

Upton Finance Committee (Fincom) Minutes, revised
February 23, 2011 at Upton Fire Department

The Chairman, Joan Shanahan, called the meeting to order, with a quorum, at 7:19 PM.

Members Present: Six

Members Absent: Two

Joan Shanahan, Chair (JS)
Steve Bern (SB)
Paul Flaherty (PF)
Karen Glowacki (KG)
Herman Meisner (HM)
John O'Sullivan (JO)

Jonathan Calianos (JC)
Jennifer Malin (JM)

The Chairman advised the committee that the Town Clerk has asked to change the date of her meeting with the committee. The committee decided to reschedule her appearance to March 16.

The Chairman spoke to the Town Clerk for a clarification on the requirements of the Open Meeting Law regarding the minutes of this committee. According to the Town Clerk more detail is required than this committee has provided in the past. In addition, the Open Meeting Law requires that any documents discussed have to be listed as attachments to the minutes. It is not necessary that the Town Clerk receive a copy of the attachments with the minutes, but they must be available upon request. (Attachment 1: Excerpt from the Open Meeting Law.)

The Chairman will keep a folder for each meeting that will contain any documents listed as attachments. If she is going to be away, the files will be left with another member of the committee.

There was a discussion regarding approval for the minutes of February 16. A member of the committee expressed dissatisfaction with the minutes as written and the title of the person taking the minutes. The committee did not accept the minutes as written so they will be retyped and resubmitted for discussion and possible approval at the next meeting. In addition, the minutes from February 9 will be retyped and reviewed for possible approval at the next meeting.

The Chairman, as requested, provided information about the bylaw that established the Local Community Housing Partnership Committee. (Attachment 2: A copy of Article 41 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant of May 17, 2007 with a copy of the Citizens Petition that placed it on the warrant.)

The next item was discussion of the budget submitted for the Library and confusion about the amount requested for salaries. The budget was submitted pending the recommendation of the Personnel Board. Mr. Bern will contact the Library Director for an update. (Attachment 3: Draft Budget Upton Library FY 2012)

There was discussion regarding the budget submitted for the School. The figures presented take into account the loss of grants totaling \$1,047,000. As the figures are presented, the total increase for Upton is \$1,454,000 and \$1,105,000 for Mendon.

A member of the committee asked about the possible expense to repair the roof from damage done during snow clearing. There is optimism that this will be covered by insurance or grant money.

There was a discussion about \$519,000 set aside for schools this year.

There was discussion about the language used in the document regarding overrides.

The assessment at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical School is based on the number of students that attend from Upton. (Attachment 4: Proposed School Budget)

The committee reviewed the Town of Upton Finance Committee FY12 Budget Recommendation Summary. Mr. Bern has adjusted the format of the document according to requests made by the Town Manager and the Town Accountant.

There was a discussion and explanation of the Conservation Commission budget request.

The budget presented has allowed \$200,000 for snow and ice. This might be a place to have some flexibility depending on the expenditure for the rest of this year. (Attachment 5: Town of Upton Finance Committee FY12 Budget Recommendation Summary)

The question was raised asking if the allowance for fuels accounts should be increased. The answer was that this was already accounted for.

The committee reviewed the Department of Public Works (DPW) Rolling Stock Cap Plan FY12-FY16. (Attachment 6: DPW Rolling Stock Cap Plan FY12-FY16)

At the present time, there are not a lot of separate articles, but that could change. The Capitol Budget Committee (CBC) may be planning to submit an article requesting funding of a study to look at alternative locations for town offices. The CBC does not make recommendations on vehicles that are under \$100,000.

There was concern expressed by members of the committee at the amount of increases in requests from multiple departments. There was discussion of a new program for Merit Bonuses being added, in addition to longevity bonuses. This will be an item discussed with the Town Manager when she returns at a future meeting.

The overall increase in the budget submitted is an increase of 7% independent of salary increases. Salary increases are up 6%. A request was made to have the percent increase independent of the schools.

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:40 by Mr. Flaherty. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen Arnold

Attachments:

1. Excerpt from the Open Meeting Law
2. A copy of Article 41 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant of May 17, 2007 and a copy of the Citizens Petition that placed it on the warrant.)
3. Draft Budget Upton Library FY2012)
4. Proposed School Budget
5. Town of Upton Finance Committee FY12 Budget Recommendation Summary)
6. DPW Rolling Stock Cap Plan FY12-FY16