

Town of Fairhaven

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK

Finance Committee

2019 MAR 11 A 11:10

Minutes of the meeting for <February 14, 2019> at the Jeffery W. Osuch BPW Administration Building, 5 Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

Members in attendance:

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

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 7:03 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 November 5, 2018. Seconded by Jessica.
Vote: Unanimous

- Chairman announces the resignation of Thomas Alden from the Finance Committee. The committee thanks Tom for his commitment and past service.
- Ms. Graves distributes copies of the Town Administrators budget for FY20.
- Mr. Rees thanks members for meeting on Valentine's Day and presents the ladies with flowers.
- Chairman states Mr. Rees will discuss his budget and at the end of the meeting we will discuss our meeting schedule going forward.
- Mr. Rees runs thru the introductory letter for the budget.
 - Mr. Rees explains the adherence to the financial management guidelines.

- Mr. Rees explains that currently the Health Insurance Trust Fund is under the recommended benchmark because of an increase in claims last year.
 - Bernie asks if the health insurance also includes the retirees.
Mr. Rees states it does.
 - Mr. Rees runs through the budget highlights section.
 - Mr. Rees states he is recommending the hiring of new position for Garage Superintendent and purchasing the diagnostic computer that is necessary to service the newer vehicles the Town is now using. This will minimize the need to send vehicles out for service.
 - The Solid Waste and Recycling budgets are being pulled out of the BPW and Board of Health categories and will now have their own category.
 - Mr. Rees states that the State is presently reconsidering their formula for funding Chapter 70 money and this may be in flux until we get closer to Town Meeting. The recommended number for this budget may change as time goes on.
 - Mr. Rees is recommending upgrading the Assessor's software program which hasn't been updated in 10 years. Also purchasing new software to allow integrated on-line permitting. He proposes increasing building fees to pay for the new system.
 - Reserves of \$306,000 have been put in place for COLA's for non-union employees and for new negotiations for the upcoming year.
 - Mr. Rees also states there were new positions requested that he is not recommending, because of budget constraints. He states the committee should expect to hear the effected departments' pitch for those positions.
 - Bernie discusses the move to increase school funding on the State level and asks, if more money comes in, could it be used to fund those positions.
Mr. Rees states, if more Chapter 70 money comes in, he feels the schools are going to want their school budget fully funded.
- Mr. Rees points to the Moody's update handout included that states the Town is in a good financial position.
 - Chairman states he is trying to reconcile the Free Cash amount being so high.
 - Mr. Rees states there are several reasons for that this year. Two that are named: The money that was set aside for the Wage Reclassification that wasn't used and overfunding of the Veteran's Department
 - Mr. Rees states this budget is continuing to try to use the most realistic numbers possible. The Free Cash will help with the upcoming Capital Projects.
 - Discussion of the upcoming sewer plant improvements.

- Mr. Rees states that project cannot be funded with General Fund money. It must come from the sewer users.
 - Mr. Rees states the Feds no longer contribute any money to these projects, but they do require an affordability study on the effects on the rate payers. He states they found that Fairhaven rate payers would still be below the level of hardship.
-
- Discussion between the Chairman and Ms. Graves about scheduling department meetings.
 - The committee will meet every Thursday night going forward.
 - Chairman states, when reviewing the budget, we once again have to look at the difference between wants and needs.
 - Bob questions Mr. Rees' plan of raising the building permit fees to cover the software improvements. He states he finds Fairhaven's fees quite a bit higher than Dartmouth's now.
Mr. Rees states the new building commissioner feels Fairhaven's fees are too low in new home construction.
 - Tracey asks about reinstituting the bulk pickup annually.
Mr. Rees states large items can be picked up at the curb now.
 - Bob asks where we are now with the extra charge for recycling with ABC Disposal.
Mr. Rees states nothing is happening. ABC is still billing the increased amount, Fairhaven isn't paying the increase, and ABC isn't pursuing it.

7:45 PM. Lisa motions to adjourn. Seconded by Bernie. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado
Finance Committee Secretary

accepted 2/28/2019

Robert A. Furtado

