

Town of Fairhaven

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Finance Committee

2019 MAR 11 A 11:11

Minutes of the meeting for <March 15, 2018> at the Jeffery W. Osuch BPW Administration Building, 5 Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

FAIRHAVEN,
MASS.

Members in attendance:

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

Town of Fairhaven:

Mark Rees- Town Administrator
Wendy Graves- Collector/Treasurer/Finance Director
Anne O'Brien- Human Resources Director
Marc Jodoin- EMA Director
Todd Correia- Deputy Fire Chief
Vincent Furtado- BPW Superintendent
Linda Schick- Sewer Superintendent
Jeffrey Furtado- Water Superintendent
Mary Freire-Kellogg- Health Agent
Timothy Cox- Harbormaster/Shellfish Warden

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 Tom to accept the minutes from March 8, 2018 with the following amendment: on page 8 where Ms. Graves states the Economic Development Committee budget has been reduced back to \$5,000, Mr. Rees states the budget remains at \$10,000. Seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous

- Chairman states we will hear from Human Resources, Emergency Management Agency, and Board of Health before we hear from Public Works. Chairman states the order may change if someone is not in when we are ready.

- Chairman discusses Human Resources. States we should see a drop in the Selectmen's budget from last year.
 - Mr. Rees states the Wellness Program has been moved to the HR dept.
 - Ms. O'Brien runs down her responsibilities in the department.
 - Ms. O'Brien states the salary category covers her as the HR Director, and 1 Principle Clerk/Benefits Manager
 - Chairman asks if this means a full time clerk was moved from the Selectmen's office. Ms. O'Brien states yes.
 - Ms. O'Brien states she asked departments to estimate their expected hiring for the FY. She used this to determine the advertising budget.
 - Contracted Services contains \$100 for a service to send out blast emails. Ms. O'Brien is asking for \$12,500 for a Flexible Spending Account, but Mr. Rees is only recommending 6 months of the account.
The Flexible Spending Account would allow employees to place pretax money in an account to use for co pays, eye glasses, dental work, etc.
 - Bernie asks if this will also include retirees.
Ms. O'Brien states no, but states they can look into it.
 - Tracey asks why there is an expense for the program if it is the employee's money going into it.
Ms. O'Brien states there is a monthly management fee as well as a onetime set-up fee. Ms. O'Brien states she doesn't expect everyone to use the program, but anticipates heavy usage with the school dept.
 - Chairman asks if this would be a reoccurring expense.
Ms. O'Brien states yes, but as a self funded plan, preventative care could save the Town money in the end.
 - Chairman questions with this being such a benefit to the employees, why wouldn't this be done as part of the union negotiating.
Ms. O'Brien states she doesn't think negotiations have to always be "tooth & nail".
 - Tom states this would also be available for nonunion employees.
 - Tracey states many employers do this now.
 - Jessica questions how it could be put in place for only 6 months.
Ms. O'Brien states it would start January 1, 2019 and run to the end of the FY.
 - Lisa asks if the teachers use the HR Director for grievances.
Mr. Rees explains the process and states the HR Director is involved.
 - Kathi asks what happens to any money left at the end of the year.
Ms. O'Brien states she believes it reverts to the Town, but does not expect people to not use their entire fund. Ms. O'Brien states new glasses and hearing aids all add to good overall health for employees.

- Bernie asks if the Town's health and dental insurance are combined.
Ms. O'Brien states the fund could be used for either. It is basically a debt card that the employee presents for payment.
- Office Supplies includes starting an employee milestone program with pins or certificates at certain milestones.
- Professional Gatherings includes money for training that Ms. O'Brien feels is necessary for the position.
- Discussion of the Wellness Program
 - Ms. O'Brien states the Wellness Mini Grants will be more open ended this year to try to get more programs going.
 - YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program is funded for 2 employees. Currently there is only 1 employee enrolled.
 - Weight Watchers Program this year they are looking at doing something more flexible and using the online program.
 - Tracey asks about insurance companies give reimbursements for this.
Ms. O'Brien states she will check into it.
 - Kathi asks how participation with the program has been to date.
Ms. O'Brien states the record keeping hasn't been up to par, and she plans on working on that in the future.
 - Tracey asks what happens to the money left over.
Mr. Rees states it is returned to the General Fund.
 - Jessica asks how the program is advertised to the employees.
Ms. O'Brien states a newsletter is done that is shared with departments and they plan on using the annual wellness fair this year.
 - Kathi suggests using email.
Ms. O'Brien states that many times people ignore emails.
 - Mr. Rees states the Wage Reclassification is also being done through the HR office.
- Emergency Management Agency budget is presented:
 - Chairman questions the reason for the budget doubling.
 - Deputy Chief Todd Correia states the majority of the expenses are going for improvements to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
 - Deputy Chief Correia presents a packet of backup information for the committee.
 - Deputy Chief Correia states the existing EOC is quite outdated.
 - Deputy Chief Correia states the improvements would include the addition of 2 LCD screens to project data from FEMA, MEMA, Eversource, and Weather Agencies.
 - They would add new copper backup phone lines.

- They would also add a new module to the existing phone system, as well as adding six 12 line phones, for department heads, and five single line phones. The single line phones would be tied into the copper line system and function in the event of a phone system failure.
- \$8,200 is figured for the EOC upgrade.
- Chairman asks if this is set up at the Sconticut Neck building.
Deputy Chief Correia states the EOC is set up in the meeting room of the fire station. He states the EMA sets the room up in the event of an emergency.
- Chairman asks if this is a onetime expense.
Deputy Chief Correia states he believes the EOC would be integrated into the new Public Safety Complex.
- Deputy Chief Correia states the Fire Alarm Dept. has run some wires into the EOC in order to save on the labor.
- Tom asks who mans the EOC.
Mr. Rees states he is the Incident Commander and there are representatives there from Public Works, Harbormaster, Police, Fire, Board of Health, and EMA.
Mr. Jodoin states he is responsible for setting up the EOC.
- Bernie asks who initiates the emergency plan.
Deputy Chief Correia states the department heads will email each other well in advance of an emergency such as a storm. In the case of an incident at a school, a command post would be set up at the school as well as the EOC as backup.
- Lisa asks, if everything is setup and run from the fire station, why do we need the Sconticut Neck building.
Deputy Chief Correia states they use the fire station because of the backup generator and the proximity to the Police & Fire but they need the Sconticut Neck building for the storage of the items used at the EOC.
- Mr. Rees states he anticipates the EMA being moved into the new Public Safety Complex and the old Sconticut Neck building being sold.
- Tom suggests using the old building as a supply depot for a major emergency.
Chairman states that should be left for discussion at a later time and stick to this year's budget.
- Also included in the upgrade expense is a Toughbook laptop computer to have all emergency plans loaded on one computer.
- Repair & Maint.- Buildings includes \$7,402 for replacement of the existing furnace in the EMA building. Mr. Jodoin states the existing system is very old and they can't get parts for it any more.
- Lisa asks about connecting to the existing inefficient ductwork.

Mr. Rees states this is a "bandaid" repair to keep the building operational for a reasonable amount of money until we know what will become of it.

- Ms. Freire-Kellogg presents the Board of Health budget.
 - Mr. Rees explains the increase in Recycling cost.
 - Mr. Rees states we are in the 3rd year of a 5 year contract with ABC Disposal. Because of the international market, it is getting more difficult to find a market for the recyclables. The recyclables that are being picked up in town are not clean enough to be easily disposed of.
ABC is looking for \$8,000 a month more than the contract price.
Mr. Rees states as part of the negotiating process the Town is looking for detailed financial records from ABC.
The increase the Town is negotiating is approximately ½ of what ABC wanted originally.
 - Lisa asks, if we have a contract, why we are negotiating with them.
Mr. Rees states if ABC stops picking up recyclables, the other haulers are substantially higher in cost.
 - Bernie asks if the Town is negotiating for just the remaining 2 years, or are we looking to extend it another 5 years.
Mr. Rees states, seeing the volatility of the market, he does not see long term contracts in the future.
 - Kathi asks why there is an increase.
Ms. Freire-Kellogg states the materials we are sending are not clean or contain items like plastic bags.
 - Tom states if the Town is able to supply clean recyclables, companies will seek them out.
 - Ms. Freire-Kellogg states she wants to concentrate on educating the public.
- Harbormaster Tim Cox presents the Marine Resources budget:
 - Mr. Cox states there is a mistake in the budget. Repair & Maint.-Equip- includes \$5,000 for repairs to the Pease Park docks. \$5,000 was also mistakenly added to Docking & Storage for the same reason. Mr. Cox advises removing the \$5,000 from this category.
 - Mr. Cox states we may still get more money back because sometimes the State reimburses for dock repairs.
 - Mr. Cox is requesting \$4,800 for repairs to the two trim motors on the motors of the shellfish boat.
Mr. Cox states the motors are 10 years old. The trim motors have been worked on before, and he has been advised if they are disassembled again they will not be able to reassemble them.
 - Chairman asks if this is for the shellfish boat.

Mr. Cox states yes. It is kept docked at Earl's Marina. It is a 25' Boston Whaler.

- Bernie asks if all repairs are contracted out.

Mr. Cox states the smaller repairs are done by one of the deputies who has experience in that field.

- Bernie asks how many boats are in the fleet.

Mr. Cox states there is a 21' Boston Whaler kept in New Bedford Harbor, 25' Boston Whaler kept at Earl's Marina, Carolina Skiff used for shellfish propagation, 21' Boston Whaler that can reach Acushnet in the harbor.

The Police Dept. has a 25' Safe boat and the Fire Dept. has a 25' Safe Boat.

Mr. Cox states they have 2 abandoned boats that they will auction eventually.

- Jessica asks what happens to the money from the auctioned boats.

Mr. Rees states it would be returned to the General Fund.

- Mr. Cox states the Carolina Skiff has a new engine on it that was purchased with a grant, so the boat in the future CIP would not require an engine.

- Bob asks about the aluminum barge on Bridge Street.

Mr. Cox states they received this and are going to use it for planting shellfish seed.

- Chairman questions the Salary & Wage line. Asks if the full time clerk is included.

Mr. Rees states it is.

Mr. Cox states the clerk will work out of the Selectmen's office because that is where the shellfish buttons are issued.

- Brief discussion of the Water Resource Revenue.

- 8:20 PM. Ms. Schick presents the Sewer budget

- Ms. Schick states the Salary is up 2% because of the contractual requirements.

- Contracted Services is up because of additional testing for the nitrogen permit.

- Replacement Equipment includes money for a roof replacement at a pumping station, a new lawn mower, spare pump for a pumping station, and a new door on the sewer building.

- Sewer Sludge is up \$25,000 for disposal.

- The Sewer CIP includes:

\$35,000 for the Fiber Connectivity Project

\$180,000 towards the Treatment Plant Nitrogen Removal upgrade

\$700,000 for improvement to the West Island Treatment plant

\$30,000 for replacement of a pump at Abby Pump Station

\$36,000 for replacement of Portable pump station

- Mr. Rees discusses the negotiations with the EPA and the DEP concerning the nitrogen removal.

He states they have not finished negotiating.

- Ms. Schick states the plant will have to be redesigned to meet the new allowable amount.
- Bernie asks what percentage is allowed.
Ms. Schick states we are allowed 125 lbs. per day and we are presently releasing 800 lbs. per day.
- Tom asks if the money required would require a Prop 2 ½ override.
Ms. Schick states they would work with Ms. Graves for the financing, but they are hoping to receive State Revolving Funds, which are lower interest loans.
- Bob asks about the statement made that Mattapoissett owns 16% of the plant. Would they share the cost of the improvements?
Ms. Schick states they would.
- 8:42 PM. Jeffery Furtado presents the Water budget:
 - Salary is up 2.63% for contractual obligations and increased overtime to allow for a night time flushing program of the water mains.
 - Water testing is increased \$2,500.
 - Water Meters is up \$2,000 because of an increase in the cost of the meters.
 - Training is increased \$2,000 for training new employees.
 - Uniforms are up \$600 for contractual obligations.
 - Dues & Gatherings is up \$400.
 - Replacement Equipment includes \$19,500 for replacing the bushings in all the joints of the hoe part of the backhoe.
 - Water District is the money paid to Mattapoissett for the purchase of water.
 - Capital Projects include:
 - \$40,000 for the Fiber Connectivity project
 - \$75,000 to replace a utility body truck with a small dump truck
 - \$20,000 for Water Rate Software
 - \$150,000 for Water Meter Evaluation
 - \$100,000 for a Well Capacity Evaluation
 - Vinnie Furtado states the Water Rate Software would allow the Water Dept. to forecast the rates needed to operate the system.
Presently the dept. pays a consultant for this research.
 - Tom states this will make for a more concise process now.
Mr. Furtado states yes.
 - Bob asks if this would take the place of hiring the consultant.
Mr. Furtado states yes.
 - Discussion of rate increases and the tiered system.

- The Meter Evaluation would hire a consultant to examine all the water meters in Town to determine what would be involved in converting the Town to an automatic meter reading system.
 - Jessica asks if this would be the type of system like Eversource uses, where a truck drives down the street and collects on the meter readings.
Mr. Furtado answers yes.
 - Kathi asks what becomes of overdue accounts.
Mr. Furtado states the amount is liened onto the property tax bill. He states they get the money first when the taxes are paid.
 - Mr. Furtado states he is working with Ms. Graves to try to get the water bills out earlier so they do not arrive at the same time as the tax bills.
- 9:06 PM. Mr. Furtado runs through the BPW Administration budget
 - Mr. Furtado states Kathy Tripp, his administrative assistant, is retiring and her buyout is in the Salary category.
 - Mr. Furtado states he added \$10 to the mileage category and took it out of Dues. This money is used for mileage when someone from the office needs to take something to Town Hall.
- Park Department
 - Mr. Furtado states Salary is up 2.5% because of contractual obligations.
 - Beach Expense is increased \$100 because of an increase in the cost of the beach stickers.
 - New Equipment is budgeted for new weed wackers.
 - Jessica states she has heard of a BMX park coming to Fairhaven and asks if it would be a Town park.
Mr. Furtado states the BPW was approached by a group of citizens that want to construct a BMX course. It would be on Town property but would be built by volunteers.
Mr. Furtado states the Town would provide the sign with the rules and the group would supply their own storage unit.
- Highway Department
 - Salary category is up 2.5% because of contractual obligations and step increases.
 - Chairman questions the overtime increase.
Mr. Furtado states it is because of the contractual increase.
 - Snow & Ice Removal is increased \$10,000 to more reflect the actual cost.
 - Trash & Garbage Removal is up because of the increase in the contract.

- Jessica asks what Sub Division Management Fees are for.
Mr. Furtado states this is money put aside by developers for the maintenance of common areas of sub divisions.
- Highway CIP
 - \$143,191 for second year payment on 963 Loader
 - \$350,000 Roadwork- BPW is recommending Hope Avenue, Billy's Way, Blue Point Road, and Ebony Street
Mr. Furtado states Bluepoint was requested by the West Island Improvement Association as well as the Shellfish Warden because the runoff is causing problems with the shellfish beds.
Mr. Furtado plans on using \$100,000 of Chapter 90 money to complete the recommended roads.
Discussion of doing gravel roads as opposed to repaving existing roads.
Chairman asks Mr. Furtado if we could see the Pavement Management Plan.
Mr. Furtado states he can provide it.
Chairman states he does not think recommending the roads that the most people show up at the meeting for is a good approach.
 - \$55,000 to replace a 2000 Ford van
 - \$65,000 to replace a 1986 Bobcat
- Park CIP
 - \$44,000 to replace a 1999 tractor
 - \$70,000 to construct a parking lot at Livesey Park
- BPW Administration CIP
 - \$30,000 for a vehicle for the Superintendent
 - \$20,000 for a new CC camera system for the BPW building, and adding addition cameras
- Mr. Furtado states the upcoming Treatment Plant upgrade will be one of the biggest projects this town has seen.
- Discussion of the next 3 meetings:
 - March 22 we will vote the parts of the operating budget that we are comfortable with. We will not vote any items we are not in agreement with the TA. We can also discuss any items members feel necessary.
 - Chairman will cancel the March 27 meeting.
 - We will meet March 29 and probably vote Articles.

- We have until April 5 to make the printer.

9:49 PM. Lisa motions to adjourn. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado
Finance Committee Secretary

accepted 3/22/2018

Robert A. Furtado