



Finance Committee
TOWN OF HALIFAX
499 Plymouth Street
Halifax, MA 02338

Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 6, 2023

Committee Members Present (Remotely): Todd Dargie, Cheryll Zarella Burke, Jonathan Schmaling (Late), Frank Johnston, Jim Walters & Michael Bennett,

Committee members absent: Tom Connolly

Audience (Remotely): Katie Esposito, Cody Haddad, Sandy Nolan, Kathy Reed, Jean Gallant, Cesar Calouro, Chief Joao Chaves & Steve Hayward Susan Lawless

Todd called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm

Meeting is being record by area 58

Todd entertained a motion to accept the minutes of Feb 6, 2023 (revised) and February 27, 2023

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Frank Johnson

AIF

Library Reserve Fund Transfer – Reviewed during the February 27th meeting, a formal request has been made. The library is requesting a transfer from the reserve fund in the amount of \$244.00 to the library expense account.

Todd Dargie entertains a motion to recommend the library reserve fund transfer in the amount of \$244

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Cheryll Zarella Burke

Highway Department: Todd Dargie introduces Steve Hayward, Highway Superintendent to review his budget requests. The first piece of equipment Steve requests is a replacement chipper. The current chipper owned by the town is a 2018 Vermeer Chipper 1000. Steve would like to replace this with a Vermeer BC1500. The need for the updates is due to normal wear and tear. By increasing to a new model, the department will be able to address the storm drains being overdrawn. The trade in value for the current machine is \$7,250.00. After reviewing different options and with input from the town administrator the committee agreed if the new chipper is purchased trading in the older chipper would likely be the most cost-effective decision for the town. The final sale price of the chipper after trade in would be \$69,264.00. Cody Haddad asked Steve to review and make sure the manufacturer is on a state approved contract list.

The next item requested by the highway department is a Mecalac 7MWR Excavator. The manufacturer is coming for a demo on Wednesday March 8th. This is a smaller excavator than the department currently has. This one is particularly useful for the cemetery as it can fit in between stones. The machine has multiple uses that will be beneficial to the town. The requested excavator is drivable and allows for an attachable trailer which would result in less man power and labor costs. The final price for the Mecalac 7MWR is \$157,000 without a trade in. Steve explains that after speaking to the manufacturer he does not see them offering a large trade in amount for the town's current excavator. Todd asks if a less expensive option has been explored. Steve confirmed to the committee he reviewed three different brands, and they did not compare to the one being requested. Steve will forward these quotes to the committee for review. Frank will attend the demonstration on Wednesday at the town barn and give the committee his recommendation at the next meeting.

Fire Department – Todd Dargie introduces Mike Witham, Fire Department Chief to review his budget and capital fund requests. Chief Witham first speaks about adding two additional fire fighter paramedics to his department. He explains the department is trying to maintain a ALS status which would require the additional employees being hired. The Chief understands the financial cost associated with this and provided the committee with updated revenue projections per run completed with a full staff. The department currently has two full-time ambulance they are unable to fill due to staffing shortages. When the department is unable to maintain ALS status mutual aid is called in. When doing this the town is losing around 50 runs per year in revenue. The chief's figures project that by adding additional staff and maintaining ALS status in town the new revenue would offset the cost of the additional hires. Chief Witham also explains the town has not increased the Ambulance rate since 2018. This is something they would like to look at increasing in the future. Todd asked Chief Witham to share documents he is referencing with the committee for review.

Next Chief Witham reviews FY 24 budget with the committee. Department wages increases to \$1,319,037 from \$1,091,426. This is based on the addition 2 full-time paramedics requested from Capital and an increase in call back parametric rate to \$26.00 per hour. The training budget has increased from \$59,007 to \$74,975. This number includes all state-required training and college incentives (50% reimbursement) offered through the town. Fire department expenses increased from \$46,750 to \$65,350. This change is mostly due to first issue and turnout gear costs. Electric budget was increased from \$17,000 to \$18,500 due to increase in service charges

The department currently received an unanticipated cost increase this year for ambulance supplies. Brockton Hospital was their original medical control hospital. They would allow the department to replace expired supplies with new ones. This program has stopped and going forward all medication needs to be purchased from Clinical One at full price. This change is affecting all local fire departments. Ambulance billing has also increased by \$1,000. Lastly Emergency Management has increased to \$5,500 which would cover new batteries for all the department radios.

Chief Witham then reviews the two Capital request for the department. First, they are requesting 12 Motorola monitor pagers for fire recalls purposes in the amount of \$4,576. Next the department needs to replace the 2008 Ford F350 Forest fire 2 truck they currently have. Chief Witman's suggestion would be to make his current command vehicle, which is a 2020 Ford F350 (28k miles) the new forest fire 2 vehicle. He would then purchase a new less expense command vehicle. The requested amount for this line item is \$80,000 which includes updating the current commend truck to the forest fire 2 truck and a new command vehicle.

Preliminary FY24 Annual Town Meeting Articles: Sandy Nolan, Town account addresses the committee to review Town meeting articles. This includes Plymouth County extension services for \$150, Road Maintenance for \$300,000, assessors recertifications for \$18,600. Sandy explains the town also pays South coastal counties legal services a \$3500 fee and South shore resource and advocacy a \$3,500 fee which grants resident access to these free services. Sandy informs the committee the ADA Compliance projects have not been added to the articles yet but will be. There are two major concerns they first the town hall portico is falling and needs to be replaced. Second is the library windows which are shattering regularly.

Todd entertains a motion to recommend Plymouth County extension services for \$150, Assessors recertifications for \$18,600, South coastal counties legal services a \$3500 fee and South shore resource and advocacy a \$3,500.

Motion – Cheryl

Second – Frank

Todd entertains a motion to recommend for the fire departments request for 12 new pagers in the amount of \$4,576 & new command vehicle \$80,000

Motion – Cheryll Zarella Burke

Second – Michael Bennett

Todd entertains a motion to recommend for the police departments request for 2 new cruisers in the amount of \$110,000, new bullet proof vests in the amount of \$5,000 and 5 new radios in the amount of \$15,789

Motion – Cheryll Zarella Burke

Second – Jim Walters

Deferred Items: The committee agrees to wait to make a recommendation on the highway department's request until Frank can review demo on Wednesday and verification that it is a state contractor. Road maintenance has been deferred as well. Sandy is working on getting the committee the information needed to make a recommendation.

Sandy informed the committee she will be adding an actuarial study line item which is a state requirement for the town's OPAP account. This will be around \$8,0000, sandy will have a confirm price next week. Also next meeting Sandy and Cody will make their recommendations on expenditures to the committee

New Town Revenue Folder – Todd reviewed the new town folder and nothing new has been submitted.

Correspondence – Cody informs the committee he replied to the complaint filed with the attorney general's office regarding the open meeting law violation. The individual who has filed the complaint is happy with the committees response and has closed the case.

Next meeting – Scheduled for March 13, 2023 at 6:00PM

Exhibit List:

- Highway Department - Vermeer BC1500 quote
- Highway Department - Mecalac 7MWR Excavator quote
- Fire Department - Organizational chart
- Fire Department - Budget and capital fund
- 2024 – Preliminary FY24 Annual Town Meeting Articles

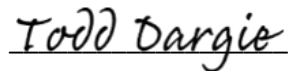
Todd entertained a motion to adjourn at 7:43PM

Motion: Cheryll Zarella Burke

Second – Michael Bennett

AIF

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Todd Dargie". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Todd Dargie, Chairperson