



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

Meeting Minutes
 Monday, November 10, 2014

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

Others in Attendance: Kendra Kelly, Finance Committee Secretary; Charlie Seelig, Town Administrator; Sandy Nolan, Town Accountant; Kim Roy, Selectmen; Troy Garron, Selectmen; Michael Schlieff, Selectmen; Gerry Elliot, Building Maintenance; John Campbell, Town and School Building Maintenance; Mel Conroy, Capital Planning; Summer Schmaling, School Committee.

Gordon Andrews called the meeting to order at 7:40pm

Meeting with the Board of Selectmen and the Capital Planning Committee

\$207,633.46 is what was left on the table previously at Town Meeting. Peg suggests that this is what we should aim for again this year but we should see what the department needs are first. Kim Roy feels that we should know the amount and keep it separate on the budget sheet. We should always know what it is and know it is there. \$479,680.75 is the 2 ½ number. Peg is fine with it both ways as long as the needs of the town are looked at. Mel Conroy feels that number should be dropped and would like to see the \$207,000.00 number kept out as Kim Roy suggested. Troy and Sandy agreed. Mike Schlieff felt that either way, as long as we know it's there he is fine with it. We could actually increase to \$687,313.00. Nikki feels that this is starting at the wrong end of the budget process. These figures are all estimates anyway. Gordon feels we should leave it on the table and listen to the taxpayers. Why is the tax rate so high? 10 years ago we had Silver Lake. The tax portion is 3 ½% of the tax bill for the average home. Free cash may be certified in December. If revenues do not pick up we may look at cuts. We should plan for a level funded state aid to be safe, but we need to know what steps and contractual obligations are going to be.

Capital Plan priorities are going to be maintaining equipment, police car fleet staying current, fire engine replacement and that is an estimated cost of \$500,000.00 that needs to be put aside. Both police quads failed at mud fest. The heat exchangers at the schools are also an issue. Grants are being looked at. HES needs \$100,000.00 for Green Community improvements. Some of that can be offset through National Grid. They are

looking at computers for the Town Hall as a result of hardware and software issues. May also need a DP budget increase, but are not sure if that will be a Capital Plan item. Another thing to look at is possibly setting aside funds for the repair of the Amphitheatre or having an Eagle Scout / Group to donate the repairs. It is currently reaching the same disrepair point as HOPS did. Kim Roy addressed the needs of the ponds as they need more attention. They are looking into hiring a part time Conservation Agent to focus strictly on following up on the ponds and dealing directly with its issues. The building department could use help but are doing ok as of right now. The same as other departments. The Building Department proposed 20 hours a week over at HES to maintain the school. The building is clean but needs help with maintenance. The school committee voted not to accept that proposal. Charlie said that we have been funding these projects so we should be putting an additional person on and can't sacrifice hours from the others. Summer Schmaling explained that the proposal was not rejected as a whole. The school committee felt there was confusion and that Gerry's time was better spent elsewhere. Mike Schlieff feels we should see what happens with a Head Custodian position filled and then go from there. Gordon said there is obviously a need in the building dept. for hours due to a previous maintenance issue. Mike Schlieff asked if \$150,000.00 for the Highway Dept. was enough for their budget this year. Maybe we should look into hiring part timers to ease vacation time.

Peg feels that we should ask the departments for a level service budget w/ needs for the department/town noted. They should submit a basic realistic budget with the needs to continue to provide services. The Treasurer/Collector and Building Inspector departments will need expenses for retirees. General consensus for upcoming budget year is to submit the most conservative budget possible, but please submit any needs or requests as well. The Liaison needs to address specific needs (technology etc. and suggest adding it to the budget). All in attendance were in agreement. Charlie will be writing the letter and sending it out shortly.

Stu Hall made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:12pm. Seconded by Peg Fitzgerald. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret Fitzgerald
Corresponding Clerk