

**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes  
October 22nd, 2015  
Town Hall  
Sturbridge, MA**

**Meeting called to order at 7:04 PM with the following committee members present; Chair Kathleen Neal (KN), Michael Serio (MS), Laurance Morrison (LM), Clerk Joni Light (JL), Robert Jepson (RJ), Alex Perez (AP), newly appointed member Suzanne Smiley (SS) and Leah Boutelle (as recording clerk). Vice Chair Kevin Smith(KS) is absent.**

**Reserve Fund Transfers**

KN explains we will delay going over the meeting minutes from the meeting on 7-21-15 due to technical projection issues. The agenda will consist of two Reserve Fund Transfers (RFT), new business, and old business. The first RFT submitted by Finance Director Barbara Barry on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015, in the amount of \$6,500.00 is to be transferred to Town Hall Supplies Account #11932-54000, Center Office Supplies Account #11942-54000, Library Supplies Account #11962-54000, and DPW Supplies Account #14102-54000, for the purchase of Automated External Defibrillators. The amount in total is \$6,380.00; four units at \$1,595.00 each and surplus to provide adequate signage for said units. Town Administrator Leon Gaumond (LG) desires more of these units in public buildings in light of the incident at Tantasqua Junior High, where a student's life was saved through the AED's availability. She explains that the units do not require training and the unit is equipped with clear instructions for use.

SS inquires as to which department is responsible for maintenance, suggesting the Fire Department.

KN states that this has not been discussed.

RJ offers that once the unit is opened it needs to be re-calibrated.

JL and KN suggest that it's likely this maintenance would come out of the buildings budget to which it belongs.

KN offers that it could be the Fire Department's responsibility.

JL asks where the funds are going.

KN reads over the account numbers to where the RFT's will be transferred, and says that Chief Zinther has the pricing quotes on the units.

JL asks if the school would like an AED unit on each floor so that it is immediately available.

KN is not sure where or how the original AED was purchased for the school.

SS asks if it would be possible to research further and do an electronic vote.

KN asserts that the Sturbridge Finance Committee does not do electronic voting.

LM offers that these curiosities are inconsequential, as the implementation of the equipment is not the

responsibility of the committee.

*RJ makes motion to approve RFT as written, LM seconds, motion passes 7-0-0.*

KN reads the second RFT, submitted by Barbara Barry on October 13, 2015, in the amount of \$10,000.00 to the Insurance Blanket Account #19102-57410, where the current balance is \$549.67. She explains that the Worker's Compensation rates increased by 19% from last year.

JL inquires as to why the RFT was submitted so late.

KN states that it is on a fiscal year basis.

SS offers that someone should be reviewing these rates from the prior year audit and categorizing people correctly. Rates should also be compared to make sure that no one is being over or unfairly charged.

JL asks if Barbara Barry is responsible for such a comparison and review.

KN asserts that the balances owed have been paid, but for the future this fund needs to have a sufficient balance.

JL asks if this is in reference to the Reserve Fund for FY 2016.

KN notes that the balance in the Reserve Fund for FY16 is \$133,000.00.

JL agrees that the RFT must be approved.

*RJ makes motion to approve RFT as written, JL seconds, motion passes 7-0-0.*

### **New Business**

KN reads over a memo submitted to all committees from the Town Administrator stressing the importance of civil discourse at all meetings. She explains that in the memo LG received a complaint from a citizen who was treated inappropriately at a meeting. KN is looking for a replacement for Arnold Wilson, a past liaison to the School Committees, and is wondering if the Finance Committee has any volunteers.

SS asks who has the most experience with schools.

KN offers that LM and herself do.

LM states that he was the liaison for two years.

MS asks if there are usually two people from the committee covering.

LM offers that the position should be consistent with depth of knowledge and breadth of knowledge, and that rotation is key because there is a large disparity in extent of knowledge. He maintains that if a volunteer is not available, one should be sought out who is knowledgeable and hasn't had the position before, for the sake of looking at issues with a new perspective.

JL inquires as to if the School Committee is just starting the budgeting process.

KN asserts that the budgeting won't start until early January.

JL inquires of KN if she plans to maintain the current rotation and rationale.

KN maintains that she will and that it seems to be natural.

LM states that the rationale was developed to equally distribute the workload between members of the committee, and that accounts were distributed in such a way that some members would be responsible for one or two large accounts, while other members would be responsible for a larger quantity of more nominal accounts.

KN asserts that she doesn't plan on changing the set up.

JL asks if KN notified the other members that she was bumped from the Tourist Association seat. JL goes on to explain she's been a member for two years and this would have been the third, but due to rotation of members and availability of members from other committees she was relieved from filling the seat.

RJ offers that education expenses are hefty and the attitude about spending amounts in the millions seems to be casual.

KN and MS offer that the Finance Committee approved funds for the new high school.

KN goes on to explain that the issue was well worked through and the decision to build it and spend that money took several years and multiple meetings.

RJ asked if there was ever a reduction after the initial funds request.

KN says yes.

MS states that two meetings need to be rescheduled for the Personnel Committee. He asserts that LG has to catch up and "do housekeeping" before these meetings can take place, because there are years of correspondence he has to go over. LG has appointed two new members, making the committee a total of six seats. Furthermore, he explains that there are new job descriptions.

JL asks if the Finance Committee has a permanent seat on the Personnel Committee.

MS says that presently, yes, there is an appointed person from the Finance Committee. He explains that former member Don Fairbrother passed away and this stopped further progress, so the TA is absorbing all past information, and needs to find time, next meeting is scheduled for November 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Old Business**

KN states that KN and KS met with Finance Director, Barbara Barry, and LG and talked about the Memorandum of Findings submitted by the Finance Committee for the first time ever. They also discussed STA economic development, facilities manager, senior center, criteria for revolving funds,

and delved into the nursery school and getting up to speed on the town's happenings.

JL offers LG said that he was going to talk to KN and KS about STA and intends to attend all meetings

KN says that LG would like to have meetings about Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest Laws that he would present (TA) even with oversight committees that don't have a department head. She notifies the committee that the town's Free Cash was certified at 3 million dollars. Tax rate was certified early, the tax rate went down and tax bills went out on time. She proffers that this is a healthy amount to have in Free Cash.

*RJ makes motion to adjourn at 7:29, LM seconds, motion passes 7-0-0.*