



Finance Committee
 Town of Halifax
 499 Plymouth St.
 Halifax, MA 02338

Meeting Minutes
 Monday, January 14, 2019

		Frederick McGovern	Leonard Teceno	Bill McAvoy	Melinda Tarsi	Vacant	Vacant
Present		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Also in attendance was Sandy Nolan, Town Accountant, Charlie Seelig, Town Administrator; Kim Roy, Selectman

Melinda Tarsi called the meeting to order at 7:08pm

Meeting was recorded by Area 58.

Melinda opened the meeting by reading the agenda. She stated that the committee will take items out of order of the agenda to take care of housekeeping items first. There was no mail or line item/reserve fund transfers. Amended meeting minutes from 12-17-18 were accepted. Meeting minutes from 01-07-19 were reviewed.

Melinda entertained a motion to accept meeting minutes from 01-07-19

Bill McAvoy motioned

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Calendar: Monday, January 21st, is Martin Luther King Day

We will not have quorum on the January 28th

Post for every Monday in February except for the 18th, which is a holiday

The schools might be changing their formula per Fred McGovern. Fred informed the committee that the next Silver Lake school committee meeting is scheduled for the 14th which is an open session for the public to discuss the budget. Melinda stated she spoke with Gordon Andrews who said he would feel more comfortable waiting for the Governor's budget to come out before having the school budget discussed.

Len requested that the committee talk about upcoming department budget meetings.

Melinda stated that in the past, the committee would look at all items that were level funded so that they could be voted on as clusters instead of line by line. Bill asked Sandy when the rest of the budgets will be in. Sandy stated that there are a few that are not in, but are being worked on and will be submitted soon.

Melinda suggested voting on categories that are level funded budgets though we do not have the whole picture tonight. Since the Fire Chief is not coming in tonight, there is time to do this. Melinda asked if everyone had the budget sheet dated 01-14, which is the most recent. Everyone had the sheet.

Public Safety: Line #48 – Police-Expense – Len stated that the committee should hold on this. There is a potential 30k contingency.

Public Safety: Fire: Committee will hold on this

Melinda asked Sandy if anything with “wage” should wait to be discussed. Sandy stated that the committee didn’t have to wait, but if wage and personnel recommends an increase in wages, the committee would need to revisit. Melinda stated the committee will wait on these.

Sandy stated that a lot of increases are due to the fact that there are two more days in this fiscal year as opposed to the previous year. We are working on a 262 day schedule instead of a 260 day schedule. With this information, Melinda stated that there are three expense lines that are being level funded that can be voted on.

Line #65: Sealer of Weights and Measures Expense is level funded at \$527.00

Line #67: Animal Control Officer Expense is level funded at \$4,616.00

Line #63: Building Inspector Expense is level funded at \$4,750.00

Melinda entertained a motion on recommendations for line #63, #65, #67.

Fred pointed out that Animal Control did not come close to using their budget last year. Sandy informed the committee that Animal Control is paid out of the dog fund and that the dog kennel at the police station needs work done to it. However, the budget is level funded. Len Teceno will ask for an itemized budget from animal control.

Melinda indicated a motion on line #63.

Bill McAvoy made motion to recommend the level funding of both line #63 and #65 in the amounts of \$4,750.00 and \$527.00 respectively.

Second: Fred McGovern

AIF

Melinda clarified that the committee will hold on line #67 until more information is received.

Melinda stated that line# 96 through #100 of the Public Works/Water Department are level funded. Bill McAvoy stated that he hasn’t met with them yet, but agreed that these lines can be voted on tonight.

Line #96 Supply Insurance is level funded at \$182,100.00
Line #97 Water Insurance is level funded at \$60,579.00
Line #98 Water Retirement is level funded at \$19,000.00
Line #99 Water Legal Fees is level funded at \$1,500.00
Line #100 Water Meters is level funded at \$25,000.00
Line #101 Water, Gas and Oil is level funded at \$13,750.00
Line #102 Water Vehicle Equipment Maintenance is level funded at \$9000.00
Line #103 Water, Tower, Wells Maintenance is level funded at \$100,000.00

Melinda entertained a motion to recommend lines #96 through #103. Bill McAvoy asked Sandy if we know what Tower/Wells Maintenance is trending yet. Melinda answered that there is so much variability with the sludge ponds, it is not yet known. Bill has more questions on line #101. Len has questions on line #97. Melinda suggested that the committee vote line per line.

Melinda entertained a motion on Line #96 for \$182,100.00
Motion: Bill McAvoy
Second: Len Teceno
AIF

Melinda entertained a motion to hold on line #97. Bill asked if the committee could just ignore it for now and not motion. Melinda agreed.

Melinda entertained a motion to recommend line #98 for \$19,000.00. Len asked what the figure was based on. Sandy stated that they don't know until the end of the year what they need from the Treasurer's Office, so they put the figure there even though it may not be accurate. They used to give us \$50,000.00 towards retirement, but they now give us \$53,000.00. Charlie then clarified that this line provides an extra cushion until what is needed is known at the end of the year.

Melinda entertained a motion to recommend line #98 for \$19,000.00
Motion: Bill McAvoy
Second: Len Teceno
AIF

Line #99 Water-Legal Fees is level funded at \$1,500.00
Motion: Bill McAvoy
Second: Len Teceno
AIF

Line #100 Water-Meters is level funded at \$25,000.00
Bill asked Sandy if \$25,000.00 is enough. Fred expressed concern as well. Sandy stated they didn't ask for more, and they live within the budget they ask for. Bill asked if these replacement meters were in households. Sandy said yes.
Motion: Bill McAvoy
Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Melinda stated that Line #101, Water-Gas and Oil will be skipped so that it can be discussed further.

Line #102 Water-Vehicle/Equipment Maintenance is level funded at \$100,000.00
Bill asked if any vehicles were replaced last year. Sandy said no, but they are looking to replace one in FY20.

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #103 Water-Tower/Wells Maintenance is level funded for \$100,000.00

Melinda entertained a motion to recommend line #103.

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Under Public Works-Solid Waste Management, Melinda brought up that only one line is a level funded request: Line #108 - Hazardous Waste Collection. Sandy stated that Hazardous Waste is not the same every year. Melinda suggested skipping the category for now.

Next category: Health and Human Services

Line #111 Health Expense is level funded at \$7,873.00 . Len asked what department this is. Sandy stated Board of Health. Sandy explained that there was a past increase in expense because we paid a consultant to do restaurant inspections. We do two per year.

Melinda motioned to recommend line #111

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Fred McGovern

AIF

Line #113 Health-Nursing Service is level funded at \$7,000

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #114 Landfill-Engineering and Monitoring is level funded at \$15,233.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Melinda stated that Line #115 Inspector of Animals will be skipped for now.

Line #117 Council on Aging-Expense is level funded at \$8,880.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #118 Pope's Tavern Electricity is level funded at \$3,000.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Melinda asked Sandy if we fill in line #123 and #124 Housing Authority and A.D.A. Expense. Sandy stated to put in \$1.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Len asked if the committee wanted to vote on Line #120 Veteran Agent Expense, which has an increase of \$50.00. Bill suggested we keep with only voting on level funded items at this time.

Next category is Culture and Recreation which only has one expense line in it. Melinda suggested we pause there to get to the Elementary School Budget.

Summer stated since this is their first discussion, she wanted to get a feel for what the climate is and what questions the Finance Committee may have. Melinda stated the Board should be filled in on what the "big asks" are. She stated that the only article pertaining to her budget are the internet switches. They need to be replaced. Grant money was discussed, but that money could disappear. There are no personnel changes. The math curriculum is all going into this year's budget. That makes up 1% of the budget. Melinda stated that it was discussed last year to skip renovating math text books. If it is done on a year to year basis, it would be more expensive. Summer stated that is 65-70k for a 6 year subscription but it is 16k per year if it is yearly. It makes more sense to have a long term subscription. SPED transportation cost is increasing because we are using a different company. There is a wish list item of a new bus for the Halifax Elementary School. This expense cannot be split with Silver Lake. This wish list item is not included in the budget proposal. Longer term bus contracts will be entertained to save money. Summer stated there are no shared cost numbers yet. Melinda asked about the wish list items and if technology upgrades would be prioritized higher on the wish list. Summer assumes so. Summer stated that what is proposed in the tech upgrades on the wish list seems to be more of a need. Melinda suggested to Summer and members of the committee that department wish lists be prioritized, i.e. gold, silver, bronze, so that the committee can get a better feel for what is more needed on the wish list. Fred raised a concern regarding the textbook increase. Summer stated that the increase is for the math books which are on a six year program. Fred stated that a big concern he has is with the big push to get money into the schools, because the last time that happened at Silver Lake

there had to be massive changes to the curriculum because the Chapter 70 formula changed. He states that extra money from the state comes with strings attached. Melinda asked if we would have enough time between getting the governor's budget and getting a sense of whether or not there would be any conditions tied to a raise in Chapter 70 to make decisions about whether or not we want to move forward with changes to our own curriculum or is that something that would be a next year discussion. Summer explained that our curriculum is based on the frameworks. The frameworks are already set by the DOE. The frameworks should be in place for awhile. We would not have to make a quick decision about curriculum in the middle of budget season. Melinda stated that the VocTech estimate is level funded but we won't know until April how many students we will actually have to pay for. Sandy stated that when Christine sent out the budget sheets, she increased the vocational education budget by 30K to account for one extra student. We will know in April if we need it. There are three students graduating, but we already have three students taking their place, so we may not see much of a budget change. Melinda stated there is one confirmed retirement which is already accounted for. Summer stated there is a potential for one more retirement, but it is not confirmed yet. No new staff will be hired. Summer stated that her board is fiscally conservative right now and are mindful that the grant may go away. Regarding the REAP grant, part of it can go towards technology. The only other big ticket item is fire suppression and that is out to bid. Melinda stated that as a committee, they decided that they are comfortable of leaving a cushion in the budget. The number hasn't been agreed upon yet. Summer stated that she is aware the HES and Silver Lake take up most of the budget. Summer's next meeting is February 4th starting at 6:00pm with is a public budget hearing. Melinda will attend this meeting. Len stated that he will probably attend as well. When Summer has more numbers, the budget will be revisited.

Melinda and the committee then continued with the level funded line items.

Culture and Recreation:

Line #129 Youth & Rec-Expense is level funded at \$13,216.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Fred McGovern

AIF

Melinda asked for clarification regarding line #133. Sandy and Charlie stated that this is a pass through. Charlie explained that a lot more people are cutting cable, so there is a decrease in revenue. Sandy and Charlie are comfortable with the budgeted amount for FY20.

Line #133 Cable Television pass through request is for \$194,150.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Melinda noted next line: Line #134 Patriotic Celebrations is level funded for \$400.00

Bill McAvoy made a motion to recommend line #134, Patriotic Celebrations for \$400.00, line #135 Historical Commission for \$2,499.00, line #136 Historical District Commission

for \$446.00, line #137 Holidays in Halifax for \$3,395.00, and line #138 Halifax Fireworks Committee for \$3,200.00, all are level funded.

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #139 Beautification Comm-Expense: Numbers not in yet per Sandy

Line #140 Agricultural Commission: Commission asked for nothing last year per Sandy, but she will reach out to them.

Line #141 Website Committee Expense: Sandy and Charlie clarified that there is no committee. There are no numbers yet for this.

Line #147 Debt-WPAT Station, and line #148 Debt-WPAT II

Bill asked Sandy for clarification on these lines. Sandy stated these are state loans the town takes that allow us to loan money to townspeople to get their septic systems repaired. The townspeople pay the loan back to the town and the town pays the state back.

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #149 Debt-Landfill Capping is a reduction and funded at \$102,937.50

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #149A Debt-HES Roof and Repairs is a reduction and funded at \$412,650.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #149B Debt-HES Fire Suppression System is an increase at \$21,750.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Len Teceno asked if this has been started and Charlie stated not yet. Len asked if Charlie was concerned about not getting a bid. Charlie stated he was less concerned this year.

Len asked what would happen if we did not receive bids and Charlie stated that we would have time to rebid.

Sandy stated line #150 Interest on Temporary Loans has not been determined yet

Fixed Costs:

Melinda asked Charlie if the committee was fine in voting on line #154 Insurance, #156 Telephone and #158 Heating Oil-All Buildings. Charlie stated he did not know. Heating

Oil is with the building committee and Sandy clarified that the building department has submitted their budget. Insurance has a meeting coming up. Telephone is with the Police department and Cesar is working with the police chief on a new phone system that will bring costs down, but it hasn't been submitted to capital planning yet. Melinda stated the committee will hold on these items.

Line #5 Selectmen-Expense is level funded at \$3,925.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #1 Moderator-Salary is level funded at \$200.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy motioned to recommend line #1 and line #2, Selectmen Salary which is level funded at \$4,500.00.

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #7 Town Hall-Electricity is a reduction and funded at \$17,700.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Bill motioned for Line #9 Audit. It is a reduction and funded at \$25,500.00

Len asked what happened last year. Sandy stated we had extra in there last year for a single audit for federal funds that was not needed.

Second: Fred McGovern

AIF

Line #11 Fin-Comm Expense is level funded at \$359.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #14 Accountant-Expense is level funded at \$1,625.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #16 Assessors Salary is not falling under other wage lines per Sandy and is level funded at \$4,500.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #19 Assessors Expense should be level funded. There is a typo per Sandy. She will double check the figure. No vote at this time.

Line #20 Office Machines Expense is a reduction and funded at \$7,000.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #33 Recruitment and Employment Costs is level funded at \$7,500.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy motioned to recommend line #33, line #34 Conservation Commission-Expense which is level funded at \$1,100.00, line #35 Planning Board-Expense which is level funded at \$2,000.00, and line #36 Zoning Board of Appeals-Expense which is level funded at \$825.00

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Sandy stated she double checked the math for line #19 and it is level funded.

Motion: Bill motioned to recommend line #19 Assessors-Expense which is a reduction and funded at \$13,165.00

Second: Fred McGovern

AIF

Line #39 Building Committee-Expense is level funded at \$450.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Line #43 Town Buildings-Snow and Ice Expense is level funded at \$3,000.00

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Fred McGovern

AIF

Melinda reiterated for those at home that we are voting on level funded and decreased items tonight but that the committee may have to revisit them.

A calendar discussion was had and the following schedule of meetings was determined:

February 4th

7:15 p.m. – Board of Health

7:30 p.m. – Fire Chief

7:45 p.m. – Police Chief

February 11th

7:15 p.m. – Water Department

7:30 p.m. – Solid Waste

7:45 p.m. – Hwy/Cemetery

February 25th

7:15 p.m. – Silver Lake and Halifax Elementary – invitees: Gordon Andrews, Summer Schmaling. Silver Lake will be first on the agenda, with Halifax Elementary School second.

Len asked when more information on wages can be expected. Sandy stated union negotiations haven't started yet. Charlie stated a 2% wage increase will be discussed. Retention is a problem. Len asked about step and wage increases. Charlie stated there is an annual evaluation and step increases are evaluated once a year. Sandy stated that there have been no hour increases requested, only hourly wage. Unclassified position (nurse position) has not been included in wage increases. Council on Aging van driver hours are budgeted for 82 hours split between drivers. Bill asked if Wage and Personnel will be discussing reevaluation of positions. Kim Roy stated a salary search will be done and it will be brought up at Town Meeting.

Melinda informed the public that the Finance Committee is looking for members and if anyone is interested, they can go to the website or the Selectmen's Office to apply. The only requirements are that you are a citizen of the Town of Halifax and a registered voter. No experience is necessary.

Melinda entertained a motioned to adjourn at 8:49 p.m.

Motion: Bill McAvoy

Second: Len Teceno

AIF

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Clark
Secretary

X

Len Teceno
Finance Committee Clerk