

# Town of Fairhaven

## Finance Committee

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Minutes of the meeting for <February 26, 2015>at the BPW Administration Building,  
5 Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

Members in attendance:

Chairman-John Roderiques, Robert A. Furtado, Padraic Elliott, Kathi Carter, Lisa Plante,  
John Mota

Member absent:

Scott Fernandes

Town of Fairhaven:

Jeffery Osuch- Executive secretary

Timothy Francis- Fire Chief

Meeting was covered by government access television. Member of the press was not 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 the meeting by video or audio.

Motion made by John M. to accept the minutes from February 19, 2015. Seconded by Lisa.

Vote: Unanimous

- Mr. Osuch distributes updated copies of the ATM warrant, an updated Article spreadsheet, updated Article 4 spreadsheet, revised Election & Registration budget, and an expense report from the Historical Commission.
- Chairman states that Lisa has volunteered to compile the salary listings for the Fin Com book this year.
- Chairman runs down the schedule of appointments upcoming:  
March 5, 2015                      Selectmen & Historical Commission

March 12, 2015	BPW for their budgets & Articles
March 19, 2015	Police
March 26, 2015	Schools
April 2, 2015	Town Accountant & Finance Director

- Meeting with the Fire Chief begins @ 7:06 PM.
  - Chief Francis states that there is a \$27,301.08 increase in the Salary line for the retirement buyout of the Deputy Chief.  
The new firefighter request accounts for an increase of \$56,155.20.  
The remaining increase is caused by contractual increases.
  - The \$9,000 in Capital Outlay is for a new main server for the computers.
  - Overtime is increased because of contractual increases in Training & Fire Officer Development
  - The Medical Services line is reestablished with \$500 for physicals for firefighters. Chief Francis states they cost \$200 to \$225 each, and he tries to do 2 a year.
  - Chief Francis has established a new line- IT Services & Supplies- with \$1,500 in that line. This would be used to replace 1 or 2 computers a year.
    - Chairman ask how many computers the station has.
      - Chief Francis states there are 7, not counting the ones in the ambulances.
  - Supplies is increased because of the contractual clothing allowance.
  - Chief Francis starts discussion of adding the additional firefighter:
  - Chief Francis runs down the number of ambulance runs for the last 3 years.
 

2012	1,817 runs
2013	2,029 runs
2014	2,318 runs
  - Chief Francis also lists the revenue generated.
 

FY12	\$680,398
FY13	\$824,574
FY14	\$899,153
FY15	\$626,973 (to date), estimate an additional \$425,000 by the end of the year.
  - Chairman asks for a breakdown of the runs by the level of service.
    - Chief Francis states that 10% are Priority 1, the worst cases- not breathing
      - 70% are Priority 2, shortness of breath, etc.
      - 20% are Priority 3, more minor cases
    - Chairman tells Chief Francis he would like to see a 4-5 year breakdown of each type of run.
  - Chairman asks how many runs were transports from the Southcoast campuses in town.

- Chief Francis states that in 2014
 

From 206 Mill Road (Cancer Center)	Priority 1	0
	Priority 2	21
	Priority 3	3
From 208 Mill Road (Urgent Care)	Priority 1	0
	Priority 2	246
	Priority 3	72
	Priority 4	5
	Mutual aid	5
- Chairman asks why 1 additional position will make a difference?
  - Chief Francis states that the ambulance runs are causing the officer to have to leave the station, and the inspections and other fire related work is not getting done.
- Chairman asks how many communities our size are running 3 ambulances?
  - Chief Francis states he doesn't know. Dartmouth has more, but they are privatized. Chief Francis states Dartmouth doesn't keep all the ambulances in town.
- Chairman states the increase is caused by the Urgent Care Center.
  - Chief Francis states his runs have increased 10 to 14% each year. He states the Urgent Care Center is only part of the reason.
  - Chairman states the Urgent Care can only handle so many visits. Eventually the runs will plateau.
  - Chief Francis states it is also car accidents and the aging of the Town population.
- Lengthy discussion between the Chairman and Chief Francis about the ambulance service paying for itself, how much is coming from the Tax Levy, and proper costing of the service.
- Discussion of the staffing of the ambulances and response time.
- Discussion of Chief Francis meeting his revenue projections.
- Chairman states that he wants to see if the Selectmen fund this position after saying that we need to listen to the financial staff in town, while the financial people are saying this won't cover the expenses.
- Pat asks if the people being transported from the Urgent Care Center are Fairhaven residence or out of town people?
  - Chief Francis states he doesn't know.  
Chief Francis states the calls are not private transport calls.  
The calls from Urgent Care come in as 911 calls. Chief Francis states that these people have insurance and we are paid for the runs.
  - Chief Francis also states that not every call is transported to St. Luke's now. Heart cases automatically go to Charlton. Trauma cases are routed to Rhode Island Hospital.

- Pat states that it is a tough decision to make.
    - Discussion of level of service.
    - Discussion of ambulances staying on line longer now.
  - Chairman states, if what Chief Francis is saying is true, the increase will compound and he will need more people in the future.
  - Pat states it is tough to make a decision without a true cost analysis of the service.
  - Chairman states he is not picking on the firefighters, but every department can make the argument for more staff.
 

The town doesn't exist to run Fire & Ambulances.
  - Chief Francis again states he increases his revenue every year.
  - Chairman states he may break his own argument and put an Article on the STM for the costing of the ambulance service.
  - Chairman states, he is not saying without the ambulance service we wouldn't have a full time fire dept.
 

We just need to know the total cost of the ambulance.
  - Pat asks why the Urgent Care isn't paying for the runs.
    - Chief Francis states the patients have insurance that pays for the runs.
  - Chairman asks Mr. Osuch if the Selectmen have voted on this yet.
    - Mr. Osuch states no.
- Discussion of Article 21- CPR Revolving Account
    - Chairman asks if they have determined the money amount yet.
      - Chief Francis states yes. He doesn't know the exact amount, but thinks it is \$5,000.
    - John M. asks what the Article is for.
      - Chief Francis states Fairhaven would be responsible for issuing CPR cards for the surrounding area.
 

Chief Francis states will would pay \$3 for the cards and charge \$5. The Town would keep the difference, and not have to pay for cards for Town employees that have to be certified.
    - Chairman asks why the money isn't going to pay for the administrative work of issuing the cards.
      - Chief Francis states he was told it could be used for anything CPR related.
      - Chief Francis states the administrative assistant would perform the work, and it won't take time away from anyone else.
    - Lisa asks Chief Francis how many cards would be issued.
      - Chief Francis states he doesn't know for sure, but it would be in the hundreds.

- Mr. Osuch asks Chief Francis about the cost of the computer server. States that the one specified for Town Hall cost half as much.
  - Chief Francis states this was quoted by the IT person.
  
- Discussion of the Fire Alarm budget:
  - Pat asks about the increase in Vehicle Maintenance.
    - Chief Francis states he has exceeded the budget each year.
    - The bucket truck is a 1990 model and is getting more expensive to repair. It is still passing the recertification each year.
    - Chief Francis states that every department in town uses the truck.
  - Mr. Osuch asks if the Salary can be reduced.
    - Chief Francis states that this only allows for 1 man to work 1 day/week all year, and 1 man to work 1 day/week for 6 months. He wants to have 2 men on staff so if 1 goes on vacation, the other can service the alarm system if something happens.

8:02 PM Chief Francis leaves the meeting.

8:03 PM Chairman calls a recess. Back in session @ 8:10 PM.

- Chairman advises members to keep in mind what we are trying to do as a town this year, curtail spending. The recommended revenue number is realistic. We should be able to fit a realistic operating budget into it.
- Chairman wants to clarify a statement made by Chief Francis, that Fin Com gave him permission to run the third ambulance. Chairman states that the Fin Com was not the board that gave permission to run a third ambulance. At the time, Fin Com made it clear that they didn't want the third ambulance to cost the Town any additional money.
- EMS is a priority, but it is a question of what the Town can afford.
- Some communities have agreements with private firms to cover the overflow of calls.
- Mr. Osuch states that with the additional employee and overtime, and \$50,000 set aside for the new ambulance, we would be looking to take \$1,000,000 from the Ambulance Account this year.
- Mr. Osuch states that the gasoline allowance in the budget should be higher with 3 ambulances.
- Chairman states that runs have increased 14% and revenue has increased 8 1/2%.
- We will wait for the Selectmen before we vote.

- Committee reviews Articles:
  - Article 20-Community Preservation Program Appropriations
    - Bob asks where the Bike Path signs are going to go.
    - Mr. Osuch states he does not know.
      - Pat motions for the following amounts:
        - Reserve for Future Appropriation-
          - A. Acquisition, creation, and preservation of Open Space, and its rehabilitation and restoration \$50,000
        - Spending Appropriations-
          - B. Fairhaven Housing Authority- Oxford Terrace- Heating System Modernization Project \$100,000
          - C. Town Hall Sidewalk Restoration Project- Walnut Street Side and Library Sidewalk Restoration Project- Center Street Side \$165,000
          - D. Fairhaven High School- Cushman Park Track Resurfacing Project \$65,000
          - E. Historical Commission- Ft. Phoenix Revetment Wall & Magazine Earthen Parapet Restoration Project \$105,000
          - F. Bikeway Committee- Bike Path Safety Signage Project \$3,000
        - Administrative Spending Appropriation
          - G. To fund the Community Preservation Committee's annual expenses as follows: Personal Service-\$6,700; Purchase of Services- \$3,400; Supplies- \$500; Other Charges/Expenses- \$2,000 \$12,600
      - All amounts seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous

Committee appoints Pat as acting Chairman because John Roderiques has a conflict with Article 27

- Article 27- FEMA Port Security 25% Grant Match
  - Lisa motions for \$7,500 from the Waterways Account. Seconded by John M..  
Vote: Motion passes 5 to 0 with John R. abstaining.

John Roderiques continues as Chairman.

- Article 30- Street Lights
  - Lisa states she viewed the Wayne Street location.  
The street has 3 poles on it and this light would be on the center pole.  
There are no lights on the street now.
  - Bob states he viewed both streets.  
Agrees with Lisa on Wayne Street.  
Bob states Temple Place has 1 light in the middle of the block between Washington St. and Spring St.

The proposed light would be 2 poles south of the existing light.

Bob only viewed the street during the day.

Committee will wait until it can be viewed after dark.

- Article 34-Propagation of Shellfish
  - John M. motions for \$17,500. Seconded by Pat. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 29- Information Technology Assessment
  - Chairman asks Mr. Osuch where the \$15,000 figure came from.
  - Mr. Osuch doesn't know but will find out.
  - Pat asks if the Town Government Study Committee is coming in.
  - Discussion of lacking language of their Articles.
  - Discussion of what Articles will fall under our purview.
- Chairman states for the record that there is an appearance of conflict with all members and the Finance Committee Article.  
Each member individually states they have the appearance of a conflict.  
Not being able to obtain a quorum, the committee invokes the Rule of Necessity.
- Chairman states he will contact the TGSC and ask when their Articles will be ready.
  
- Discussion of the Special Town Meeting within the Annual.
  - Chairman states that any Articles in the STM, should be non-general fund money or very special circumstances.
  - Chairman states the money for the TA study will come from the Cherry Sheet difference.
- Discussion of the State shortfall.
- Mr. Osuch states the Governor is trying to get FEMA to combine the 4 major snow storms as 1 storm in order to get emergency money.
- Discussion of the Capital Planning Committee and their work.
- Discussion of Article 4
  - Selectmen haven't voted anymore than we did, since our last meeting.
  - Selectmen will have 2 more meetings before our next meeting.
  - Discussion of Selectmen not voting on the OPEB or Wellness Article.
  
- Chairman again runs down the previous list of future appointments.
- Chairman states the main issue is going to be the Cherry Sheet.  
If county charges go up significantly we will have a problem.
- Chairman states he doesn't want to have departments suffer unfairly.
- Discussion again of the additional Fire Dept. position.
  - Chairman states we can't be afraid to make tough decisions.
  - Discussion of ambulance staffing.

9:01 PM. Pat motions to adjourn. Seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado  
Finance Committee Secretary  
(accepted 3-12-2015)