

Town of Stow
FINANCE COMMITTEE
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Finance Committee Minutes
4/25/17

Meeting was called to order at 705PM. Present were Peter McManus (PMcM), Werner Fritz (WF), Paul McLaughlin (PMcL), Artur Jurczyk (AJ), Rich Eckel (RE) Atli Thorarensen (AT) and Julianne North (JN).

Kathy Farrell, the fincom secretary submitted a letter of resignation due to a new job. We are sad to see her go and appreciate her time and effort over the past year to get the finance committee organized. Her viewpoints and administrative help will be missed.

A reserve fund transfer request from Doug Hyde of the Building Department was presented and discussed. The Building Dept is seeking \$7,000 to pay Hudson Light and Power for labor and materials for installation of six banner poles at three locations within the town right of way of route 117. The original cable system and supports have deteriorated and are unsafe and need to be replaced. The banners advertise town events. The finance committee discussed transferring \$4,900, the amount of the installation quote from HP&L. If the Building Department requires more funds for contingencies such as subsurface conditions and/or extra cable, they can request them at the next Finance Committee meeting. RE moved to accept the reserve fund transfer of \$4,900, JN seconded the motion, the committee voted unanimously in favor.

Mark Jones was present to discuss the NRSD FY18 school budget. Highlights include:

- Reported decreases in salary figures from fy17 to fy18 (5.01% decrease for district-wide salaries and 28.06% decrease for Special Education) do not reflect actual salary increases of 4-5% as reporting formats have changed.
- Lancaster will have a \$150,000 shortfall, may use free cash to cover this year but may need an override next year
- Center School and Hale are at capacity, without a lot of outside school choice kids. High school was built for 900, currently have 1,100 students with 85 school choice kids.
- Pre-K and full-day K programs (not state-mandated) need to support themselves. Programs are still a cheap alternative to daycare, even after price increases this year.
- State picks up the employee pension cost. \$50k in OPEB goes towards current

- liability for post-employment health care. Current year's liability is \$1.2million
- Curriculum has not been looked at in a while, changes may help reduce costs at HS.

Members discussed and voted on Warrant articles 37, 42, 51 and 74.

Article 37, \$15,000 for veteran benefits for fy17. This was not in the draft warrant we saw last meeting, PMcM to find out purpose, fincom will vote on before Annual Town Meeting.

Article 42, \$150,000 for support for development by Habitat for Humanity of Affordable homes on Pine Point. Discussions included lack of approvals (zoning, board of health, etc), lack of communication with abutters, well contamination by raised septic. Habitat process requires 50% fundraising for them to begin their process. RE moved to recommend approval PMcM seconded. Warrant approved with vote 4 in favor (PMcM, RE, PMcL, WF), one opposed (JN). PMcM will write up recommendation.

Article 51, \$492,000 for lower village traffic safety improvements. Discussions ensued about expectations for traffic improvement, improved attractiveness of area, drainage improvements, and use of highway funds. RE moved to approve, PcM seconded. Vote defeated with 2 in favor (PMcM, RE), three opposed (JN, WF, PML). WF will write up opinion.

Article 74, Zoning modification for Burrells on 44 Box Mill Rd. JN moved to approve, RE seconded, unanimous vote to approve. PMcM to write up.

PMcM to send around PPT presentation from last year, asked for updates before next meeting. Next meeting will be held in Hale cafeteria at 6:30PM on May 1, before town meeting.

RE moved to adjourn, PMcL seconded, all voted in favor.

Approved 5/23/17 JN

