> at the Jeffery W. Osuch BPW Administration Building, 5 Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

Members in attendance:

Chairman-Scott Fernandes, Robert A. Furtado, Padraic Elliott, Kathi Carter, Lisa Plante, Tracy Diggins, Bernard F. Roderick, Thomas Alden

Town of Fairhaven:

Mark Rees- Town Administrator

Wendy Graves- Collector/Treasurer/Finance Director

Michael Myers- Chief of Police

Timothy Francis- Fire Chief

Todd Correia- Deputy Fire Chief

Meeting was not covered by government access television.

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 Bernie to accept the minutes from March 9, 2017. Seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous

- Meeting with Chief Francis and Deputy Chief Correia concerning the Fire Dept. budget:
 - Chief Francis states he is asking for an additional Firefighter/EMT for the day shift, to be able to run the 3rd ambulance.
The Chief states he will split the extra shift with the additional firefighter they received 2 years ago, in order to have coverage 7 days a week, during the day shift.
 - Deputy Chief Correia distributes a sheet showing the increase in ambulance runs, and explains it. Sheet shows increase of 3.5% in ambulance runs.
 - Discussion of the Outstanding Balance column of the spreadsheet, and the dept.'s success at collections.

- Chief Francis states they generally collect 50% of the outstanding balances.
He states they have recently decided to start using a collection company for this.
- Discussion of the process of writing the specifications for purchasing a new ambulance and how they arrive at the estimated cost.
- Pat asks about the condition of the ambulance that is 10 years old now.
Chief Francis states it is holding fine now and will be moved to 3rd run status when the new ambulance comes on line.
- Chairman asks how much money is being used from the Ambulance Fund for salaries.
Mr. Rees states that the money is now being treated like General Fund money.
- Pat asks what would happen if they didn't have the 3rd ambulance.
Chief Francis states they would lose those runs to mutual aid.
- The salaries category includes salary increases for the new contract and the new firefighter position.
- Vehicle maintenance has been increased to reflect the increased repairs.
- Service & Maintenance increase reflects an increase in those contracts.
- Replacement equipment includes the increase to replace 3 Toughbook laptop computers.
- Training- Cont. Educ. is increased to cover the cost of Coast Guard certification and the expense of sending 2 new firefighters to the academy.
- Lisa questions the year to date amount for Equipment for Personnel.
Chief Francis states they usually hold off until the end of the year to make purchases.
- Mr. Rees distributes his spreadsheet showing the Gasoline amounts.
- Pat asks what the expenditures related to the 3rd ambulance are.
Chief Francis states he does not have that information separated out now.

- Discussion of the Fire Alarm Dept:
- Pat questions the Repairs & Main. category increase.
Chief Francis states it is because the equipment is getting older.
- Replacement Equipment is to cover replacement of department pagers. The older units are no longer repairable.
- Bob questions any savings in this department since the Town installed the wireless alarm system.
Chief Francis states the Town is saving, but the department is still working removing the old wiring in Town.

- Fire Dept. Capital Planning:
- IV Pumps for the ambulances- \$21,000 from the Ambulance Account. Chief Francis states the State requires 1 for each ambulance and a spare. Required by June 30th.

Discussion of it being an unfunded mandate.

- Ambulance Replacement- \$260,000-- \$161,183 from Ambulance Account \$98,817 from the Ambulance Stabilization Fund.
- Replace Ladder 1- \$925,000 from a 10 year Bond.
- Tom starts discussion of how the truck was specified.
Chief Francis states the new Ladder Truck will be a heavy duty tandem rear axle truck that will be capable of also carrying all the equipment that is now on the Heavy Rescue Truck as well as the Cascade System for refilling the air tanks.
- Discussion of borrowing for truck rather than taking it out of the Capital Stabilization Fund.
- Mr. Rees suggests the borrowing to make the Stabilization Fund sustainable in coming years.
- Discussion of building Debt Service into the budget in order to be able to do large projects in the future.
- Pat asks the Chief if the new truck will fit in the station.
Chief Francis states yes.
- Lisa asks if the dept. can do without the Heavy Rescue Truck.
Chief states yes. They will consolidate the equipment in one truck.
- Discussion of trying for a grant again.
Chief Francis states they are trying for a grant again, this time with a 25% match.
He believes the higher match may give them a better chance of getting thru to the next round.

- 7:58 PM. Chief & Deputy Chief leave the meeting.

- Chief Myers presents the Police Dept. budget:
 - Ms. Graves distributes a revised sheet with the Salary and Overtime separated.
 - Salaries includes the new contract and the new command structure.
 - Mr. Rees states the Police are close to settling.
Discussion of arbitration if they don't settle.
Mr. Rees states he doesn't expect it to come to that. Also states that Town Meeting is responsible for voting on the new contract.
 - Mr. Rees states Chief Myers had requested an additional officer, but he is not recommending it.
 - Chief Myers states he will lose a patrol officer, to become a sergeant, to oversee the Animal Control operation. He wants to replace the patrol position.
 - Lengthy discussion of this proposal and supervising Animal Control .
 - In the end, Chief Myers states he can live with Mr. Rees' budget recommendation.

- Operations budget:
 - Medical supplies is up to cover the replacement of automatic difibulators that are in the police cars. They plan on replacing 4 per year.
 - Service & Maint. agreements is up because of the standard increase in contracts each year and also to cost of the dept. becoming accredited.
 - Tom asks what Keeper of Lockup is?
Chief Myers explains that is the cost of housing prisoners at the Ash Street jail overnight.

- Police Capital Plan:
 - 2 New police cruisers- \$80,000 from Free Cash
 - Radio/communication system- \$250,000 from Free Cash
Chief Myers explains that the existing radio system is outdated and Verizon will no longer service the wiring.
This would allow the Police to use space on the Fire Dept. system, but Police would still be separate from Fire.
Chief Myers states the trend is to move to a regional system.
Chairman asks if this can wait until we know if the dispatch would be regionalized?
Chief Myers states he should know in the next year.
Bob asks if we would still share the system with Acushnet and Mattapoisett.
Chief Myers states we would have our own system.
Mr. Rees states Chief Myers had originally requested this for FY19, but the scoring of the Capital Planning Committee moved it to FY18.

- Pat asks Chief Myers his opinion of the value of the EMA.
 - Chief Myers states they provide lighting for emergencies and events and help with traffic control and support for special events.

- 8:44 PM. Chief Myers leaves the meeting.

- Lisa asks Mr. Rees if the Town employees are going to be listed by name, with their pay, in the Fin Com booklet.
 - Mr. Rees states he is not in favor of listing employees by name.
 - Brief discussion follows.

- Mr. Rees distributes the draft Warrant. States it has not yet been approved by the Selectmen.
 - Mr. Rees reviews the Warrant with the committee and briefly discusses some Articles.
 - There is no Special Town Meeting within the Annual this year.

FY17 Articles are for the present year. FY18 Articles are for next year.

- Chairman states next week BPW, Water, & Sewer will be in.
- Chairman states we may vote the Capital Planning next week, but will probably wait.

9:11 PM. Pat motions to adjourn. Seconded by the Chairman. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado
Finance Committee Secretary
(accepted 3-23-2017)