

Town of Fairhaven

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TOWN CLERK

Finance Committee

2019 MAR 11 A 11:10

Minutes of the meeting for <February 28, 2019> at the Jeffery W. Osuch BPW Administration Building, 5 Arsene St., Fairhaven, MA

FAIRHAVEN
MASS.

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
Timothy Francis- Fire Chief
Todd Correia- Deputy Chief
Michael Myers- Police Chief
Capt. Michael Botelho- Police Department
Marc Jodoin- EMA 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 Bernie to accept the minutes from February 14, 2019. Seconded by Lisa.
Vote: Unanimous

- Chairman apologizes for having to cancel last week's meeting, states he was advised by the State to not hold a meeting because of the lack of 48 hours notice in posting.
- Mr. Rees presents the FY20 General Fund Capital Improvement Plan.
 - Mr. Rees explains the scoring system used every year.
 - Mr. Rees states the Facilities Improvement Plan is not included in this plan.
- Mr. Rees runs down the projects for FY20, in their order of ranking, and how they will be funded:

- Harbor Master/Shellfish Warden: Union Wharf Improvements- South Side (Phase 4) \$1,250,000: \$173,500 from General Fund Free Cash, \$76,500 from the Waterways Account, \$1,000,000 from a Grant
- Fire Dept: Two Way Radio Upgrade \$265,000: Funded from General Fund Free Cash
- Harbor Master/Shellfish Warden: Phase 5 Dredging Project \$895,000: \$179,000 from the Waterways Account, \$716,000 from a Grant
- Fire Dept: Municipal Fire Alarm System Upgrade \$66,000: Funded from General Fund Free Cash
- BPW- Highway: Roadwork \$350,000: Funded from General Fund Free Cash
- BPW- Highway: Six Wheel Dump Truck with Plow (Replaces unit #25) \$183,000: Funded from General Fund Free Cash
- Police Dept: 2 Police Cruisers \$90,000: Funded from General Fund Free Cash
- Animal Control: Dog Park Construction \$225,000: \$22,500 from General Fund Free Cash, \$202,500 from a Grant
- BPW- Highway: Utility Truck (replaces unit#11) \$58,000: From General Fund Free Cash
- Emergency Management: Pickup Truck w/Crew Cab (replaces unit #53) \$52,000: From General Fund Free Cash
- Police Dept: 2 Police Vehicles for School Resource Officers \$75,000: From General Fund Free Cash
- School Dept: Fairhaven High School Performing Arts Lighting \$206,000: From General Fund Free Cash
- Tree Dept: Forestry Bucket Truck \$160,000: From the General Fund Free Cash
- Information Technology: Computer Hardware Equipment Replacement \$30,000: From General Fund Free Cash
- Police Dept: Traffic Monitoring Cameras \$110,000: From the General Fund Free Cash
- Mr. Rees states if the projects that are funded with grant money, do not receive the grant, the Town share on the money will not be spent.
- Chairman asks how the amount of money proposed to be spent this year compares to last year.
Mr. Rees states it is probably a little higher.
- Chairman questions the priority of the Harbor Master projects.
Mr. Rees states because they are partially funded with outside money, they receive a higher priority. Mr. Rees states these projects are also part of the Town's Master Plan.
- Chief Francis presents the Fire Dept. budget:
 - The Salary category is up because of contractual obligations.
 - The Chief is requesting adding 2 additional firefighters/paramedics.

- Chief provides a packet of information outlining the call volume of the dept. and staffing levels.
- Chief states the 2 day shift firefighters that were added over the last couple of years, were changed to the regular 24 hour shift to try to cut down on overtime spending. The Chief states that even though two shifts are maximized at 6 people, most shifts drop to 5 for the day and 4 at night because of time off requests and vacations.
- Chief states fire calls were up 17% in the last year.
- Chief informs Mr. Rees that 1 firefighter resigned today.
- Chief states the ambulance should bring in 1.2 million dollars this year.
- Deputy Chief states sometimes the station is down to one person.
- Chairman questions the reason for the increase in fire calls.
Chief states sometimes it is caused by people supplementing the heat in their homes. Deputy Chief states they are the first ones called when people need help that is not police related.
Many times they are called because CO detectors are triggered.
- Deputy Chief states the importance of having time for training.
- Both state other communities run larger shifts.
- There is a need for fire inspections.
- Chairman questions how calls are handled when the ambulances are out.
Chief explains the calls are handled as they come in.
- Chief states \$125,755 would cover the 2 additional personnel.
- Lisa questions if this would reduce overtime.
Chief states it should level off.
- Bob questions if the stated amount covers everything for the two: training, uniforms, equipment, etc.
The Chief states yes.
- Chief states originally in the Repair of Vehicles category he was going to ask for more, but Mr. Rees is recommending a lesser amount because of the new certified mechanic position.
Chief is asking for an additional \$5,058 to purchase headsets for the apparatus operators.
- Repair & Maint.- Buildings; has a one time increase of \$5,000 for repairs to Station 2.
- Medical Services: includes an increase to cover the medical exams and psych exams for the proposed new hires.
- Telephone: is increased to add 2 wireless modems for apparatus communication.
- Service Agreements: is up because of the increased in the service contracts. This is required to recertify equipment.
- Training : includes \$5,000 for a driver training certification course.

- Training-Cont. Ed.: is up to cover increase in mileage costs and meals. The Chief states they do not pay for lodging because the firefighters are able to stay at a local fire house when they go.
 - Contracted Services: is up because of the regular increase in the contract price.
 - Gasoline & Diesel: is increased to cover the additional runs.
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- 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 3/5/2019

Robert A. Furtado