



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

Meeting Notes
 Monday, November 19, 2012

	Gordon Andrews	Peter Beals	Karen Fava	Margaret (Peg) Fitzgerald	Paul Weckbacher	Nikki Newton
Present	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Others in Attendance: Kendra Kelly, Finance Committee Secretary; Sandy Nolan, Town Accountant; Kim Roy, Selectmen; Charlie Seelig, Town Administrator; Mike Schleiff, Selectmen; Lisa Gilbert, HES School Committee Chair

Karen Fava made a motion to accept the minutes from September 24, 2012. Seconded by Paul Weckbacher. Motion passed unanimously.

Mail

An email was received from Charlie Seelig regarding OCPC E-Permitting Forum to be held on Wednesday, December 7 at 11:30 at the Massasoit Conference Center in Brockton, MA. Charlie is going to attend to address issues regarding the cost of the software including any annual fee vs. the number of permits issued, benefits for users and/or departments. Also problems with applicants filling out their own permit/license application without assistance from the departments and how burdensome it is for the departments.

A thank you note was received from Kendra for the flowers sent to her Father in Law's funeral services.

2 issues of the Beacon were distributed.

Building Committee Update

Gordon and Nikki attended the last Building Committee Meeting that was held at Armand's Powersports location on Plymouth St. The location is for sale and they are exploring the possibility of purchasing it to relocate the Senior Center. It is a metal building with 13,000 sq ft which is more than what they were originally looking for. Some options discussed were making it a multi-use town building or having a business there as well as the Senior Center. Tom Millias said that it was on the market for 1.1 million and that is not a real number. The property next door that Stella's used to be on is not included in the sale. The COA felt that they could use all 13,000 sq ft. The attending members are not sure what the plans would be for Pope's Tavern if the COA were to

relocate. A cost comparison on this building including necessary repairs and architect expenses is needed.

Selectmen Meeting

The Selectmen have not discussed the FY14 Budget Plan as a board as of yet. There was a Department Head Meeting and a Financial Team Meeting last week and that did produce discussion. Silver Lake is an issue for level funding. Halifax Elementary may be doable as a level funded budget. Kathy Shiavone is going to need more hours as is Gerry Elliot. The Fire Chief expects that his budget may come in lower.

Communications won't know of its increases until the regionalization is decided.

Highway will be more Capital issues. The population as of 10/1/12 is the number that is used for budgeting.

Our percent with Silver Lake is 33.9% for FY13 and will be 34.8% for FY 14. It was 33.2% in FY12. The 50% reimbursement rate on Regional Transportation has remained steady. We will need to have better communication between the 3 Finance Committees in order to have any impact. Paul asked what effect do we have on the School Budget. Peter responded that if we communicate better whatever chance we have will be better than trying to go it alone. Lisa Gilbert said that in order to reduce a teacher we would need to have 20 less kids in one grade, not just 20 kids total. Level service would be the preference for the FY14 budget for Halifax Elementary School.

Kim Roy said that they are nervous about funding at the State level. The Circuit Breaker reimbursement will see a cut. Charlie indicated that there will be no more Library Project in FY14 so there will be no school library debt this year. In projected revenue for FY14, they will reduce the allowed levy by last years unused levy as he believed that to be the Fin Com philosophy. There will be no change to State Aid and we probably will not get any significant additional State money.

A big worry is going to be the 2015 Retirement increase.

Kim said that the OPEB report will be out in December. They are hoping that it will be rewritten but we have no details as of yet. Mike believes that we are still in a tight spot and we should continue to keep our belts pretty tight. Peg brought up the idea of zero based budgets. We can ask that we would like the departments to sit down and really examine their budgets in order to submit a realistic budget. If we continue to ask for level funding some departments are going to level fund and then keep coming in later for a Reserve Fund Transfer.

Kim stated that when you look at the Capital side, we may see the Loader come up again. Paul said that we have 3 options for the Loader; a capital repair, a capital replacement or expense a large repair. We have never done the things we need to do as far as maintenance in that department. The grader will also need attention. Mike feels that if we see any extra cash anywhere we should try to pay some attention to these Capital issues. Peter asked if Mike was saying that these Capital needs should trump extravagance elsewhere? The picture may look very different once the first of the year

arrives. Sandy has been talking to the Building Department regarding Capital items. How should specific maintenance items be handled? Should they be submitted as individual Articles? If so we could end up with a lot of them if the extra money is not included in the budget. Gordon said that they should do a General Maintenance Article. Paul added that itemizing it would be best. We do not currently have a Maintenance Plan and we need to have one. Without proper maintenance it costs the town more down the line. Peter said that if we are going to be treating equipment as disposable then we should be buying cheaper vehicles. Karen reminded the Committee that both Plympton and Kingston are leasing their vehicles and equipment and are very happy with it. Paul and Kim will look into getting some bids on leasing.

Kim feels that maintaining services would be the goal of the Selectmen. Look at the Capital items as well and try to get a plan. Peter stated that with a zero based budget realistically how many of the departments are going to come back with a cut? It is great in regards to business but not here. Paul thinks that zero based sends a conflicting message. It is clear to level budget, level fund and level service in order to maintain control. Nikki does not have an opinion as of yet. Kim suggested that we ask for level funding and have the liaison sit with the Department head and go line by line through their budget before bringing it to the table. Gordon feels that the liaisons should know what is going on ahead of time on each budget as well. Karen said that if we do that the liaison needs to have last year's budget with them and look at the whole picture. Gordon is in favor of a level funded budget plus step increases.

It was suggested that the budget letter is sent out with the Liaison list attached and if the Dept. submits a budget that is more that level funded, the liaison would need to be contacted to discuss. Charlie will be sending a letter. Timeline will be for budget submittal by January 7, 2013.

Vacant Committee Position

Committee Member Stu is back in town and we would love to have him join the Committee again. Peter will reach out to him.

Solar Project Revolving Fund

The Selectmen voted yes. No money will need to be put into the account. There is a limit of 15,000 and it would come from application fees.

Nikki Newton made a motion to set up the fund, Seconded by Karen Fava. Motion passed unanimously.

Kendra will draft a letter to John Tuffy asking him for a level funded budget vs. a level service budget comparison.

Peter Beals made a motion to adjourn at 8:55pm. Seconded by Peg Fitzgerald. Motion passed unanimously.

Nikki Newton

Corresponding Clerk