



Finance Committee  
 Town of Halifax  
 499 Plymouth St.  
 Halifax, MA 02338

Meeting Minutes  
 Monday, May 6, 2019

	Frederick McGovern	Leonard Teceno	Bill McAvoy	Melinda Tarsi	Brad Graham	Vacant
Present	X	X	X	X	X	

Also in attendance was Sandy Nolan, Town Accountant, Charlie Seelig, Town Administrator; Kim Roy, Selectman

Melinda opened the meeting at 7:03p.m.

The meeting was recorded by Area 58

Mail: Copy of the Beacon

Melinda entertained a motion to approve the minutes from 03/11/2019

Motion: Bill

Second: Len

AIF

Beautification Committee – Candy explained the committee’s reasoning behind the plastic bag ban request. She stated that bags are detrimental to the environment globally and locally. The committee wanted to take some organized steps to ban plastic bags. Many other states have already banned them. The committee is promoting reusable bags. They held an informational meeting at the Library and received favorable feedback. They are developing a sheet for area businesses to help them prepare for a ban. There is a six month wait after town vote for this to be certified. Stop & Shop will be selling reusable bags by the end of the month, with 50% of the profits going to various charities. Because change is hard, plastic bags will still be offered. The committee realizes the challenge between “one more regulation” and the greater good. She has spoken to the Board of Health and the Selectmen about this issue. She stated that Susan at the Recycle Department will handle enforcement of this. A towns person asked if this regulation applies to town trash bags and produce bags. Candy stated no, only to single use plastic bags.

Len stated he is against this. He feels another by-law should be the very last course of action. He believes the town should have stores agree not to use them instead of passing a law. He agrees with the merits of the proposal. Brad stated he is in agreement with it.

Melinda asked what the implementation process will be compared to other towns. Candy will hand out free bags that have been donated as long as she has them. She also provided brochures to inform everyone. She made this issue public in January, which allowed the committee to respond to and address any concerns people have. She stated there is no cost to the town with this article. Brad asked her about Tewksbury who rescinded this article in their town. She stated the people of Tewksbury felt the decision was made by too few people in the town, and that is why it was rescinded, but she will look into that. Kim asked if there will be a fine to the stores if they do not cooperate. Candy said yes, they will get a letter first, then fines in the amount of \$50.00, \$100.00, \$150.00. It can become a daily fine after that, but she is not anticipating that happening.

Quorum was met with Brad's arrival, so Melinda entertained a motion to recommend:  
Article #51 – Proposed By-Law to Reduce use of Single Use Plastic Bags in Halifax

Motion: Len

Second: Brad

Opposed: Len

Melinda, Fred, Brad were in favor. Len opposed.

Motion recommended

Melinda entertained a motion to approve a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$10,514.65 to the Law Account.

Motion: Len

Second: Brad

Melinda asked Charlie about the Land Use Council #2 bill. Charlie stated he believes it to be a couple of thousand dollars. Charlie believes the case at the end of the month may exceed the Reserve Fund amount. He may have to do a line item transfer for May and June.

Melinda entertained a motion to table the Reserve Fund Transfer

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

Sandy provided the current Reserve Fund balance of \$26,187.56.

Melinda made motion to reconsider the Reserve Fund Transfer.

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

Len asked what happens if we bottom out on the Reserve Fund. Kim stated we will do line item transfers from what we have excess in other line items. She stated she is concerned that we are so low with May and June still to go. Charlie and Sandy stated we will placing \$5,000.00 back into the Reserve Fund from Recycling.

AIF

Melinda entertained a motion to approve a line item transfer in the amount of \$3,500.00 from Fire Department/Ambulances.

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

Melinda entertained a motion to approve a line item transfer in the amount of \$1,000.00 from Treasurer Collector/Wages to Expense Line

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

Melinda stated we will move the discussion regarding Charlie's email about the HVAC on the agenda to Budget Discussion and move on to the Town Meeting Articles. Melinda stated Kim and she posted for Wage and Personnel because they have quorum, so they will discuss the wage items. Melinda stated last week, they took a look at all the wages across different towns, and the one position that they found difficult to classify is the Assistant Treasurer position. Kim stated that they found each town's Assistant Treasurer role handles different responsibilities. She stated they averaged the pay rate of the towns in which the position handled benefits to come up with a recommendation for the wage, and asked the Finance Committee's recommendation on how it should be weighed. She also stated that they have provided wage recommendations on the other positions in town as well, and the Finance Committee will have to look at those tonight. Kim stated she and Melinda, by town by-law, have to serve on Wage and Personnel so that it why they are responsible for the evaluation of the wages. She stated it has been a difficult process, and it gets controversial. Kim gave background information on a previous study that had been done in which some people felt the scope of the jobs were not weighed properly. A townsperson who served as the secretary to Wage and Personnel spoke as a taxpayer against the wage increase for the Assistant Town Treasurer position. She stated this is the third time this issue has come up. She stated a Grade 10 is a Department Head salary and the Assistant Treasurer should not make a similar salary.

Charlie clarified that there was going to be a separate, distinct Human Resources position created that would absorb the benefits responsibilities of the Assistant Treasurer position. That did not happen. A concern was raised that if we approve this this year, what's to say that next year we don't leave this open and change the title to Assistant Treasurer/Director of HR and we back door it that way. Charlie stated everything is open. There's no stopping anyone from trying to do something. If that's the reason to not do something, then we would never do anything. It is up to the townspeople to make the decisions. Kim stated she knows how this looks because we have brought this position up three times before. It looks terrible, but it is honest to what the position is doing now. The position is being paid at a level seven, but doing the work of a grade 10. A townsperson brought up the point that the Assistant Treasurer stated in a Wage and Personnel meeting that some of her duties revert back to the Treasurer. She also pointed out that the study done by Don Jacobs study, which the town paid \$16,000.00 for, and he

is a professional, and he didn't find her to be out of the ordinary with his grading of the position. Sandy stated that many new required state mandates are performed by this position, which support the wage increase. There was a question about the merit increase regarding this position. Charlie will check on this. Fred asked about the process of the evaluation from Wage and Personnel. Kim explained that she called all the town administrators to ask them how they evaluated their positions. She also explained that she and Melissa evaluated every component of every position in the town and compared them with other towns. Sandy then compiled all of that information from the salary survey into an excel spreadsheet. Brad doesn't understand why we're looking at this again and finds the excel spreadsheet very complicated. He feels this is being rammed down his throat. He feels the presentation should be better. Melinda stated she understands, but as a Wage person, doesn't believe it would be ethical to sit on this information and ultimately, the town will vote how they want. Kim stated she respects where everyone is coming from, but wanted to point out that she and Melinda did a tremendous amount of work to bring this to the Finance Committee and she is hoping that if it goes to town meeting, it doesn't implode. She also stated she and Melinda did the most honest job they could and that it has been a terrible process. A town employee stated she feels the numbers are incomplete and they don't add up. She states the comparison with other towns is not there. A suggestion from a towns person is to get an efficiency study and if the Assistant Treasurer is doing too much, she should delegate some of her duties to another position. She feels as if certain liaisons between boards have an agenda to move this position forward. Kim reiterated that we are talking about this one position, but they evaluated every position in the town. They are moving this position forward because they feel that it is warranted. They did their due diligence. Melinda stated that she is completely confident in the work that she and Kim have done and presented. An employee asked for clarification on the wages that are going up. She asked if phone calls were made to other towns regarding the positions that are being put up for a wage increase and who made those calls. Kim stated she personally made the phone calls for the Assistant Treasurer position, but the phone calls regarding the other positions were made, and data collected by other people.

Len stated that the grading system is from 1993. He knows data is very hard, but if you separate the salary piece, the grading is almost pointless. Melinda stated we can keep apologizing for things that happened before, but that is not going to change the numbers at the end of the day. Len said if Wage and Personnel want to bring it to town floor, then bring it. A town employee asked where the \$5,600.00 wage increase came from. Kim tried to explain again how the process was done. Sandy made a point of clarification that she came up with the raise amount by analyzing all the numbers and comparisons.

Melinda entertained a motion to reconsider the existing Finance Committee recommendation.

No motion was made.

The existing Finance Committee of not recommending stands.

Melinda made a motion to recommend the following articles as printed in the warrant:

Article #8 The updated figure for Article 8 is \$14,745.00 (Highway/Cemetery).

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

Article #9

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

Charlie stated we may end up adding a Lieutenant position in the future which will fall outside of the union.

Article #53

Charlie stated he will have an answer tomorrow on the pilot tomorrow. There is no pressure for us to get this done.

Article #61

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

Len asked for clarification on a two family single dwelling. Charlie stated that we have that as a separate use. It would be a duplex.

This will be discussed on Thursday at the Zoning meeting, so Fincom will wait until the results of that meeting and then vote this.

Melinda entertained a motion to table Article #61 until after the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

Article #5 with highest potential amount of \$42,800.00

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

Article #8

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

Melinda pointed out that Sandy provided a sheet outlining the new uniform rates. The Finance Committee recommended these previously.

Public Participation: None

Calendar: Melinda informed everyone that we are posted for Monday, the 13th, Tuesday, the 14th and Wednesday, the 15th at 6:30p.m. in the Teacher's Lounge at HES.

Melinda entertained a motion to adjourn at 9:02p.m.

Motion: Len

Second: Fred

AIF

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Clark, Secretary

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Len Teceno, Clerk