

# Town of Fairhaven

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## Finance Committee

FAIRHAVEN,  
MASS.

Minutes of the meeting for <March 8, 2018> at the Jeffery W. Osuch BPW Administration Building, 5 Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

### Members in attendance:

Padraic Elliott, Robert A. Furtado, Kathi Carter, Lisa Plante, Tracey Diggins, Bernard F. Roderick, Jessica Dwelly

### Members absent:

Thomas Alden

### Town of Fairhaven:

Mark Rees- Town Administrator  
Wendy Graves- Collector/Treasurer/Finance Director  
Dr. Robert Baldwin- Superintendent of Schools  
Tara Kohler- Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Nicole Potter- Director of Technology and Finance, Schools  
Pam Kuechler- Chairman School Committee  
Brian Monroe- Vice Chair School Committee  
Michael McNamara- School Committee  
Michael Myers- Chief of Police  
Michael Botelho- Police Captain  
Terry Cripps- Animal Control Officer

Meeting was covered by government access television.

Chairman Pat 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 1, 2018. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous

- The meeting begins with Ms. Potter running through the Information Technology budget:
  - Ms. Potter states there are 5 people in the department:

She is the Director of I.T., there is a Network & Infrastructure Manager, Informational Technology Specialist Manager, Informational Technology Specialist, & District Data Analyst

- The department serves roughly 3,000 end users, if you include school students.
- Contracted Services- is reduced because some of the items were transferred to the Finance Dept.
- Ms. Potter explains how she has added Archive Social which backs up emails and social media as per MA General Law.
- There is also software to facilitate offsite back-up.

Ms. Potter states that the back-up now is done by physically dropping the back-up off at another building.

- Jessica asks if the back-up will be physical or cloud based.

Ms. Potter states it will be physical because of the cost of cloud based for the amount of storage the Town would need.

- Ms. Potter states the Supply category is reduced because paper and toner were shifted to the Finance Dept.
- Replacement Equipment is increased to create a replacement cycle for machines. Software also needs to be upgraded because some departments are running older versions of programs that have compatibility issues with other departments. Ms. Potter states the access points for internet access at some buildings need to be upgrade, as they are now using residential grade wireless hardware and need a more commercial grade solution.

- Jessica asks about leasing the equipment.

Ms. Potter states they are looking into it, but feel it is more cost effective to own it because the Town can get a longer service life out of the equipment than leasing provides.

- Chairman asks about the effect on the overall budget with the changes to this budget. Mr. Rees states with the moving of money between categories to cover supplies and such, the budgets are more or less the same.

- Discussion of the IT Departments CIP request:

- The dept. seeks to install Fiber Optic Connectivity or all Town Departments. Ms. Potter explains the Town would create its own network between all Town departments.
- Ms. Potter states the High School has issues with bandwidth limitations now.
- This system would provide redundancy as well, because it will act as a loop, and if one section goes down a building could still be fed.

- Ms. Potter states, compared to using Comcast or a similar supplier, this system will have a 5 year return on the initial investment.
- Chairman asks if all Town buildings will be connected.  
Ms. Potter states yes. Mr. Rees also states that the water towers and pumping stations would be connected.
- Bob asks if they would be tying back into to Comcast at some point and are they able to run the lines on the existing poles.  
Ms. Potter states they will have to use an internet provider, but they would be using their own equipment. Mr. Rees states they can run on the existing poles and will use a State qualified contractor.

7:22 PM. School Department presents their budget:

- Mr. Rees states consolidating the IT Dept. with the School Dept. has been great for the Town and thanks Dr. Baldwin for his cooperation.
- Dr. Baldwin states the look of the budget has changed a little from previous years because of changes they have made that were suggested by the Department of Education.
  - Dr. Baldwin runs through the budget.
  - Dr. Baldwin states the budget is based on the District Improvement Plan, the Schools Improvement Plan goals, and Curriculum Alignment.
  - Dr. Baldwin states there are increased expenses in English Language Learners.
  - Discussion of Out Of District Tuition and Transportation expenses.
  - Dr. Baldwin states the teachers have ratified a new contract and it fits within this budget.
  - Lisa asks if the fact that the High School is now a Level 2 school will have an effect on the number of students going there.  
Ms. Kohler states the sifting of improvements affects the level rating system.  
Dr. Baldwin states you get points for a decrease in failing students, but if everyone is passing you don't get any bonus points.  
Dr. Baldwin states he sees no decline in the attendance at the High School. He states fewer students are attending GNBVRTHS from Fairhaven than previous years.
  - Dr. Baldwin states their goal is to graduate independent, productive, and successful students.
  - Lisa asks if we get money from the State for Homeless Student transportation.  
Dr. Baldwin states we get a reimbursement from the State, but it doesn't completely cover the costs, and it is returned to the General Fund.
  - Lisa asks if they actively pursue students attending from out of the district.  
Dr. Baldwin states they do and have a very cooperative relationship with the Police Dept. on this issue.

- Jessica looks at the amount for Building Security Equipment over previous years and questions if \$5,000 budgeted for this year is adequate.  
Dr. Baldwin states they are looking at increasing it in the future.
- Lisa questions the High School not having metal detectors.  
Dr. Baldwin states no area schools have them.
- Dr. Baldwin thanks the Finance Committee and the Town in general for funding the schools. He states the State numbers do not reflect today's costs of education.
- Lisa asks why the budget for text books changes.  
Dr. Baldwin states the budget is driven by what the teachers need that particular year.
- Ms. Kohler states the cost at the High School is increasing because of the class size. This year's freshman class is the largest at 204 students.
- Jessica questions Fairhaven having a lower than average number of Special Ed teachers as opposed to other schools.  
Dr. Baldwin states they are in the process of transitioning from paraprofessionals to more Sped teachers.
- Lisa questions the lowering of the Psychological Services budget.  
Dr. Baldwin states the services are now provided in house and no longer contracted out.
- Bob questions the lower spending in Building Maintenance over the past years. Doesn't want to see the buildings not being maintained.  
Dr. Baldwin states they are using money from grants and other sources to fund it, also items in the CIP.
- Chairman asks about the School Choice Tuition.  
Dr. Baldwin states the Town does not participate in School Choice for students coming into Fairhaven, other than Acushnet, but people can choose to send the children to out of district schools.  
This amount is generally used for students attending ORR.
- Discussion of the School Dept. Capital Project:
  - This project would correct the HVAC issues in the High School gymnasium.
  - The existing rooftop units would be replaced with a system that would allow dehumidification of the air and eliminated moisture issues.
  - Dr. Baldwin states this is for dehumidification not air conditioning.

7:51 PM. School Committee leaves meeting and Chairman calls a recess. Back in session at 7:57 PM.

- Police Chief Myers presents the Police Dept. budget.
  - Chief Myers also has Captain Botelho and ACO Terry Cripps with him.
  - Chief Myers states he is requesting an additional officer in this year's budget.

When the command structure was changed one officer was taken from patrol and placed in a supervisory position. To cover the vacancy he reduced the number of School Resource Officers from 2 to 1.

- Chief Myers states he is down 2 patrol officers.

- Bernie asks if the Chief sees the number of SRO's increasing to one at each school at some point.

Chief Myers states the system of having one at the High School and one at the Middle School has worked well in the past.

- Tracey asks if the Chief is looking to get that position back.

The Chief states yes.

- Mr. Rees states the budget is structurally balanced, meaning that the revenue matches the expenditures.

He states when the command structure change was instituted, positions were moved but no additional positions were suggested or promised.

- Bob asks if there are 2 people at the Police Academy now.

Chief Myers states one is attending now and he has one waiting to attend.

- Bernie states if something happens at one of the schools, he wouldn't want to say it was because we didn't have enough money.

- Lisa asks if one person spends all his time at the Animal Control now.

The Chief states Captain Botelho handles that as a supervisory position, but is not physically at the shelter all the time.

- Chairman asks the Chief what would happen if the person for the SRO position was pulled from the existing staffing.

Chief Myers states it would put them short on the patrol side and could put the public at risk.

- Chairman asks what pulled the present officer away from the SRO position.

Chief Myers states it was the change in the command structure.

- Lisa states that the middle school years are tough years and she sees the need for the SRO there. States it helps students relate to the police officers.

- Mr. Rees states having these discussions and looking at the issues is very good.

- Chief Myers states he is asking for \$ 5,000 more in the Repair & Maintenance of Vehicles because the newer vehicles have newer technology that cannot be repaired at the Town garage. They are forced to have the vehicles repaired at the dealer.

- Repair & Maint. Of Building is increased \$ 2,000 because of the aging building and HVAC systems.

- Repair & Maint. Of Equip. is increased \$ 6,037 as a result of the IT survey and the need to update equipment and computer security.

- Keeper of Lock-up is reduced \$ 1,000 to reflect the actual costs.

- Service & Maint. Agreement is requesting a \$ 4,780 increase because of the increase in service and maintenance agreements.  
Chief Myers states he set that budget using the actual service agreement costs.
- Chairman asks if the service agreements could be put out to bid.  
Chief states these are vendor specific to the equipment and software they have.
- Jessica asks why copiers and printers are separate and not part of IT Dept.  
Mr. Rees states it was to give the IT Department an opportunity to focus on the IT for now.
- Office Supplies is increased this year by \$8,000 to replace the department copier/fax/email machine.
- Uniforms is increased to cover the contractual requirements.
- Dues & Professional Gatherings is up because of the new command positions.
- Bob questions why they asking for money to cover the expense of dog licenses and the Town Clerk is also carrying for it.  
Chief Myers states that is in the Animal Control budget, but explains they were going to take it over but later learned that the Town Clerk is required to handle it, so the budget will be adjusted accordingly.

8:26 PM. Mr. Rees leaves the meeting.

- Animal Control budget:
  - Repair & Maint.-Vehicles was increased last year and is now level funded.
  - Repair & Maint.-Building is increased \$1,400 due to the age of the building and the fact that maintenance has been neglected in the past.  
Capt. Botelho states when he took over supervision of the Animal Shelter the building was in a state of neglect. There were roof leaks and electrical issues.  
He states repairs were made with volunteers and money from the gift account.
  - Bernie asks if the building was originally constructed by GNBRVTHS, could they be asked to do the maintenance.  
Capt. Botelho states they generally don't do small repair jobs.
  - Veterinary Expenses is reduced \$7,000 because they now have an agreement with New England Animal Hospital.  
Bernie asks if they are handled on a case by case basis or do they have a contract?  
Capt. Botelho states it is a case by case basis.
  - Telephone is increased to cover the actual expense.
  - Office Supplies is increased to cover the cost of a computer and printer to take over the dog licenses from the Town Clerk.

As stated earlier the Town Clerk will continue to issue the licenses, but the Animal Control Dept. will provide them with the computer.

Licenses are now being hand written and it is much more difficult to track them.

- Preprinted Forms was increased to cover the expenses of the dog licenses, but that will be corrected.
- Cleaning Supplies is increased \$700 to reflect the needed products. Mr. Cripps states when he took over, the shelter was not being properly cleaned and the proper chemicals were not being used.
- Uniforms is increased \$300 to cover the cost for the Assistant ACO.
- Jessica asks if they get supplies from donations and the Gift Account.  
Mr. Cripps states they receive many donations of supplies if he puts the word out on social media.
- Bernie questions the amount for Gasoline and asks if it is adequate.  
Mr. Cripps states it should be enough.

- Police Capital Improvement:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> item is a recurring request to replace 2 police cruisers. This year the request is for \$90,000.
- The cars would also be equipped with new data terminals.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> item is a Live Scan Electronic Fingerprint Machine at a cost of \$25,000.  
The Chief states that presently they use paper cards and it is difficult to share the prints with other agencies.  
The new system would allow for prints to be stored and shared digitally.
- Bob states he has noticed that the new cruisers now have the lights hidden inside the vehicles instead of using the traditional bar lights across the top and wonders why the change.  
The Chief states it is less expensive to use the interior lights and they have less issues with weather related maintenance.

8:46 PM. Police Dept. representatives leave the meeting.

- Chairman explains he will run through the budget categories on pages 7-16 and asks members to speak up if they have questions about a specific category they would like answered.
  - It is determined that there are questions for the following departments:  
Selectmen, Human Resources, Town Clerk, Town Hall, Economic Development Committee, Conservation, Building Department, Marine Resources, EMA, Tree warden, Board of Health, Veterans, Rec Center, Historical Commission

- Jessica asks when will we have the Water and Sewer budgets.  
Ms. Graves states she should have them for us this week and will email them to committee members and have paper copies at the next meeting.
- Bernie asks if we will discuss the Capital Improvement Plan.  
Chairman states we discussed that last week.  
Chairman states he is reconsidering his previous decision to cancel the March 22 meeting, and we may meet after all.
- The committee goes back over the departments that were questioned.
- Chairman had questioned the Selectmen- Salary & Wages.  
Ms. Graves states there was a part time position created to take the minutes at all board meetings, but this has been taken out.  
Also, the \$7,500 for the Wellness Committee has been moved to the Human Resources Department.
- Human Resources- Chairman states there are a lot of new things going on and thinks it would be good to have the director come in to explain the department.
- Town Clerk- Chairman questions the increase in salary.  
Ms. Graves believes it is because of the additional elections this coming year.  
Bob questions the Books & Subscriptions was \$2,000 last year, is raised to \$3,000 this year, and the TA is recommending \$0.  
Ms. Graves states Mr. Rees has discovered that the MGL books do not have to be kept at Town Hall and can be accessed online.
- Town Hall- Bob questions the part time custodian being cut from \$17,622 to \$3,000.  
Ms. Graves states she will check with Mr. Rees.
- Economic Development Committee- Chairman questions the amount doubling to \$10,000.  
Ms. Graves states that has been reduced back to \$5,000.
- Conservation Commission- Chairman questions the salary line increasing from \$12,636 to the recommended \$55,290.  
Ms. Graves states this would be creating a full time Conservation Agent instead of the part time position.  
Committee would like more information on this.
- Building Dept.- Bob questions whether the 2<sup>nd</sup> part time Admin. Assistant is being recommended.  
Ms. Graves states no.
- Marine Resources- Chairman states there are lots of increases in this budget and would like the Harbormaster in for an explanation.
- Emergency Management- Chairman states there is a large increase in this budget and would like to have them in for an explanation.



- Tree Warden- Chairman questions the \$7,500 increase in Repair & Maint.- Equip.- without any backup.  
It is determined that the increase is for new blades for the chipper.  
Lisa recusses herself from discussion of the Tree Dept.
- Board of Health- Lisa questions the large increases in the budget and would like them in if Mr. Rees can't explain.
- Veterans- Bob questions the large increase in salary.  
Ms. Graves states she will ask Mr. Rees.
- Recreation Center- Chairman questions the \$2,900 in New Equipment.  
It is determined that this is for cameras in the building for the safety and well being of the staff and members.
- Historical Commission- Bob notes that the Manjiro Building is now listed in this category. Bob states he has seen in the news that the Manjiro Society is now going to finish the carriage house on the property and questions whether something like this every gets approval from the Selectmen or Town Meeting before it happens, as the Town will ultimately be financially responsible for its maintenance.

- Chairman states next week we will have BPW in with Highway, Parks, Water, & Sewer.
- Ms. Graves will look into scheduling Human Resources, Harbormaster, EMA, and Board of Health for next week also.
- Possibility of voting next week also.
- Discussion of whether we will meet on March 22 or not. Possibility of voting on items that are not in dispute.
- Tracey states she will not be in on March 22.
- We will meet on March 27 and March 29.
- Next week we should know the Selectmen's votes.
- Brief discussion of the School Resource Officer position.
- Chairman advises that the meetings from now on will be full length meetings. Discussion of running longer if it means getting the votes done.

9:38 PM. Lisa motions to adjourn. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado

Finance Committee Secretary

*(accepted 3/15/2018)*  
*Robert A. Furtado*

