

**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**January 13, 2004**  
**Town Building**  
**APPROVED**

The meeting is brought to order at 7:10 p.m. In attendance are Tom Ryan, Patti Heron, Pam Glauner, Charlie Kern, Steve Dungan, Mary Kerr, and Janet Wheeler. David Walrath arrives at 7:30.

**Minutes**

- The minutes from the 12/9/03 meeting are amended. Patti moves to accept the 12/9/03 minutes as amended, Tom seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.
- The minutes from the 12/16/03 meeting are amended. Tom moves to accept the 12/16/03 minutes as amended, Patti seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

**Correspondence**

- Planning Board Preliminary FY '05 budgets. (2 drafts and cover letter)
- Appropriations Status Report through 12/31/03.
- Memo from the Selectmen Administrative Assistant Re: Annual Reports are due by 2/12/04.
- Memo from Minuteman Regional High School Re: Teacher Salary Survey.
- January 2004 edition of the MMA *Beacon*.

**Reserve Fund Transfer Request from the Recreation Department**

This request is for \$1,940 to cover back pay that is owed to the Recreation Department director. This error was caused by a step increase that was not included in the FY '04 budget. Tom moves to grant the request, Patti seconds the motion. Tom would like to know if the funds to cover this oversight can be taken from a revolving fund. Tom amends the motion to move to grant the request only if Bill Wrigley determines that the back pay cannot be taken from revolving funds. Patti is disconcerted that this oversight happened and nobody is present to answer questions. Mary suggests developing a checklist of procedures to use at budget reviews to help reduce errors and foresights such as this one. The motion to grant the request passes unanimously.

**Stow Housing Plan Review**

Mary describes The Stow Housing Plan that was developed for the Master Planning Committee and the town of Stow to assess housing and other municipal issues. A copy of notes Mary made on this plan is attached with these minutes. Steve believes that there are too many committees that exist to deal with housing issues. Janet adds that many of the large projects around town are not even close to maximum capacity, such as the Pilot Grove development.

**Draft of Letter to Selectmen Re: Getting Developers to Help Pay for Public Services**

Mary states that Stow must apply for local initiative program grants from the state. Steve suggests presenting the letter to the Board of Selectmen in person.

**Status of Zero-Based Budget for Stow**

Steve submitted a memo on zero based budgeting to all town departments which created some angst since some people believed that the town was in a tough fiscal situation similar to that of the schools. Tom believes that ZBB is important since even a small amount of savings can translate to an important line item or position.

## **SOP Manual**

Steve distributes copies of an updated draft of the SOP manual.

## **Preliminary Report on the FY '05 Budget**

Bill Wrigley had asked that all departments submit a level funded budget and a budget with a 3% COLA. Pam states that departments calculate the budget with a COLA in different ways, including applying the COLA to salaries, expenses, or both. Bill has not yet started his review of the budgets. Steve states that the annual town meeting will be on 5/17/04 and the FinCom recommendations are due around the first week in May. The consensus of the FinCom is that each liaison should review their department's budget before the review and develop ZBB style questions to ask the representative from that department.

## **Liaison Reports**

### **NRSD School Committee**

-Pam states that the Financial Advisory Board did not approve all the spending requests made by the School Committee. The line item for 3 full time equivalents for janitorial services was tabled until later in January and the routing software will be purchased from an administrative technology line item instead of surplus so FAB approval was not needed.

-Pam states that the School Committee received a letter from the Citizens of Stow group.

-Pam adds that the School Committee voted to approve the audit. The Audit Advisory Subcommittee is looking to take an active role in educating SC members on the audit process.

-Pam states that in response to handicapped accessibility (ADA) complaints, the NRSD is in midst of hearings with the MA Architectural Access Board.

-Pam states that the School Committee will receive a preliminary budget from the cost centers on 1/22/04. The superintendent also submitted a prioritized capital request list to the School Committee.  
**Minuteman HS**

-Charlie states that Superintendent Ron Fitzgerald plans to retire at the end of this year.

-Steve adds that there will soon be information on writing a letter to the state Department of Education to change the current flawed assessment calculation procedure.

## **Other Business**

-Tom suggests that a Tri-Town meeting be scheduled with the NRSD to discuss the FY '05 budget in conjunction with other town financial issues.

## **Action Items**

**-Steve and Mary to edit and send the letter to Selectmen re: getting developers to help pay for public services.**

**-Fincom to make corrections to the updated draft of the SOP manual by the 1/27 meeting.**

**-Patti to clarify the status of the COA budget.**

**-Steve to share the letter to the School Committee from the Citizens of Stow group at the 1/27 meeting.**

**-Jason and Pam to present the FinCom recommendations and concerns voiced at the 12/16 meeting at an upcoming School Committee meeting.**

Tom moves to adjourn the meeting, Patti seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously. The meeting is adjourned at 9:35.

Respectfully submitted by Mitchell Samson.