

Town of Uxbridge, Massachusetts Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: June 13, 2017

Place: Board of Selectmen Room

Attendance: Present or Absent

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------|---|----------------|---|
| Peter DeMers - Chair | P | Ken Tavares | A | Michael Wilson | P |
| Mark Andrews- Vice Chair | P | Evelyn Marchand | A | Derek Normadin | P |
| Susan Franz- Clerk | P | | | | |

Call to Order: 6:30 PM

Agenda:

1. Organization

The committee thanks Richard Napolillo for his many years of service.

MOTION / SECOND / DISCUSSION / VOTE

| | | | | | |
|--------|---|-----|----|------|-------|
| Motion | Peter DeMers as Chairman of the Finance Committee | | | | |
| 1st | DN | 2nd | MW | Vote | 5-0-0 |

MOTION / SECOND / DISCUSSION / VOTE

| | | | | | |
|--------|--|-----|----|------|-------|
| Motion | Mark Andrews as Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee | | | | |
| 1st | MW | 2nd | DN | Vote | 5-0-0 |

MOTION / SECOND / DISCUSSION / VOTE

| | | | | | |
|--------|---|-----|----|------|-------|
| Motion | Susan Franz as Clerk of the Finance Committee | | | | |
| 1st | DN | 2nd | MA | VOTE | 5-0-0 |

2. Reserve Fund Transfer for FY2017 set up costs for Harper's Payroll Service

Deferred until arrival of Town Manager, David Genereux

3. Meeting Minutes

MOTION / SECOND / DISCUSSION / VOTE

| | | | | | |
|--------|----------------------|-----|----|------|-------|
| Motion | Minutes May 16, 2017 | | | | |
| 1st | MA | 2nd | MW | Vote | 4-0-1 |

2 (cont). Town Manager joins the meeting.

The Town Manager requests a reserve fund transfer of \$4,000 of Harper's Payroll Service. The Town Manager states the purchase was not anticipated when the FY2017 budget was set up. He states that the Payroll Administrator gave her notice and the current software program was bought out by another firm and discontinued. The salary savings remain in the budget but are not available for transfer to pay for needed payroll professional services until the end of the fiscal year. The annual cost is projected from a quote by Harper's to be approximately \$24,000 per year. Funds are needed for setup and check production for the first three months of the year.

Susan Franz asked if training modules are included for staff. The Town Manager said Harper's came and did training. The first weekly error rate was 3%. Peter DeMers asked why the amount increased from the initial emailed request of \$2,500. The Town Manager responded that the end-of-year school payroll requires five runs. The Town Manager says any excess will be turned-back.

Mark Andrews asked if this is the only expected reserve fund transfer. The Town Manager responded that this is the only one, for now, but there may be other unexpected bills.

Peter DeMers asked if the online portal would eliminate paystubs. The Town Manager responded that, in time, it likely would. The Town Manager also clarified that the service is for 52 pay periods as required by some public safety union contracts.

MOTION / SECOND / DISCUSSION / VOTE

| | | | | | |
|--------|--|-----|----|------|-------|
| Motion | Transfer from Reserve Fund to account 10-130-5200 of the amount of \$4,000 | | | | |
| 1st | MA | 2nd | MW | Vote | 5-0-0 |

4. Committee Involvement

Peter DeMers said there was a very favorable response to the liaison program from the department heads and other committees. The committee members responded that they found the process interesting and useful. Michael Wilson and Derek Normandin expressed interest in continuing to work with the School Committee. Mark Andrews stated he is currently working with the Police Department and the Town Manager for the Unclassified budget areas. Peter DeMers contributed that Richard Napolillo had been liaising with the Fire Department, Evelyn Marchand with DWP, Ken Tavares with the Library and Senior Center, and Peter with some of the smaller departments. Susan Franz expressed interest in taking over the Fire Department from Richard and working on revenue issues, including economic development, grants, and assessments.

Peter DeMers suggests that committee members could also participate in tours, bring questions back to the committee, and ask officials to join Finance Committee meetings. Peter suggests that members go through the budget and send a note about their interests for this year.

Michael Wilson suggested we reach out to establish contacts with the departments that are not assigned a liaison to the Finance Committee.

5. Reports

The committee members present felt electronic copies would be acceptable for report distributions. The Town Manager said pending reports would be distributed tomorrow.

4. Old business - None

5. New business

a) Peter DeMers shared an invitation from Kristen Black at the Health Department to a presentation on Wednesday to look at options for town-wide recycling and waste collection. Some other towns, including Upton, have town-wide collection and bag programs.

b) Susan Franz suggests identifying how to create areas that are “business ready” and to consider strategies on how to move that forward.

Michael Wilson observed that the first step might be to turn around the perception and desires of the town. He suggests that we have valid, positive discussions in opposition to negative talk. His view is that “perception is everything” and that we need to shift how we present the town to a positive light.

Mark Andrews states that he thinks it may be a combination of both and that we can put things in place but we do have to fix the issues.

Susan Franz responded that she is trying to take it more to a strategic level and that she is not sure that the town even knows what it wants. Other committee members agreed.

Susan Franz noted that the current solar generating capacity is 25% of the capacity of the proposed power plant that did not pass town meeting. Peter DeMers was concerned that the revenues from the solar projects are not on the same scale as the power plant proposal and that solar development may slow in the future. Susan Franz noted that we might need to look at the revenue proposals on projects going forward. She also suggests that other kinds of projects could be considered, such as farm leasing arrangements for which programs currently exist.

The Town Manager notes that many of our efforts are reactive and that there are areas where we may not have sufficient governmental infrastructure in place. Many efforts are led by volunteers. The Town Manager notes that we are fighting to get an online permitting system and our staffing mix is "boots on the ground." Susan Franz agreed that we need to look at the organizational structure and the leadership can not do all of it in their spare time and be successful.

Susan Franz observed that the town is being limited in revenue growth to the limits of proposition 2 1/2 because our tax base is largely residential and based on property taxes and that we need to look at what will work in our community and with our mix of resources.

Peter DeMers contributed that there is a nice model in Berlin that does an excellent job of preserving the small town character in the town center and is successfully growing industry along the town borders. He notes that there are many blends we can look at to see what works best for Uxbridge.

The Town Manager stated that it is important not to talk negatively and that the mind set has to change. He observed that there will be challenges but we need to get the message out that we are open to development and need to have the message of "let's talk about it." Susan Franz observed that public relations has to be more than telling people to "watch the meetings" and that we need to communicate better with the town.

c) Mark Andrews wanted to raise the issue that there have been four public meetings in two months with comments made about potentially inaccurate numbers around sewer and water services. Mark will bring that issue up with Dave.

d) There is an invitation to the committee to a meeting on Chapter 70 being sponsored by Representative Kuros and Senator Fattman.

e) Peter DeMers made a request about committee communications and social media. In his view, committee members should:

- Avoid discussions about issues over email
- Avoid "reply-all" to emails
- Members should feel free to call Peter if something needs to be added to the next meeting's

agenda

- Prefers that committee members refrain from using social media about any issues that might come before the committee and any issues related to the town and is concerned that the committee member are able to remain independent.
- Suggests that disseminating information to the public can be done through Town Meeting, Town Web site, or a committee-driven public access presentation.
- Asks members to refrain from being involved in any other hot-topic or controversial issues.

Mark Andrews noted that he tends to put the actual facts out and that the longer that incorrect or misunderstood information is on social media, the more problems it can cause. He suggests having a minimum of one FinComm meeting a month. Peter DeMers says he has no issue with putting up a link without commentary, such as links to the Town Website.

Susan Franz said she understands the issue but that she, respectfully, disagrees and that what people do on their private time is not actually the business of this committee. She offers that she understand the issue of neutrality and that we do not want people to have to recuse on every vote. She noted that before someone joins a committee that they are required to list their conflicts of interest and the other things that they are involved in and she does not believe that we can ignore Facebook. She observes that it is a violation of the municipal regulations that we operate under to control what people post when it is not on town resources and not on town time.

Peter DeMers noted that his intent is not to control, but that he is requesting that members of the committee not put themselves in a situation where people will question the motives behind their decisions and that he will leave it up to each individual person.

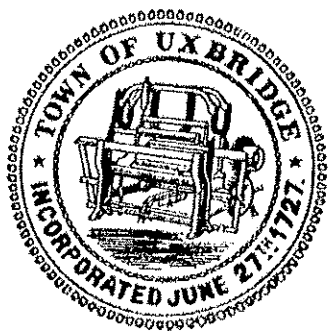
Motion to adjourn: ~~8:00 pm~~ ^(SF)
Ad 7:40 pm.

1ST MA

ZND

SF

VOTES 5-0



Finance Committee Approval Sheet

Date: 06/13/2017

Location: Board of Selectmen Room

| Name | Signature | Date |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Peter DeMers | | 03 OCT 17 |
| Mark Andrews | | 03 Oct 17 |
| Susan Franz | | 03 Oct 17 |
| Evelyn Marchand | | |
| Derek Normadin | | 10-3-17 |
| Ken Tavares | | |
| Michael Wilson | | 10-3-17 |