

# Town of Fairhaven

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TOWN CLERK

## Finance Committee

2019 JUN 28 A 10:07

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

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

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 March 21, 2019. Seconded by Jessica.

Vote: Unanimous

- Mr. Rees states he made a mistake with the timeline for posting the Warrant. Because of that, he posted the Warrant with 35 Articles on it and a Special Town Meeting will be called within the Annual for the items he didn't have completed.
- Mr. Rees states the Selectmen have made changes to his recommended budget. He presents a sheet with the breakdown of the changes to Revenues and Expenses.
  - Mr. Rees states the Selectmen are recommending the two additional firefighters and want to take the needed money from Free Cash.
  - Mr. Rees runs thru the changes on the sheet.
  - Chairman questions where the extra Free Cash money is coming from. Mr. Rees states less money will go towards the Capital Plan for next year.
  - Mr. Rees states he would not usually recommend using Free Cash to fund positions, but it will be covered next year by money coming into the Ambulance Fund.

- Tracey questions the additional firefighter position, sighting the additional costs besides salary that go with positions.  
Mr. Rees states what new hires pay into retirement covers what they will eventually draw. He states that wasn't the case years ago.  
Mr. Rees states the Fire Department has stated the position will fund itself.
- Lisa asks if the additional positions will cut down on overtime.  
Mr. Rees states they hope it will help.
- Mr. Rees explains the distribution of the COLA for the nonunion employees.
- Chairman asks what percentage the unions are getting.  
Mr. Rees states they are still negotiating.
- Chairman questions what will happen when the unions find out what the nonunion are receiving.  
Mr. Rees states 2% is what other communities are doing for a COLA.
- Committee starts to run down the budget and address lines we held last week.
  - Selectmen/TA: Mr. Rees states the additional \$5,784 will be split between the three Selectmen to compensate for the loss of health insurance benefit.  
Mr. Rees states those that are receiving health insurance now will be grandfathered as long as they remain Selectman.
  - Bob questions if those that are receiving insurance now will still receive the raise in salary.  
Mr. Rees states everyone will receive the increase, whether they receive insurance or not.
    - Lisa motions to recommend Selectmen/Town Administrator: Salary & Wages \$295,136. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
  - Town Clerk/Elections: Mr. Rees states the additional \$10,000 is to cover a part time position on an as needed basis.
  - Chairman asks what the benefit to the Town is with having the additional position.  
Mr. Rees states the former clerk used to put in for part time help on the Elections side, but the new Town Clerk is new to creating the budget and didn't carry it.
  - Discussion of variance to the budget from year to year.  
Mr. Rees states it varies depending on how many elections there are in a given year.
    - Bernie motions to recommend Town Clerk/Elections: Salaries & Wages \$138,824. Seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous

- Police Department & Animal Control
  - Lisa motions to recommend Salaries & Wages \$2,506,341. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
  - Lisa motions to recommend Operating Expenses \$307,836. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
  
- Fire Department/Emergency Management
- Mr. Rees states the recommended budget now includes \$125,756 in Salaries for the two additional positions and \$2,915 in Operating Expenses for the scheduling software.
- Chairman looks at the Fire Chief's graphs and wonders if the increase in calls is a trend or a blip.
- Jessica questions if it is caused by the Cancer Center.  
Chairman states that has been operating for a while now.
- Bernie states the Chief stated there are retirements coming up and asks if that will reduce costs with newer hires.  
Mr. Rees states there isn't a big difference in the rate between the 1<sup>st</sup> and top steps in salary.
- Chairman states once a new position is created, it is tough to get back if the demand drops.
- Jessica states she would rather see the additional firefighters than all the additional clerks.
- Discussion of safety concerns.
- Lisa states she would rather see the additional firefighters, as they are directly serving the public rather than the additional clerk positions.
- Mr. Rees states is goes against good financial policy to fund a position from Free Cash, but he sees little risk in the Ambulance Fund covering it in the future.
- Mr. Rees states he does not foresee any additional government hiring in the future.
- Chairman states he would support the 2 additional positions now but would like to watch the number of calls in the future.
- Bernie wonders if the Chief would commit to not replacing a retiree if the numbers do not remain where they are.
  - Lisa motions to recommend Fire Department: Salaries & Wages \$2,506,341. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
  - Bernie motions to recommend Operating Expenses \$307,836. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous

- Building Department
- Lisa questions why the Building Commissioner is considered emergency personnel and why the Town is paying for his commuting.  
Mr. Rees states State Law mandates the Building Commissioner is responsible for certifying if it is safe to enter a building after a fire. If there is a fire at night and people are waiting outside to reenter the building, he has to be there to inspect it. He is on call 24 hrs. a day.
- Discussion of the Town providing a vehicle for his commuting being part of his employment agreement.
- Mr. Rees states the Building Commissioner does not have a contract; he is part of the nonunion pay classification.
  - Tracey motions to recommend Building Department: Operating Expenses \$10,300. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Motion passes 6-1 with Lisa opposed.
- Sealer of Weights & Measures
- Mr. Rees states the \$500 increase is for additional stickers.
  - Lisa motions to recommend Operating Expenses \$1,498. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
- Fairhaven Public Schools
- Discussion of State funding for schools.
- Mr. Rees states if the State Aid number changes we could revote our number at any time.
- Bernie asks if we could wait until before Town Meeting to vote.  
Mr. Rees states he doesn't recommend leaving such a large budget blank in the book.
  - Lisa motions to recommend \$21,082,516. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
- GNBVRT High School
- Mr. Rees states the number is lower this year because there will be less students attending next year.
- Mr. Rees states he has asked the school for additional budget information on the formation of the budget.
- Bob discloses that he is a member of the Carpentry Department Advisory Committee, but is allowed to vote on the budget.
- Bernie asks if the amount per student is the same each year or if it changes.  
Mr. Rees states it changes based on their formula.
  - Lisa motions to recommend \$1,866,136. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous

- Public Works Administration
- Mr. Rees states the \$9,131 increase is to fund a raise for the BPW Superintendent and a portion of the part time administrative assistant.
- Chairman asks how the raise was arrived at.  
Mr. Rees states it came from the Board of Public Works and he doesn't know how they arrived at the number.  
He states this position is not part of the nonunion pay classification.
- Discussion of the part time administrative assistant.
- Mr. Rees states the pay rate is what the person was getting when she retired. Mr. Rees states he wants to look at that.
- Bob questions bringing back a retiree at a higher rate when someone could be hired at a lower rate.  
Mr. Rees states he has to look at that with the Superintendent and Human Resources.
- We will table this until next week and Mr. Rees will ask Mr. Furtado to come in.
  
- Highway Department
  - Lisa motions to recommend Salaries & Wages \$1,080,240. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
- Lisa questions the purchase of the diagnostic equipment in Operating Expenses and not Capital Planning.  
We will hold Operating Expenses until next week.
- Snow & Ice Removal
  - Lisa motions to recommend \$60,000. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
  
- Sanitation: Operating Expenses
  - Lisa motions to recommend \$1,386,520. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
  
- Board of Health
- Mr. Rees states the \$1,508 increase in Salaries & Wages is for an increase for the Board members for the same reason as Selectmen.
  - Lisa motions to recommend \$148,011. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
  
- Veterans Services
- Mr. Rees states there is a \$600 increase in Operating Expenses to cover mileage.
  - Lisa motions to recommend Operating Expenses \$742,400. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous

- Millicent Library
- Chairman held this last week with a question of how the formula works.
- Committee refers to the sheet in the budget booklet with the breakdown.
  - Lisa motions to recommend \$684,037. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
  
- Park Department
- Mr. Rees states \$6,000 was mistakenly left out of the Operating Expenses.
  - Lisa motions to recommend Operating Expenses \$38,541. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
  
- Historical Commission
- Mr. Rees states the increase includes money to maintain the antique fire engines.
  - Jessica motions to recommend \$16,750. Seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous
  
- Consolidated Information Technology
- Mr. Rees states the additional \$3,300 is for contractually provided continuing education.
- Chairman questions if software should be Capital Expenses.
 

Mr. Rees states the Assessors software is a onetime expenditure which qualifies, but the permitting software is a reoccurring expense so it is part of the budget.

  - Lisa motions to recommend Operating Expenses \$170,555. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
  
- COLA for Non-Union Employees
- Mr. Rees has distributed a 2% COLA throughout the various Salary lines for non-union employees.
- Chairman states 2% does not seem unreasonable.
- Chairman states the Wage Reclassification was to bring the salaries to a competitive level and the COLA is supposed to maintain that.
  - Bernie motions to recommend distributing \$60,781.21 from the COLA for Non-Union Employees Reserve to the respective line items as Mr. Rees has recommended. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous
  
- That covers the entire operating budget except for BPW.
- Article 4: Sewer Enterprise Fund Sewer Capital Improvements Stabilization Fund
  - To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from the Sewer Retained Earnings the amount of \$305,490.88 which was generated from the Sewer Capital Fee from FY18 and transfer into the Sewer Capital Improvements Stabilization Fund or to take any other action relative thereto.

➤ Jessica motions to recommend Adoption. Seconded by Lisa. Vote: Unanimous

- Committee at Article 25: Community Preservation Program.
  - Mr. Rees runs down the list of items.
    - A. Move Adoption and to Reserve for future appropriations \$55,000 from FY20 Estimated Receipts for acquisition, creation, and preservation of Open Space, and its rehabilitation and restoration.
    - B. Move Adoption and to appropriate \$60,000 from FY20 Estimated Receipts for the Fairhaven Housing Authority- Anthony Haven Porch & Rails Replacement
    - C. Move Adoption and to appropriate \$118,730 from FY20 Estimated Receipts for the Millicent Library, Interior Restoration Project.
    - D. Move Adoption and to appropriate \$75,000 from FY20 Estimated Receipts for the Whitfield-Manjiro, Carriage House Interior Restoration Project.
    - E. Move Adoption and to appropriate \$12,000 from Undesignated Fund Balance for the Riverside Cemetery Trustees, Nasketucket monument restoration project.
    - F. Move Adoption and to appropriate \$4,000 from Undesignated Fund Balance for the FHC, Washington Street Firehouse Roof project.
    - G. Move Adoption and to appropriate \$9,000 from Undesignated Fund Balance for the FHC, Academy Building Shutters Project.
    - H. Move Adoption and to appropriate \$10,000 from Undesignated Fund Balance for the NFIA, Fire Station #3 Roof Project.
    - I. Move Adoption and to appropriate \$16,000 from Undesignated Fund Balance for the Selectmen, Town Hall Terra Cotta Restoration Project.
    - J. Move Adoption and to appropriate \$55,000 from FY20 Estimated Receipts for the Fairhaven Public School, H/S Window Restoration.
    - K. Move Adoption and to appropriate \$45,000 from FY20 Estimated Receipts for the FHV Tennis Association, Livesey Park Project.
    - L. Move Adoption and to appropriate \$12,650 from Undesignated Fund Balance for administrative services and operating expenses provided in support of the Community Preservation Committee.
  - Bob questions the Manjiro Society expanding the Town owned building and the Town having to maintain it in the future.
  - Bernie questions how much money is left in the High School Trust Fund.  
Mr. Rees states that money is used more in support of projects than to fund them completely.
  - Chairman states the CPC is a good way to fund projects without digging into the trust fund.

- Lisa motions to move adoption of the CPC committee's recommendations.  
Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous

- Article 17: General Fund Capital Budget (FY20)

- Items previously held:

- F: Animal Control- Dog Park Construction- (10% match)

Mr. Rees states the location has not been chosen yet. They are going thru a process and developing a matrix to rate the different options.

Mr. Rees states the Dog Park Committee needs the support of the Town in the way of the matching funds, in order to apply for the grant.

- Lisa motions to recommend \$22,500. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous

- K: Tree Department- Forestry Bucket Truck

Discussion of money spent on the old truck.

Mr. Rees states he advised the former Tree Warden to look into replacing the old truck when it needed substantial repairs, But the Tree Warden chose to have the old truck repaired.

The present Tree Warden sees the need to replace the truck now.

- Lisa motions to recommend \$160,000. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous

- Lisa questions the number of streets on the Warrant this year.

Mr. Rees states anyone who gathers 10 signatures can have a street placed on the Warrant.

- Next week Vinnie Furtado will be in to address questions.

- Chairman asks Mr. Rees when we need all votes completed.

Mr. Rees states the Selectmen are meeting on April 8<sup>th</sup> so it would be the following Thursday for us.

- Chairman states he will be sending out a draft of the letter from the Finance Committee for review.

9:04 PM. Lisa motions to adjourn. Seconded by Jessica. Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by:

Robert A. Furtado

Finance Committee Secretary

*accepted 4/4/2019*  
*Robert A. Furtado*