

# Town of Fairhaven

## Finance Committee

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Minutes of the meeting for <February 28, 2013>at the BPW Administration Building, Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

Members in attendance:

Chairman-John Roderiques, Robert A. Furtado, Scott Fernandes, Kim Hyland, Kathi Carter, Kevin Costa, Therese Szala, Colin Veitch, Dawn Devlin, Sid Martin, Phil Washko, Padraic Elliot

Town of Fairhaven:

Historical Commission: 7:10 PM appointment

David Despres- Chairman, John Medeiros

Christopher Richard- Director of Tourism

School Department: 7:30 appointment

Dr. Robert Baldwin-Superintendent of Schools, Paul Kitchen- Business Administrator

School Committee: Pam Kuechler- Chairperson, David Gonsalves, Donna McKenna,

Bernard Roderick

Meeting was covered by government access television. Member of the press present.

Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Announced that the meeting was being recorded by government access TV. Chairman has to be notified if anyone else present is recording.

Motion made by Kim to accept the minutes from February 21, 2013. Seconded by Sid.

Vote: Unanimous

The Chairman passes out updated budget spreadsheet, updated Article spreadsheet, Historical Commission budget breakdown, and updated Board of Health budget.

- 7:10 PM: Mr. Richard presents the Tourism budget
  - Salary is up for the 1% increase on June 30, 2013.
  - Rent, heat, light, & power categories are eliminated because the office is now housed at the Academy Building. Utilities are paid by the Historical Commission.
  - Postage category was added this year. Postage used to be listed under advertising.

- Mr. Despres presents the Article requests for the Historical Commission.
  - Academy Building request is raised to \$ 5,000 to cover the increased usage of utilities, because of Office of Tourism.
  - All other categories are same as last year.
  - Historical Commission also has CPC Articles on the Special Town Meeting. They are welcome to come back on March 21, 2013 when the CPC presents their Articles.
  - The Chairman urges the Commission to get their budget incorporated into Article 4 like other departments.

Chairman discusses revenue numbers with committee.

- As of this week the proposed deficit has increased by \$ 144,000 because of an accounting error associated with the debt from the new school
- Using the Selectmen's conservative scenario would required approximately \$ 1,000,000 in cuts.
- At this point we have approximately \$ 44,000,000 in revenue. \$ 75,000 should be held back to cover for the possible lack of State money
- All revenue scenarios will still max out the taxpayers.

7:25 PM Chairman calls a recess while the secretary makes copies. Back in session @7:30 PM.

- Dr. Baldwin presents the School Department budget.
  - The FY 14 request is \$ 17,978,499.
  - Salary category includes 1% raise on June 30, 2013, steps, lane changes, longevity. Category is up only \$ 104,000 because of staffing reductions. Staffing was reorganized because of the consolidation of the Wood and Rogers schools.
  - Transportation costs are up \$ 238,920 because of the extra buses required to transport Rogers students to the new Wood School. Mr. Kitchen explains that the bids will be opened on March 11, 2013 and the final figure will be adjusted at that time. There is a possibility that 1 bus could be eliminated once they see how the runs work out. Mr. Kitchen states that busing starts at 2 miles from the schools but students cannot cross Route 6 or 240. Safety is always primary. Special Ed busing number is generally figured by using the previous year's students. There are always adjustments once school starts.
  - Discussion of staffing levels. Vice principal has been added to work between Wood and East Fairhaven Schools. 1 less secretarial position. 1 less nurse. Some paraprofessionals are relocated between different schools, depending on where the need is. Same holds true for English language learner positions.

Not all positions in the school are necessarily funded by the town.

- Discussion of Net School Spending.
- Discussion of the use of Technology in the schools and the instruction of Technology.
- Discussion of Utilities:

The new Wood School will have a displacement ventilation system, which is new to the Fairhaven School Dept.

Mr. Kitchen is using figures from the Lincoln School in New Bedford as a starting point to figure utilities. That school has the same system in place.

- Chairman states we still do not have concrete revenue numbers. Chairman does not see \$ 1,000,000 worth of cuts being made at TM.  
States that the School Dept. is number 1 generator of revenue in the town. If you cut the budget and start cutting services, the out of town students will stop coming to Fairhaven.  
Chairman advises that the department is headed to a problem in the long term, as salaries are 80% of the overall budget.

8:25 PM Chairman calls recess. Back in session @ 8:33 PM.

- Discussion of School Dept. Articles.
  - Revolving Accounts
    - Bus fees:
      - Historically when bus fees were instituted, fewer students rode the bus and the system ended up losing money.
    - Athlete fees:
      - Historically when fees were charged for sports, fewer students from Acushnet chose to attend Fairhaven High School.
  - Article #10 High School Fire Escapes:  
Mr. Kitchen presents documentation from the architectural firm with 3 options for the fire escapes. Costs range from \$ 150,000 for repair, to \$ 300,000 for total replacement of both fire escapes.  
Article #10 seeks \$200,000 from the General Fund. Mr. Kitchen seeks to appropriate \$ 104,000 from last year's CPC grant for the high school. That money was left when the school was unable to get a matching grant for another project.  
The fire escapes must pass an inspection every 5 years. Last inspection was 2008.

The main issue with the repairs and maintenance is the fact that the fire escapes are coated with lead based paint.

The High School Trust money would be used for the architectural fees. Only the interest from that account can be expended.

If the fire escapes cannot meet the inspection, the 4 classrooms on the 3rd floor cannot be used.

- Chairman offers an invitation to the School Dept. to return if the committee must make cuts to their recommended budget.
  
- Next week:  
Board of Public Works  
Following week:  
Board of Health  
Natural Resources
  
- Phil requests written agendas for each meeting, laying out which votes will be taken.  
Discussion follows:  
Chairman states it is not always easy to tell what votes will be taken ahead of time.  
Revenue numbers are always changing. Sites last year's \$ 200,000 showing up long into the process.
  
- Chairman says to be prepared to vote on the School Dept. budget next week.
- After the BPW finishes next week we will work on the back half of Article #4, Unclassified.  
Discussion of Stabilization Account.
  
- Chairman advises committee to look over budgets and have their questions, if any, ready.
- If committee doesn't get further revenue guidance, we will start with the \$ 44,000,000 and decide how much we are going to leave.
  
- 9:29 PM Kim motions to adjourn. Seconded by Sid. Vote: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado  
Finance Committee Secretary

(accepted 3-7-2013)