

Town of Fairhaven

Finance Committee

Minutes of the meeting for <March 24, 2016> at the Jeffery W. Osuch BPW Administration Building, 5 Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

Members in attendance:

Chairman-Scott Fernandes, Robert A. Furtado, Kathi Carter, Lisa Plante, Tracey Diggins, Thomas Alden

Member absent:

Ann Ponichtera DesNardis
John Mota
Padraic Elliott

Town of Fairhaven:

Mark Rees- Town Administrator
Wendy Graves- Collector/Treasurer/Finance Director
Dr. Robert Baldwin- Superintendent of Schools
Brian Monroe- Vice Chairman School Committee
Donna McKenna- School Committee

Meeting was covered by government access television.

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 Lisa to accept the minutes from March 17, 2016. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous

- Appointment with the School Dept. to review their budget.
 - Dr. Baldwin states that their salary budget was built on a 3% increase as per discussions at the initial economic summit meeting.
 - Dr. Baldwin states the salary figure is \$10,000 below that 3% increase.
 - Discussion of net school spending and the affect of health insurance costs and out of district tuition.

- Dr. Baldwin states many school districts average 15 -20% above net school spending. Fairhaven's calculation is presently .5% above net school spending.
- Dr. Baldwin states this budget will place Fairhaven \$96,000 above net school spending.
- Dr. Baldwin states the Town will receive approximately \$2,500,000 from the town of Acushnet, for their students attending Fairhaven High School.
- Chairman asks if that money is included in the foundation budget. Dr. Baldwin states it is not.
- Dr. Baldwin states the biggest problem with the budget is the transportation category. Dr. Baldwin states, from talking with surrounding school districts, they were planning on a 20% increase for the bus contract, over the previous contract.
That is the number that was carried in the budget.
The actual lowest bid received for the bus contract was \$40,000 over that.
- Mr. Monroe states the 2nd lowest bidder was \$100,000 over that number.
- The School Committee has chosen to rebid the contract.
- Lisa asks if MCAS and Common Core are the reason for the increase in testing & assessment?
 - Dr. Baldwin states that line is for the Special Needs testing. If the State changes to computer testing for the standardized tests, Dr. Baldwin believes they should provide the funding for the equipment as well as the connectivity resources.
- Discussion of Out Of District Tuition.
- Dr. Baldwin states this is for SPED programs that cannot be handled in the district, specialized care providers.
- Discussion of SPED transportation.
- Discussion of Homeless Transportation.
Dr. Baldwin explains if a Fairhaven family becomes homeless and is lodged in a house or motel out of town, Fairhaven is still responsible for providing transportation back & forth to Fairhaven schools.
- Chairman states it is an unfunded mandate.
- Discussion of Utilities.
- Chairman asks if there is any offset for the Solar.
 - Dr. Baldwin states there is no connection between the schools and the Solar field.
- Chairman asks if the teachers' contract has settled.
 - Dr. Baldwin states it has. Dr. Baldwin states they were asked to keep the entire salary package increase below 3%, and they did.
 - Those who are eligible for step increases will receive 0% the 1st two years.
 - Those getting no step increase will receive a 2 1/2% increase the 1st two years.
 - The 3rd year everyone receives 1 1/2% increase.
 - Contract covers FY16, FY17, FY18.

- Discussion of Revenue Sharing Agreement as mentioned in the DOR report.
 - Mr. Rees states it is not uncommon in communities. States it may not matter as we get closer to net school spending, as you cannot fund lower than that amount.
 - Dr. Baldwin states there is good and open communication between Town Hall and the School Dept. now.
- Kathi asks for an explanation of the sheet in the budget concerning home values increasing in Fairhaven.
 - Dr. Baldwin states he cannot directly correlate it, but believes the values are up and people are moving into town because of the school system.
- Mr. Rees asks Dr. Baldwin how things look on the State level.
 - Dr. Baldwin states Chapter 70 money looks to be increasing \$20 per student. He states some legislators are pushing for \$50 per student increase.
- Discussion of the School Dept. Capital Planning items:
 - Dr. Baldwin and Mr. Rees explain the HMS roof project.
 - The project will cost approximately \$830,000 up front. \$400,000 will come from the Capital Planning Stabilization fund, the balance will come from Surplus Revenue/Free Cash. When the money is reimbursed, from the MSBA at approximately 54%, it will be put back in the CP Stabilization fund.
 - Discussion of work that has been done at HMS.

7:56 PM. Chairman calls recess, school dept. leaves. Back in session @ 8:01 PM.

- Chairman states he had a meeting with Mr. Rees to address some of the concerns Fin Com had at the last meeting.
- Chairman presents Reserve Fund Transfer requests from the Fire Chief.
 - Chairman presents a Reserve Fund Transfer request, in the amount of \$3,400, for Purchase of Services- Con Ed.
 - Reason given for the transfer is 2 firefighters leaving and money is needed to send 2 new recruits to the firefighter academy.
 - Chairman and Mr. Rees explain that the Chief still has money left in the category, but he needs to be able to use that at the end of the year for equipment repair. If he doesn't have the money he will have to take equipment off the road. He needs the Fin Com's assurance that he will have the money available.
 - Tom motions to transfer \$3,400 to Acct. #01-220-00-5361-01 Purchase of Services- Training- Con Ed. Seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous

- Chairman presents a Reserve Fund Transfer request, in the amount of \$5,000, for Purchase of Services- R & M Vehicles.
- The dept. has seen unexpected vehicles repairs as well as still having to fund the ladder truck recertification in June.
- After discussion between the Chairman and Mr. Rees it is decided to combine this with the previous transfer, as they are in the same category.
 - Lisa motions to rescind and amend the previous vote to \$8,400 for Acct. #01-220-00-5200-00-0206 Purchase of Services. Seconded by Tracey. Vote: Unanimous

- Chairman presents a Reserve Fund Transfer request, in the amount of \$3,000, for Supplies- Equipment for Men.
- Money is needed to provide uniforms for the 2 new firefighters.
 - Tom motions to transfer \$3,000 to Acct. #01-220-00-5585-00 Fire Department-Supplies- Equipment for Men. Seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous

- Discussion and voting of ATM Warrant:
 - Chairman states the deadline for the printer is April 8th.
 - Chairman and Mr. Rees have a discussion about the Selectmen putting the money for the Economic Development Committee in its own Article.
 - Chairman states if Fin Com members have questions, they can email him, and he will do his best to obtain the answers.
 - Discussion of creating the letter for the Fin Com booklet.
 - Lisa brings up concern over the budgets being in Article 5 now, and confusion at TM.
 - Mr. Rees states he has spoken with the Moderator, and it will be explained on a Government Access TV program, at the Precinct meetings, and at the beginning of TM.
 - Chairman states next week the Retirement Board will be in to discuss the COLA. Chairman states he will have to abstain from that discussion and also Group Insurance.

- Article 4- Setting Salaries of Town Officers
 - Lisa motions for the following amounts:

A. Board of Selectmen (3 members)	\$15,600
B. Town Clerk	\$52,981
C. Moderator	\$800
D. Tree Warden	\$6,631
E. Board of Health	\$4,000
 - All amounts seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous

- Article 9- FY17 General Fund Capital Plan
 - Mr. Rees states that section "F" is now referred to as the Facilities Improvement Plan.
 - Lisa motions for the following amounts:
 - A. Replacement of Two Police Cruisers \$78,345
 - D. Hastings Middle School flooring \$153,408
 - Above amounts seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
 - Discussion of Police Boat
 - Lisa motions for the following amounts:
 - B. 2004 Police SafeBoat \$30,000
 - E. Harbormaster truck \$40,000
 - Above amounts seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
 - Chairman asks Mr. Rees if the Facilities Improvement Plan will go back before the Capital Planning Committee?
 - Mr. Rees states it does not have to. Selectmen can control it.
- Chairman states the Highway Department will be in next week.
- Article 11- Roadwork
 - Tracey states she has viewed the roads, and questions the need to do Harding Road. She feels Union Street and Capeview Street need to be done.
 - Discussion of how road selection is done.
 - Chairman advises members to look at roads for next meeting.
- Article 13- State Aid to Highways
 - Tom motions for the following:
 - A. Move adoption
 - B. Approve appropriate number when received from the State
 - Both seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 14- Capital Stabilization Fund
 - Lisa motions for \$500,000 from Surplus Revenue. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 15- Ambulance Stabilization
 - Lisa motions to move \$50,000 from Ambulance Receipts Reserved for Appropriation. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 16- Social Day Care Center
 - Lisa motions for \$140,000 from Receipts Reserved for Appropriation for Social Day Program. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 18- FEMA Grant for Ladder 1- 10% Match
 - Lisa motions to transfer \$45,000 from last year's Article and raise & appropriate \$45,000 from Surplus Revenue. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous

- Article 19- FEMA- 5% Match for New Fire Equipment
 - Lisa motions to raise & appropriate \$1,302. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 20- Cultural Council Funding
 - Lisa states Pat asked for clarification on the increase and suggests we wait to vote.
- Article 21- Town Master Plan
 - Discussion of the Master Plan & possible timeline.
 - Lisa motions for \$85,000. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 24- Wind Turbine Electricity Purchase
 - Discussion of the amount being less than last year.
 - Lisa motions for \$750,000. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 25- Street Lights
 - Tracey questions the light on Roy Street. States it is a short street. She believe the one on Balsam Street is justified.
 - Tom motions for B. Balsam Street pole #299/50, not to exceed \$800. Seconded by Kathi. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 26- Revolving Funds
 - Lisa motions to approve all amounts as listed on the Warrant, and amend the Town Hall Account to read: To Fund improvements, maintenance and repairs of the Town Hall auditorium. Revenue Source- Town Hall Auditorium rental fees. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 27- Transfer from Surplus Revenue
 - Chairman and Mr. Rees state this is not needed to balance the budget anymore, so the Selectmen will move Pass Over.
- Article 28- Street Acceptances
 - A. Welcome Street
 - Tom motion to move adoption. Seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous
 - B. Treasure Bay Lane
 - We will wait.
 - C. Rockland Street
 - Tom motions to move adoption. Seconded by Tracey. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 29- Community Preservation Program Appropriations
 - C. Planning & Economic Development- Master Plan- Housing Element
 - Lisa motions for \$25,000. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 34- Legislative Article Amendments- BPW and Town Administrator
 - Discussion of who petitioned the Article.
 - Discussion of meeting with the Selectmen.

- Article 36- Eliminate References to "Executive Secretary" in the Town Bylaws
 - Lisa motions Recommend Adoption. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
- Chairman states next week we will work on the Article 5 budget & Public Works.
- Bob asks if Mr. Rees has the information about the new part time Town Hall help.
 - Chairman and Mr. Rees states will we take Town Hall separately.

9:11 PM. Tom motions to adjourn. Seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado
Finance Committee Secretary
(accepted 3-31-2016)