



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

Meeting Minutes  
 Monday, March 16, 2015

	Gordon Andrews	Linda Braga	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; Barbara Gaynor, Town Clerk; John Bruno, Moderator; Troy Garron, Selectmen; Mike Schleiff, Selectmen; Cassey Hanson, Halifax Elementary School and Silver Lake School Committee Chairperson; Robert Johnson, Halifax School Committee; Robert Slager, Halifax School Committee; Lori Costa Cline, Resident; Joy Blackwood, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; John Tuffy, Superintendent of Schools; Christine Healy, Business Manager of Schools; Ed Desharnais, Silver Lake School Committee; Paula Hatch, Silver Lake School Committee; Summer Schmalung, Halifax Elementary School Committee.

Meeting called to order by Gordon Andrews at 7:07pm. Meeting is being taped by CHAT TV

The Board of Selectmen interviewed Linda Braga for an open position on the Finance Committee.

Mike Schleiff made a motion to appoint Linda Braga to the Finance Committee to a term to expire on 6/15/17. Seconded by Gordon Andrews. Motion passed unanimously with a yes vote from Mr. Schleiff, Mr. Andrews and Mr. Bruno.

Barbara Gaynor was present to swear Linda Braga in as a member of the Finance Committee.

Mail

A letter of resignation from Karen Fava was read.

Peg Fitzgerald made a motion for Kendra to write a letter to Karen thanking her for her service. Seconded by Nikki Newton. Motion passed unanimously.

Schools

Chapter 70 for FY15 is the number that will be used. \$2,711,657.00 is the Governor's number for Chapter 70 for Halifax Elementary. It is an \$11,840.00 difference from LY. Line 74, the numbers have been discussed but have not been voted as of this time. There is currently a deficit. A decrease in the Elementary budget and a decrease in Line 75 is

why there is a change in the amount of the deficit. April 1 the Out of District Vocation numbers are due. As of now there are 2 students but we have budgeted for 3. March 30 is the next Elementary School Committee Meeting. Line 76 and 77 will depend on Circuit Breaker money but right now it looks like it will be at 65%. Gordon feels that Plympton's growth number of 6.06% is wrong and should be around 3%. This will greatly impact Line 78. Charlie pointed out an error in the FY15 assessment numbers on the worksheet that Gordon provided as a handout. Regional Transportation may be the source of the error; Gordon will review it and adjust it accordingly.

Everyone reviewed the SLRSD assessment worksheet draft a/o 3/5/15 in depth. There is a decrease in overall State Aid of \$52,000.00 from LY. New to the budget is the net power sharing line and that comes off the top. They have requested \$12,290,420.00 in minimum contributions for FY16, broken down as follows: Halifax \$3,562,595.00; Kingston \$7,019,243.00; Plympton \$1,708,586.00. The Operating Assessment is \$4,164,071.85 which is an increase of \$938,892.00 (7.1%) from FY15. The Exempt Capital is \$529,727.22 which is a decrease of \$11,000.00 (approx. 3.8%) from FY15

Gordon does not feel that a 7% increase is sustainable. Charlie says that they average min. contribution over the years has been an increase close to 2.5%. That is a long term problem. The new growth today is \$168,000.00. If the overall assessments can only go up 2.5% per year it won't be long until we are there with the min. contribution and net spending alone. Cassey Hanson wants to know what the town would like to use for a number to budget with. Peg asked if they see any action at the state level to support schools. Kim mentioned unfunded mandates, they are hopeful but they are not expecting anything. They are not seeing much movement so it is important to talk. Silver Lake needs to vote a budget by 3/31. They need direction. Gordon feels the total town assessment needs to be in the 2.5% range in order to be sustainable. Kim suggested "don't grow your budget". Charlie's concern is that there is an increase in pay that is not there for our own employees. Same goes for the Elementary School. Peg feels this is unfair and would vote against level funding town employee's wages knowing what she knows. Kim brought up that two other towns participate so that is something to consider. Peg wants to talk about individual merit of budgets and stop worrying about the deficit. Summer feels that all of these things have already been addressed at the Elementary School level. Robert Slager had a point of order – he feels this may be in violation of Open Meeting Law as they are in negotiations at the Elementary School level with the Teachers contract. Lori Costa-Cline asked has there been discussion to look at large line items and asking for participants to pay larger fees. Peg feels that no one should have to pay extra. Kim said that it was looked at previously to increase a total sport fee to \$200.00. There is a meeting on April 15 with Building and Maintenance and they would be the department to make that decision.

Capital needs are a work in progress. Several people expressed concern about wants vs. needs. Joy explained it is just a list at this point and it will be narrowed down at their meeting on Friday.

Finance Committee is to aim for a response for Silver Lake and Halifax Elementary School Budgets for their Wednesday night meeting.

9:45 pm Linda Braga made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Nikki Newton. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Margaret Fitzgerald  
Corresponding Clerk