



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

Meeting Minutes
 Monday, March 10, 2014

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

Others in Attendance: Kendra Kelly, Finance Committee Secretary; Sandy Nolan, Town Accountant; Kim Roy, Selectman; Matt Tucker, Communications Center Supervisor; Ted Broderick, Police Chief; Jeff Cuzzo, Interim Fire Chief; Patty Forsstrom, Fire Department Secretary; Cassandra Hanson, School Committee Chairperson for Silver Lake and Halifax Elementary.

Meeting called to order by Gordon Andrews at 7:05pm

Mail

A memo was received from Wage and Personnel. They are reclassifying all jobs from Step 2 – 14. The job description form needs to be filled out and submitted to Wage and Personnel by 3/18/14. Gordon will take care of completing the form and submitting it.

A letter to the Board of Selectmen from David Hurd of 15 13th Ave. was read concerning the potential need for a new COA facility.

Reserve Fund Transfer

Town Clerk, Barbara Gaynor submitted a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$500.00 to be transferred to the Clerk’s Expense line. The amount requested would be used to codify the articles passed at the May 2013 Town Meeting and for a new printer. \$2,000.00 was budgeted for the General Code using last year’s price and the estimate came in much higher. Along with that cost, the time/date stamp needed to be replaced at the cost of \$683.00 leaving no room for the extra costs.

Peg Fitzgerald made a motion to approve a \$500.00 Reserve Fund Transfer. Seconded by Karen Fava. Motion passed unanimously.

Fire Department Budget Discussion

For the second year in a row, the wages are going to see an increase as there was not enough budgeted and there have been Reserve Fund Transfers needed to cover the shortage in the salary line. Sandy recommends an increase of \$30,000.00 in that line for

FY15. That is an increase over and above the \$39,000.00 in steps already requested. Overtime and storm coverage are usually the reason for the overages. One storm last year cost over \$10,000.00. That storm was eventually partially reimbursed but it was after the end of the FY so it went back into the general fund. This year they have had two Firefighters leave so there has also been overtime and vacation to payout. Stu mentioned that he has reservations of funding to a forecast. Peg said that if you constantly run short, then by the third year it is no longer unforeseen. She would like to see a budget that is realistic. Gordon is not inclined to vote to approve the additional amount at this time. He would rather vote the step increases now and look at the line further at a later date. Sandy reiterated the need for the increase and feels that the Fire Department should be asking for more money in the salary line as it is now showing a trend.

The vehicle equipment maintenance line will also be in for a RFT. It is showing the same trend as the salary line with RFT's needed each year to keep up with maintaining the equipment. The new request for this line is \$28,065.00. Peg feels that number is warranted. The total transfer last year was \$11,000.00 for vehicle maintenance. The fire department has some older equipment that they try to patch but really shouldn't as it is used in public safety and should be repaired properly.

The Fire Department has an Article on the Warrant for \$3,000.00 to purchase 2 dry suits. Chief Cuozzo would like to change the Article to \$3,000.00 for improvements to the burn building. There are currently no dry suits in the department and he is not sure how much they would get used. His feeling is that the money would be better used in the burn building upgrades. The department does have Ice Commander wet suits and those are used for surface rescues. The dry suits are more for recovery and scuba diving. If the department had a need for a recovery suit, they would most likely call the South Shore Dive Team in for support and they have their own dry suits. The burn building is a Type 1 building that is all cement and steel. It is a great location for training. Other towns do use the facility but there is no charge to use it. This Article is still being reviewed further by the Capital Planning Committee.

Police Department Budget Discussion

Line 50 will now be a combined account. It is actually a maintenance account although it is called Electric. It includes the electric maintenance instead of splitting it up and having it included in the regular maintenance line.

There may be a need for a RFT or line item transfer for the salary line. They may not have enough to cover the officer that has left the department. They had to pay out vacation and overtime so it was an unexpected payout for that line. The department also has an officer out on 111F for the second time so they are trying to fill that shift as well. Chief Broderick is planning to fill the shift with a new PT officer so he is not paying overtime. He also has not filled the 11th officer position so the department is saving that money as well. Sandy is keeping a close watch on the salary line and will keep the Finance Committee informed.

Chief Broderick has an Article on the Warrant for two new police cruisers. This will bring the department back in line with the Capital Plan for a regular rotation of vehicles.

There will possibly an Article on the Warrant from the Dog Officer. She feels the heat and air conditioning in the animal shelter is insufficient. She is looking at a small unit that produces both heat and air and would cost approximately \$3,500.00. This Article would be funded from the Dog Fund.

Halifax Elementary School

Gordon had sent a list of questions to Cassey Hanson and she came to the meeting to provide the answers as they had not had a chance to touch base beforehand. The increase to the budget that includes just steps and lanes will be \$65,714.29. They are unsure of the percent of the increase as they are still in negotiations with the Teachers. Cassey is hopeful that the contract will be settled by Town Meeting so that there will be a concrete number but she is not positive. If Town Meeting does not support the increase and the School Committee has already approved the number for the contract, then the Committee is bound and will have to make cuts within their budget to cover the increase.

The Labor Attorney will be available to speak with any members of the Finance Committee with questions on 3/25 at 5:30 and 4/8 at 5:45. Charlie suggests that the Committee takes the opportunity to speak with the Attorney regarding what number to recommend at Town Meeting as we don't want to force arbitration. As of right now they are conceptual ideas but it will help to figure out the possibilities. Peg feels that this discussion should be taking place in November, not now so that the School Committee has a direction to go in once the negotiations start in January.

Article 5 Line Items

Line 45 – Gordon Andrews made a motion to approve \$98,420.00 for Police Chief Salary. Seconded by Karen Fava. Motion passed unanimously.

Line 46 – Karen Fava made a motion to approve \$906,964.00 for Police Wages. Seconded by Summer Schmaling. Motion passed unanimously.

Line 50 – Peg Fitzgerald made a motion to approve \$19,173.00 and change the name of the line to Police Station Maintenance. Seconded by Nikki Newton. Motion passed unanimously.

Line 53 – Peg Fitzgerald made a motion to approve \$38,269.00 for Fire Clerical. Seconded by Summer Schmaling. Motion passed unanimously.

Line 54 – Peg Fitzgerald made a motion to approve \$593,879.00 for Fire Wages. Seconded by Nikki Newton. A yes vote was received from Peg Fitzgerald and Nikki Newton and a no vote from Stu Hall, Summer Schmaling, Karen Fava and Gordon Andrews. Motion did not pass. Karen Fava made a motion to approve \$578,880.00 for Fire Wages. Seconded by Peg Fitzgerald. Summer Schmaling was the only member to vote no, all others voted yes. Motion passed.

Line 59 – Peg Fitzgerald made a motion to approve \$28,065.00 for Fire Vehicle/Equip Maintenance. Seconded by Nikki Newton. Yes votes were received from Nikki Newton, Peg Fitzgerald and Gordon Andrews. No votes were received from Karen Fava and Summer Schmaling. Stu Hall abstained. Motion did not pass. Summer

Schmaling made a motion to approve \$24,065.00 for Fire Vehicle/Equip Maintenance. Seconded by Karen Fava. Motion passed unanimously.

Line 70 – Peg Fitzgerald made a motion to approve \$269,409.00 for Comm. Center Wages. Seconded by Karen Fava. Motion passed unanimously.

Line 71 – Gordon Andrews made a motion to approve \$0.00 for Comm. Center Clerical. Seconded by Nikki Newton. Motion passed unanimously.

Line 72 – Peg Fitzgerald made a motion to approve \$2,500.00 for Comm. Center Expense. Seconded by Summer Schmaling. Motion passed unanimously.

Upcoming Meetings

3/17/14 – Discussion of the Warrant. Nikki will contact Dick Steele and let Kendra know if he needs to be scheduled for a discussion.

9:55 pm Karen Fava made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Peg Fitzgerald. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nikki Newton
Corresponding Clerk