



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

Meeting Minutes  
 Wednesday, February 11, 2015

	Gordon Andrews	Karen Fava	Margaret (Peg) Fitzgerald	Nikki Newton	Stu Hall	Julianne Crawford	Vacant
Present	✓			✓	✓	✓	

Others in Attendance: Charlie Seelig, Town Administrator; Sandy Nolan, Town Accountant; Kim Roy, Selectmen; Cassey Hanson, School Committee Chairperson; Michael Schleiff, Selectmen; Troy Garron, Selectmen; Barbara Gaynor, Town Clerk.

Meeting called to order by Gordon Andrews at 7:46pm. Meeting is being taped by Comcast.

Mail

Letter from Association of Town Finance Committees was read regarding CD copies of the handbook.

44<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Financial Data book was received.

Letters requesting and approving deficit spending for snow and ice were read.

Reserve Fund Transfer Request

A Reserve Fund Transfer Request was received from Gerry Elliott in the amount of \$8,000.00 to be transferred to Town Building Expense for General Maintenance, repairs, emergencies and unforeseen expenses.

Motion to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer Request was made by Nikki Newton. Seconded by Stu Hall. Motion passed unanimously.

Board of Selectmen Discussion

Gordon attended the BOS meeting last night. The boards have not met since January 8 due to the snow. He did show them the slides that he prepared regarding the operating revenue. For a quick overview, Prop 2 1/2 increase of \$346,750.00. Estimated new growth as of today is \$134,783.00. Last year's excess capacity was \$207,633.00. Excess capacity is the amount that we did not tax up to the levy limit; it is the money in the tax payer's pocket. \$689,166.00 is the grand total for us to spend beyond last year's budget. Silver Lake is level funded in the budget that these numbers are coming from. Their

initial budget shows a 34.6% increase without an increase in assessments. \$944,077.37 above what we spent last year is the request so far from the departments. \$254,991.37 is the deficit without any increase from Silver Lake at this time. These budget numbers (Out of District Sped, Vocational etc.) came out at the beginning of January so a lot may have changed since then. This budget does not include leaks that have since developed at the Elementary School or other similar items that may have come up since the numbers have come up.

Kim Roy explained that all of this means we are going to have to tax up to the levy limit where we have not had to do that for the past two years. We are looking at a possible tax rate of \$19.68 per thousand for a tax rate with taxing to the max and still having a deficit. We are going to have some upset taxpayers. Gordon does not see the town supporting an override. He would like to know what the Board of Selectmen see as a priority for the town. Where should we start to look more closely? Kim feels that public safety is a major priority. We are already at minimum staffing for Fire, Communications and Police. There really isn't anywhere to cut in those budgets. Water and Recycling have their own sources so the Revenue will not come back into the General Budget if it is cut; therefore it will not affect the deficit. When making cuts we really need to look at the funding sources. Although fixed costs are big numbers, we are not going to find large numbers to cut in those areas. We would like to ask the school committee members to look at the budget and really give us a bare minimum budget so we really know what the true deficit is. Charlie mentioned that we may have to look at the option of moving the Health plan and having higher co-pays and deductibles if it comes down to it. Stu asked the magnitude of a change like that and Charlie said it could mean an \$83,000.00 swing if the plan is made less attractive to the employees. He will have to do more research. Troy said that any time you have to make cuts this big you automatically go to staffing and their benefits and that really bothers him. You lose quality people that way. He is not sure what the solution is, but someone is going to get hurt in the process. Mike does not feel that any one or two departments should be the ones to feel the sting. It should be spread out as evenly as possible.

The first thing we have to do as a Finance Committee is find the revenue source for SPED, Step increases, Insurance, Electricity and Retirement, then you can go from there. Charlie will send out an email to the Department heads to advise of the deficit facing the town and ask for them to look at their budgets again and see if they have any fat to cut. He will also ask them to please provide a narrative as to why any increases are imperative if they have not already.

#### STM Articles

Article 1 – Pay increases for this FY to be competitive and maintain Staff. Remove overtime for weeks in which an Officer uses sick / vacation pay. Also education incentive.

No Motion made. Will discuss further at meeting right before STM.

Article 2 –

No Motion made. Will discuss further at meeting right before STM.

Article 3 – Chapter 79 Funds Acceptance.

Nikki Newton made a motion to recommend the Article. Seconded by Julianne Crawford. Motion passed unanimously.

Article 4 – Funded from lots and graves.

Stu Hall made a motion to recommend the Article. Seconded by Nikki Newton. Motion passed unanimously.

Article 5 – Will be passed over.

Stu Hall made a motion to pass over the Article. Seconded by Julianne Crawford. Motion passed unanimously.

Article 6 – Silver Lake would like to spend \$619,000.00 out of their E&D account for a list of Capital Items. Security Items should be done right away. Accounting system should be done this year. OPEB does not have to be done right away. Track is a timing issue for planning purposes. Sirroco lighting to be done in the spring. Sheds, need to tell CTE money is available for planning purposes.

Stu Hall made a motion to NOT recommend. Seconded by Gordon Andrews. Nikki Newton abstained. All other members voted in favor of the motion.

#### Upcoming Meetings

Finance Committee is going to begin picking up a second night in order to make up for some lost meetings. Wednesday nights may be picked up, need to verify with Peg.

Tuesday, 2/17 7pm before STM

Monday, 2/23 7pm. Start looking at individual budgets and scheduling Dept heads

Wednesday, 2/25 7pm

10:15 pm Stu Hall made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Nikki Newton. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Margaret Fitzgerald  
Corresponding Clerk