

**ADVISORY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2014**

A meeting of the Advisory & Finance Committee was held on Wednesday, November 19, 2014. The meeting was called to order by Chairman John Moody at 7:00PM and was conducted in the Mayflower II Meeting Room at the Plymouth Town Hall, 11 Lincoln Street, Plymouth, Massachusetts.

PRESENT **Twelve members of the committee were present:**
Cornelius Bakker, Kevin Canty, Harry Helm, Kevin Hennessey, Michael Hourahan, Shelagh Joyce, , Kevin Lynch, Christopher Merrill, John Moody, Harry Salerno, Marc Sirrico, Charles Stevens

ABSENT **Three member of the committee were absent:**
Richard Gladdys, Michael Hanlon, Ethan Kusmin

AGENDA ITEMS

Review of Caucuses and Town Meeting

Harry Salerno thanked the Advisory & Finance Committee members for their cooperation with the caucus scheduling. He said he would like a chance to do the scheduling again in the Spring. John Moody also thanked the committee members for their cooperation throughout the Town Meeting and caucus process. He said that everyone did a great job. He reminded the committee that when they attend caucuses they are representing the Advisory & Finance Committee and their first responsibility is to put forward the view of the committee as a whole.

Upcoming Budget Cycle & Role of Budget Sub-Committees

John Moody explained that Spring Town Meeting is different because it contains the fiscal budget. Advisory & Finance receive their budget books after the Board of Selectmen review the budget in early January. Everything is then reviewed and finalized by mid-February so it is a tight schedule. In addition to the budget, all other Articles have to be heard by March 4th. The role of the budget sub-committees is very important. Everyone has their assignments. Although most budgets are rather tight due to trimming that has been made throughout the past few years, we still need to have a solid look at each line item to make sure all expenses are valid.

- Are the school's budget workshop dates available yet? We have not heard yet. John Moody said that he is going to try to schedule someone from the School Department to come to our December meeting. Since schools account for 50-60% of the town's budget, we should look at school funding carefully. There are lots of mandates and we should understand how far we have to go to meet those mandates.
- When do the sub-committees meet? Typically they meet during the weekday since that is when staff is available. Committee members should do their best to attend. If they are not able to attend they need to have that conversation with the Committee Chair and come up with another way to support the sub-committee like maybe conducting research.
- Is there a format or written guideline for the Chairs to follow in these meetings? There is nothing formal. Chairs need to schedule the meetings and make sure they post the meetings. Sub-committees may want to have a pre-meeting to come up with a list of points of discussion.

Public Comment

None

Old/New/Other Business

Comments/Questions:

- Town Meeting timeline was tight. Is there a way to prioritize articles or extend the timeline? The warrant for the Annual Town Meeting closes on December 17th. As articles become clear, we can start our own personal research. It is possible for the Sub-Committee Chairs to reach out to the departments before January.
- The Charter Review Committee has just assembled and if you would like the Town Meeting process and timing to be reviewed then you should reach out to them with your request.
- It would be nice to let the public know what goes on before Town Meeting and the website should not be the only avenue for information.

Meeting Minutes

- September 10, 2014: **Christopher Merrill made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Cornelius Bakker, second. The motion carries (10-0-1). Harry Salerno, abstained.**
- September 17, 2014: **Kevin Canty made a motion to approve the minutes. Michael Hourahan, second. The motion carries (9-0-2). Christopher Merrill and Shelagh Joyce, abstained.**
- October 1, 2014: **Christopher Merrill made a motion to approve the minutes. Michael Hourahan, second. The motion carries (9-0-2). Charles Stevens and Kevin Canty, abstained.**
- October 18, 2014: **Kevin Canty made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Kevin Hennessey, second. Cornelius Bakker, Christopher Merrill and Marc Sirrico, abstained.**

Questions/Discussion:

- Do Advisory & Finance meetings held right before Town Meeting always happen? The meeting is always held right before Town Meeting but we do not always have the number of Articles to review that we did this year. Inevitably there is new information on at least one Article though.
- Can the Advisory & Finance Committee just stick with its original vote and recommendation that is printed in the book and turn the decision making over to Town Meeting? The job of our committee is to make recommendations to Town Meeting, if there is new information that surfaces it is important for us to hear the new information.
- What if members are not present for that new information and re-vote? That is part of the democratic process. You have to be present to participate in that process.
- We can look at the rules of the Advisory & Finance Committee to see if we should re-write the rules regarding what can be heard the morning before Town Meeting. Maybe look at the requirement of a vote by super majority to overrule a vote previously taken, or something along those lines. There is one vacancy on the Rules Committee. Kevin Lynch volunteered.
- Is there a way to better educate petitioners so they are prepared when they come to present their Articles to us? John Moody said he can check with the Town Clerk to see what information is provided to petitioners.

ADJOURNMENT

**Cornelius Bakker moved for adjournment. Kevin Canty, second.
The motion for adjournment carries unanimously (11-0-0).
The meeting adjourned at 7:50PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kere Gillette