

**Minutes of the Finance & Advisory Board
Town of Georgetown
August 16, 2006**

Location – 3rd Floor Meeting Room – Town Hall

Members in Attendance – Jon Ayers, Phil Cannon, Jack L’Hommedieu, Robin O’Malley, Tim Ruh, Reggie Tardif

Members Absent – Sandy Gerraughty, Mike Sweat, Ruth Stewart

Guests Present – Matt Vincent, Steve Delaney,
From the Fire Department – Mike Anderson, Chris Dubois, Brian Coolidge

Minutes taken by Tim Ruh

Meeting called to Order at 7:00 PM

The July 13th, 2006 minutes were distributed and a motion was made by Tim Ruh to accept the minutes as written. Second by Jon Ayres. Vote 6-0 approved.

Items Discussed:

1. Master Box Bylaw Request – Mike Anderson, Chris Dubois and Brian Coolidge presented a letter (see attached) that outlines their request for the town to pass a by-law requiring an annual fee of \$250 to any party tied to the municipal fire alarm system. The three presented these facts:
 - a. Fire Department currently pays approximately \$10,000 per year to maintain the municipal fire alarm system. Last year’s maintenance was approximately \$8,000 but has been higher in prior years.
 - b. There are approximately 40 master boxes in commercial use and 60 street boxes.
 - c. The fire department no longer installs street boxes in new developments because of the widespread use of cell phones. Long term the strategy would be to eliminate all of the street boxes.
 - d. System has been around for 100 years and, at some point, needs to be replaced.
 - e. Fire Department recommends that beginning 7/1/07, a fee of \$250 be charged to parties tied to municipal system. They recommended that these fees be deposited into a newly established revolving account for the fire department overseen by the Finance & Advisory Board.
 - f. Matt Vincent spoke as a supporter of this measure to raise funds for the town.

Questions and action items –

- i. Questions about whether the fees should be deposited into the general fund or a special account as proposed ensued. Robin asked Steve Delaney to get a list of all revolving accounts already established in the town. One drawback of a revolving account is the Financial Management concerns.
- ii. Robin asked Mike Anderson to get the actual maintenance costs over the last few years and a listing of other town’s fees in the area and come to the next meeting to discuss.

- iii. Tim posed a question as to whether all entities including the school department and various non-profits in town would be assessed the fee. Mike Anderson responded that the intent was for commercial businesses only.
 - iv. Jack asked if the code required the use of a municipal box and whether the fees were detailed in the code. Mike Anderson replied that there is no detail fee structure in the code.
 - v. If after the next meeting the Board agrees, they would work on developing a warrant for the next town meeting.
- 2. Discussions with Steve Delaney and Matt Vincent on these topics
 - a. Matt wants to benchmark our town to other towns to understand the level of services that we currently provide and the cost to the taxpayers of those services – He mentioned North Reading and Wrentham as “lining up well” with Georgetown.” Board asked to have any material gathered be shared with Board to help with next year’s budget process.
 - b. Steve stated that the Union contract negotiations are going well and hopes to have all resolved by the fall meeting.
 - c. Discussed last minute spending by School Department – We spent a lot of time on the appropriateness of the spending – Steve stated that this is not a new phenomenon, and is quite routine in past years.
 - d. Steve stated that Jack Moultrie and he are working on the downtown construction project, looking at alternatives for Bailey Lane and there may be additional Chapter 90 funds coming in.
 - e. Board thought that it would be a good idea to have Jon Ayres join Tim at School Committee meetings.
 - f. Robin asked if Cynthia Bateman could present at our next Board meeting to explain the inter-workings of the revenue streams from the state.
 - g. Reggie asked Steve Delaney if the Voc Tech assessment for August was paid. Steve to research.
- 3. New Secretary for the Board

After a few minutes of discussion, Phil Cannon made a motion to appoint Tim Ruh as the new Secretary of the Board, Seconded by Jack L’Hommedieu. Vote 6-0 in favor.
- 4. Inventory of Town Equipment

Jon asked if there was an inventory of town equipment. Robin replied that the CIP should be maintaining but stated that the CIP currently has openings. As far as she knew, the last analysis was completed in 2003. Reggie would like a listing of workable police vehicles. Matt Vincent stated that he would ask the Chief of Police for a listing and he will also push to get the open CIP slots filled.
- 5. New business – Jack wanted to discuss the “last minute” school expenditures. After a few minutes of discussion, Jon Ayres made a motion to have Jack L’Hommedieu work with the town accountant and examine, make copies, and distribute to Board members large expenditures from the 6/29, 6/26 and 6/12 school expenditure vouchers. Phil Cannon seconded the motion. Vote of 6-0 in favor.
- 6. Reggie presented the schedule for the Association of Town Finance Committees Annual Meeting scheduled for 10/28/2006 at the Westford Regency Hotel. Reggie highly

recommended attendance. He thought that the dues were \$165 per year, but would bring more information at the next meeting.

7. New Business – Communication – Jon Ayres stated that one of our goals for this year should be to improve the communication between the Board and the Community. We need an email or web-site to allow residents to post questions to the Board. He applauded the fact that our meeting was being taped and hoped we could post information to a web-site for residents to view. Matt Vincent decided that this would be a benefit for other boards as well so he will work with Steve Delaney to determine best way to handle the sharing of information of the various boards with the residents of the town. We all agree that Jon should contact Steve for ideas and inquire about using an existing site for emails and Q&A facts.
8. New business – Reggie asked if we could look at the 4th Wednesday as a meeting date instead of the third. We all agreed to keep September as the third Wednesday (9/20), but to tentatively schedule the fourth Wednesday for October.
9. Motion to adjourn was made by Robin O'Malley and seconded by Phil Cannon. Vote 6-0 all in favor.