

Town of Fairhaven

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Finance Committee

2019 MAR 11 A 11:11

FAIRHAVEN.

Minutes of the meeting for <October 25, 2018> at the Jeffery W. Osuch Administration Building, 5 Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

Members in attendance:

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

Members absent:

Bernard F. Roderick

Town of Fairhaven:

Mark Rees- Town Administrator

Wendy Graves- Collector/Treasurer/Finance Director

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 October 18, 2018. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous

- The committee receives an updated HR report, updated Warrant, and a spreadsheet for quick reference of the Articles.
- Chairman states will vote the remaining items on the Warrant tonight.
- Article 1- Funding For Repair of Ceiling in Assessor's Office
 - Mr. Rees states Bob questioned, at the last meeting, whether the whole ceiling was going to be replaced or just the damaged area. Mr. Rees has confirmed that the entire ceiling will be replaced.
 - Lisa motions to Recommend Adoption in the amount of \$50,000 from General Fund Surplus Revenue. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous

- Article 2- Funding For Repair Of Sewer Pipe At Fire/Police Station
 - Lisa motions to Recommend Adoption in the amount of \$147,000 from General Fund Surplus Revenue. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous

- Article 3- Funding For Replacement Of Handheld Meter Readers
 - Lisa motions to Recommend Adoption in the amount of \$75,000 from Water Retained Earnings. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous

- Article 4- Additional Funding For Doorway Restoration & Handicap Access Project At The Academy Building
 - Lisa questions if we know whether the money will come from Community Preservation Fund or the General Fund Surplus Revenue.
 - Mr. Rees states it will be taken up at the next CPC meeting, but he does not know if we will have a decision before Town Meeting.
 - Lisa asks why the project was delayed.
 - Mr. Rees states the project was being overseen by the Historical Commission and they are a volunteer group. He states he has taken over the position of project manager.
 - Pat starts discussion of the wording of the funding part of the Article.
 - Lisa motions to Recommend At Town Meeting. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous

- Article 5- Amended FY19 General Fund Operating Budget
 - Mr. Rees states the Selectmen reviewed this at their last meeting and voted to recommend Option #2.
 - Mr. Rees states there was a change made with the Call Firefighters because the original plan did not take into consideration the different ranks in to department.
 - Discussion of what motions are available to make at Town Meeting.
 - Lisa discusses the longevity component of the program and has concerns of salaries rising too high in the future for the Town to be able to cover.
Lisa states she feels the department heads raised the levels and the report wasn't relevant.
 - Jessica questions that statement.
 - Tom asks Mr. Rees if the benefits package was taken into consideration.
 - Mr. Rees states the primary benefit the employees receive is health insurance.
The Town pays 60% and the employee pays 40%.
Mr. Rees states most municipalities contribute a higher percentage.
 - Tom asks about pensions.
Mr. Rees states the contributions to pensions are set by state law.

- Discussion of the steps.
Mr. Rees states each step increases by 2 ½%.
- Jessica states we don't hesitate to take care of Capital Expenses and feels this is important to retain good employees.
- Kathi questions reviewing positions when they are vacated.
Mr. Rees states it is good practice to review all positions every five years.
- Discussion of the "Red Circling" of salaries that are above average in the report.
Mr. Rees states the only positions were the two van drivers for the COA.
- Discussion of the COLA.
Mr. Rees states that is now determined by the budget process.
- Bob questions the steps being used for longevity when employees also get a longevity bonus based on their years.
Mr. Rees states the steps will not be increased without the performance review.
- Discussion of the evaluation process.
- Lisa questions contracted employees.
Mr. Rees states there are only two contracted employees, in the BPW.
Mr. Rees states Town Counsel has stated the BPW has authority to enter into contracts with employees.
- Chairman states we don't want to lose people because the budget gets out of control.
States salaries have been held tight for many years.
Chairman states we have tried to do the same for nonunion employees that we do for union employees.
Chairman feels the consultant did a good job categorizing the jobs.
Chairman states the raises are coming from the taxpayers and wonders when the taxpayers get a break.
- Tom states we need to bring the salaries up to what is fair, but in the future we need to be careful with the budget.
- Tom wonders where the increased revenue will come from in the future.
Mr. Rees states the Economic Development Committee is working on that issue. Is considering zoning changes as a way to increase growth.
- Bob questions Mr. Rees' statement that taxes were less last year, when the taxes increase 2 ½% each year.
Mr. Rees states that is what the numbers reflect.
It is determined it is because the override to pay for the high school project came off the bill last year.
 - Jessica motion to Recommend Adoption to Town Meeting of the Amended Salaries Modified Budget as endorsed by the Selectmen. Seconded by Tom.
 - Lisa motions for Indefinite Postponement. Seconded by Kathi.

- Discussion of the voting procedure.
 - Vote on Lisa's motion to IP: Motion fails 2-5 with Lisa & Kathi in favor. Pat, Bob, Tom, Tracey, & Jessica opposed.
 - Vote on Jessica's motion for adoption: Motion passes 5-2 with Pat, Bob, Tom, Tracey, & Jessica in favor. Lisa & Kathi opposed.
- Article 6- Amended FY19 Sewer Enterprise Fund Operating Budget
 - Jessica motions to Recommend Adoption and transfer \$6,847 from Sewer Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings to Sewer Salaries and Wages. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Motion passes 6-1 with Lisa opposed.
- Article 7- Bills of Prior Years
 - Lisa motions to Recommend Adoption of the following amounts from General Fund Surplus Revenue

Assoc. Phy. Of HMFP@BIDMC	\$61.34
Dr. Brian Bowcock D.C.	\$665.19
Southcoast Physicians Group	\$282.04
Cape Medical Supply, Inc.	\$82.99
Stewart Medical Group-St. Anne's Hosp.	\$2,322.90
Staples	\$54.68
 - All amounts seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 8- Temporary Moratorium on Sale and Distribution of Adult Use Marijuana
 - Lisa motions to Yield To Petitioner. Seconded by Tracey. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 10-Sale of Rogers School
 - Mr. Rees states information from the developer and consultant will be available prior to Town Meeting.
 - Bob questions the wording of the Article. As it is written it give the Selectmen authority to sell the school to anyone.
 - Mr. Rees expects a motion to limit it only to the developer that is presently involved.
 - Chairman asks if this will be removed if the project is found to be not viable. Mr. Rees expects that would happen.
 - Lisa motions to Recommend At Town Meeting. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
- Article 11- Rezoning of Rogers School Property
 - Mr. Rees states he would expect this to be passed over if the previous Article fails.

➤ Lisa motions to Yield To Petitioner. Seconded by Tracey. Vote: Unanimous

- Article 12- Authorization to Settle Claim Against the Town- Robert D. Hobson
 - Jessica asks if a law was found that would require the Town to pay Mr. Hobson.
 - Mr. Rees reads a letter from attorney Tom Crotty that states he would expect the Town to win the law suit, but defending it would cost more than the \$1,000 settlement.
 - Discussion of opening a “slippery slope” of unfounded law suits.
 - Chairman questions the process of the recount for the election.
 - Tom asks if there is any proof that Mr. Hobson received incorrect information.
 - Chairman questions if spending the money to defend the law suit is worth not having a precedent of settling.
 - Chairman asks if there is a motion to Recommend Adoption. There is no motion.
 - Lisa motions to Indefinitely Postpone. Seconded by Tom. Vote: Unanimous
- Chairman asks Mr. Rees for an explanation of the Free Cash.
 - Mr. Rees states he doesn’t have the paperwork with him, but can give an explanation.
 - Mr. Rees states slightly more than \$6,000,000 has been certified Free Cash.
 - Part of that is the goal of having 5% of the budget Free Cash.
 - Approximately \$400,000 came from collected past due taxes.
 - There were budget turn backs from depts. and Articles.
 - Approximately \$400,000 reimbursement for the middle school roof project.
 - The \$150,000 of Salary Reserve that was not used.
- Lisa asks about the amount of money from past Articles.
 - Mr. Rees states he can provide that information at a future meeting.
- Chairman states he sees no need to meet next week.
- We should plan on attending the Selectmen’s meeting on November 5, 2018 to hear the Rogers School presentation, then we will have our own meeting to vote that Article.
- Special Town Meeting is November 13, 2018 at 7:00 PM.

8:19 PM. Lisa motions to adjourn. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado
Finance Committee Secretary

accepted 11/5/2018
Robert A. Furtado

