

**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**February 10, 2004**  
**Town Building**  
**APPROVED**

The meeting is brought to order at 7:10 p.m. In attendance are Tom Ryan, Patti Heron, Jason Robart Steve Dungan, David Walrath, Laura Rome, and Janet Wheeler. Mary Kerr and Charlie Kern arrived at 7:15.

**Minutes**

Jason moves to accept the 1/27/04 minutes as submitted, Patti seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

**Correspondence**

- Updated Tri-Town list of officials.
- 2/4/04 update of the Board of Health Level funded FY '05 budget request.
- Association of Town Finance Committees February Newsletter.
- February edition of the COA Newsletter.
- Memo from Minuteman Regional High School Re: Suggestions for the new superintendent.
- February edition of the *MMA Beacon*.
- Memo from Minuteman Regional High School Re: Preliminary Stow assessment to the FY '05 budget is \$919,382 based on the House 1 state budget.
- Notice of a Planning Board Public Hearing on 3/9/04 to amend the zoning bylaws.
- Planning Board Minutes from the 11/12/03 meeting.
- Memo from the Town Clerk Re: deadlines for various elections and town meetings.
- Memo from Robin Riley Re: The annual town meeting warrant will be open from 2/10/04 until 3/26/04.
- Schedule of Minuteman School Committee meetings.
- Memo from Minuteman Regional High School Re: Qualities in a new superintendent.
- Memo from the Community Preservation Committee Re: CPC forums on Deed Restrictions.
- Memo from Minuteman Regional High School Re: FY '05 budget. (Approximately level funded from last year.)
- Memo from Michael Wood Re: Raises to NRSB principals.
- Memo from the Highway Department Re: Snow and Ice budget.

**Annual Report**

Minor edits and amendments are made to the draft of the annual report. Steve will submit this document to the Town Clerk to be printed in the Town Report.

**Posting the FinCom Agenda on the Concerned Citizens of Stow Group E-mail Forum**

Steve asks if there is any concern about posting the FinCom agenda and final copy of the FinCom meeting minutes on this e-mail forum. The group contacted Steve to request these documents, and since they are public documents, Steve has no problems adding them to the distribution list. The consensus of the FinCom is to add this group to the distribution list.

**Liaison Reports**

Charlie states that the Minuteman High School budget will translate to a Stow assessment of about \$920,000. Ron Fitzgerald cannot yet finalize his budget since the legislature has not decided

how much it will reimburse the regional high schools for transportation money. About \$1 million was lost in revenue since Department of Education Commissioner Driscoll did not allow certain out of district students to attend Minuteman. Charlie states that there is not expected to be any legislative assistance this year, but it is possible next year. Charlie adds that there are many options available to change the calculations of mandated minimum assessments to member towns. However, there is no current plan to change the calculations.

Jason states that the FY '05 NRSD proposed budget is an increase of 8.12% from last year. Jason distributes a presentation compiled by Superintendent Michael Wood on budget drivers and rationale. Jason adds that the district is considering making the Snow and Ice budget a municipal expense instead of a district expenses. The Municipal Snow and Ice budget for Stow is \$80,000 not including certain funds contributed from the Highway Department budget.

### **FY '05 Budget Reviews**

Steve Submits a list of questions added to Pam's budget report. He noticed that most of the departments failed to submit job descriptions for department employees.

Accountant-Tom to ask why Office and Computer Expenses can not be lowered?

Assessors-Jason to ask whether the interim Building Inspector is paid by the day or by the hour. Also ask how the sharing of the Building Inspector works between Stow and Maynard.

Town Clerk-Steve suggests the potential for job sharing between the Treasurer-Collector office staff and the Town Clerk's office.

Conservation Commission-Laura to clarify the status of the special articles that were passed at town meeting.

Fire Dept- Steve suggests asking the chief about the idea of shared or volunteer fire services.

Board of Health- Mary requests clarification on the truck used by the Board of Health and a job description of the Animal Control officer.

Highway Dept.-Tom states that a half of the price of a new street sweeper might be funded by the state. Tom asked the Highway Department to develop a needs assessment of all capital and budget requests. Steve suggests the idea of sharing the purchase price of the street sweeper with another community since it will be used somewhat infrequently.

ITAC-David states that a nonrecurring special article relating to networking various town departments which is currently budgeted at \$6200 may be adequately funded with \$400 by using alternate means.

Library-Laura is concerned that the Library has already used 2/3 of their funds as of halfway through the fiscal year.

Municipal Lighting-Laura suggests that the Hale School lower parking lot lights be turned off late at night. Steve requests clarification on where the COLA is applied to a budget with no salary line items. Tom asks when the preferential street light rates take effect from when SMED was dissolved.

### **Action Items**

-Mitch to begin scheduling budget reviews.

-FinCom to talk with Bill Wrigley and Linda Hathaway on general budget issues at a future meeting.

Tom moves to adjourn the meeting, Jason seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously. The meeting is adjourned at 10:05.

Respectfully submitted by Mitchell Samson.