

FINCOM  
Meeting Minutes – September 16, 2015

Members Present: Alice, Bruce, John, Steve, Laura, Don  
Not Present: Heidi, Rudy  
Others: Lorraine and Tim  
Location: Hapgood Room, Old Library

Alice opened the meeting at 7:08PM.

**Minutes:** The Minutes of the September 2 meeting were unanimously approved after adding two items of discussion not included in the draft, and adding Linda's last name (Dwight) for clarity in the school discussion.

**Election of Officers, Liaison Appointments:** John Seeley was nominated and seconded to serve as Secretary of the Committee. His nomination was approved unanimously. Don Ludwig was nominated and seconded to serve as Vice Chair of the Committee. Laura Vilain offered to serve as Vice Chair. A vote was taken and Don received four votes and was elected as Vice Chair of the Committee.

Alan's liaison positions were reassigned and Bruce and Laura traded an assignment. The final 2015 liaisons are:

Laura: Police, Fire, Cable  
Steve: School, CPC, Monty Tech  
Bruce: COA, OPEB, Ambulance  
Rudy: Planning, Parks & Rec., Library  
Don: Agriculture, Town Hall, Master Plan, Energy  
John: Historical, Pond, Cemetery  
Heidi: CPIC, Health, DPW, Tree Warden  
Alice (Chair): Town Clerk, Personnel, Moderator, Board of Selectmen

**FY17 Finance Committee Initiatives:** After discussion, we identified our priority initiatives for FY17:

- **Consider a Meals Tax**—This was last considered in 2009. Lorraine will bring data on what our potential revenue could be if a three-quarters of one percent tax were instituted. She plans to bring this data to our October 7 meeting.
- **Consider PILOTs for Harvard's Tax-Exempt Organizations**—Tim will bring data to our next meeting that lists all of the town's property tax exempts. It was noted that other towns have asked similar organizations to contribute to their town's operating costs (like DPW and fire), and these PILOTs (payments in lieu of taxes) have been individually negotiated with each organization.
- **Clarify FinCom's Role, if any, in the Devens Economic Development Team**—For now we will wait for the Selectmen's decision on next steps.
- **Clarify FinCom's Role, if any, in the annual Property Tax Rate Decision**

Other items, mostly of a follow-up nature, we need to make sure we keep in mind include: review the results of the Selectmen department audit of DPW (expected report in December); decisions on user fees for school athletic programs and athletic field reservations/use; Park & Rec field reservation scheduling system and \$10,000 field improvement budget; status of the Town's warranty claim for old pumper truck being pursued by Mark Lanza; amount of savings captured by moving to the regional police dispatch system; and request an interim year progress review of all warrant articles passed at Town Meeting and incremental spending approved by our

Committee; investigate whether the current 1.1% CPC restricted use funding rate should be changed (requires Town Meeting vote).

**Budget Letter to Initiate FY17 Cycle:** Tim distributed his first draft of the budget initiation process letter to the committee. Members suggested multiple changes and Tim agreed to incorporate these changes and email a revised letter to the Committee for review/final approval tomorrow. Tim plans to send the letter October 1.

**Town Administrator Report:** Tim distributed version 5 of his 2016 planning/meeting calendar. He confirmed that plans for the Town Hall renovation project remain on schedule—target completion by April 21, 2016. The Fire House repair project is progressing—target completion by mid-November.

The BOS plans to start the process to hire Lorraine’s replacement in January, hoping to have the new Director on board for a 2-3 month transition period before Lorraine’s retirement on June 30. This will add incremental cost this fiscal year but will allow for better “knowledge transfer” from Lorraine to her replacement.

**Finance Director Report:** Lorraine distributed the FY16 Recap showing a \$40,572 deficit. She explained this was caused by a late in the FY insurance cost increase from a 5% estimate to 15% actual increase. This will be “zeroed out” once local receipts are finalized and will reduce next year’s free cash available.

**Liaison Reports:** None.

**Next Meeting:** Our next Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, October 7 at 7PM in the Hapgood Room of the Old Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Seeley, Secretary