



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

Meeting Minutes

Monday July 17, 2023

Committee Members Present (Remotely): Todd Dargie, Cheryll Zarrella Burke, Michael Bennett, Frank Johnston & Jim Walters

Committee members absent: Jonathan Schmaling

Audience: William Smith, Chief Chaves, Chief Witham, Christine Healy, Sandy Nolan & Katie Esposito

Todd Dargie called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm

This meeting is being conducted remotely and being recorded by Area 58.

ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING MINUTES: Minutes from Monday June 26th have been circulated to the committee for a vote.

Todd entertained a motion to recommend the meeting minutes from Monday June 26, 2023

Motion: Jim Walters

Second: Frank Johnston

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters & Michael Bennett

(Cheryll Zarrella Burke abstained from vote due to not being present for June 26, 2023 meeting)

TALENT BANK FORMS OF FINANCE COMMITTEE OPEN POSITION CLOSED 6/30: The finance committee received one talent bank form for the current vacant position.

FINANCE COMMITTEE CANDIDATE INTERVIEW: WILLIAM J SMITH: The candidate, Mr. Smith, joins the meeting remotely. Todd asks Mr. Smith to share his professional background with the committee and why he would be interested in joining. Mr. Smith shares he has been a resident of Halifax since 1989. He also has 37 years in the municipal government. His current position is the chief of police in Holbrook MA. He has experience operating 4-million-dollar budgets and is familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the finance committee. Mr. Smith will be retiring in the spring from his current position and will now have the time to volunteer and give back to his community. Todd thanks the candidate for his interest. The committee will discuss and take a formal vote during the next meeting.

LINE-ITEM TRANSFERS REQUESTS: The first line-item transfers of the night is from the Police department. The department is requesting \$503.75 be transferred from the Police Training Account into the Police Chief Salary

Account. The reason for the transfer is due to the Juneteenth federal holiday not being in the Police Chiefs contract. This has been corrected for the new fiscal year.

Todd entertained a motion to recommend the transfer of \$503.75 from the Police Training Account into the Police Chief Salary Account.

Motion: Cheryll Zarrella Burke

Second: Michael Bennett

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters, Cheryll Zarrella Burke & Michael Bennett

Next requests come from the School Department. They are requesting the transfer of \$33,321.25 from the Vocational School Education – Transportation Account in the Elementary School – HES Expense. The reason for the request is due to the cost to run the program at HES including the salary of the teacher and para. They also had unexpected long-term leaves including three maternity leaves. Other expenses included are long term subs, homeless transportation and interpreting services.

Todd entertained a motion to recommend the transfer of \$33,321.25 from the Vocational School Education – Transportation Account in the Elementary School – HES Expense

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Frank Johnston

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters, Cheryll Zarrella Burke & Michael Bennett

The school department also requested the transfer of \$80,000 from the Special Needs Tuition to the Elementary School – HES Wages. This is needed because the school is now providing these services in the elementary school and not transporting students to surrounding towns. This allows for less transportation expenses, smaller classroom sizes and allows students to remain in the same school as their peers.

Todd entertained a motion to recommend the transfer of \$80,000 from the Special Needs Tuition to the Elementary School – HES Wages

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Cheryll Zarrella Burke

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters, Cheryll Zarrella Burke & Michael Bennett

Next transfer also from the school department is in the amount of \$8,477.95 from the Vocational School Education – Transportation into the Special Needs Transportation. The reason for the request is for the unexpected increase in special education transportation.

Todd entertained a motion to recommend the transfer of \$8,477.95 from the Vocational School Education – Transportation into the Special Needs Transportation

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Cheryll Zarrella Burke

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters, Cheryll Zarrella Burke & Michael Bennett

The last transfer for the School Department is in the amount of \$48,768.72 from the Vocational School Education – Transportation into the Special Needs Tuition. This is a the result of additional students in need of out of district placements.

Todd entertained a motion to recommend the transfer of \$48,768.72 from the Vocational School Education – Transportation into the Special Needs Tuition

Motion: Cheryll Zarrella Burke

Second: Michael Bennett

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters, Cheryll Zarrella Burke & Michael Bennett

Next Chief Witham reviews the requests for the Halifax Fire department. The first one is in the amount of \$17,300.00 from Fire Training into Fire Expenses. The reason for the request is due to additional costs related to unforeseen staffing changes. The department added new members and new custom gear was needed for each firefighter.

Todd entertained a motion to recommend the transfer of \$17,300.00 from Fire Training into Fire Expenses.

Motion: Cheryll Zarrella Burke

Second: Michael Bennett

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters, Cheryll Zarrella Burke & Michael Bennett

The following request by the fire department was in the amount of \$20,707.94 from the Fire Wages Part Time into the Fire Expense Equipment. This was caused by the purchase of necessary equipment that was over the projected budget. The department needed two chair lifts for the current ambulance fleet. The previous lifts were 8 & 12 years old, and they were unable to get needed parts or replacements anymore. This was a safety issue as the lifts are used daily.

Todd entertained a motion to recommend the transfer of \$20,707.94 from the Fire Wages Part Time into the Fire Expense Equipment.

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Cheryll Zarrella Burke

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters, Cheryll Zarrella Burke & Michael Bennett

The Building Department has one small request in the amount of \$47.00 from the Building Committee Expense account into the Building Committee Clerical account. This was due to Holiday pay for a part-time staff member.

Todd entertained a motion to recommend the transfer of \$47.00 from the Building Committee Expense account into the Building Committee Clerical account.

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Cheryll Zarrella Burke

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters, Cheryll Zarrella Burke & Michael Bennett

Last request for the night comes from the highway department. They are requesting the amount of \$5,870.00 be transferred from the Snow and Ice Account into the Gas and Oil Account. This shortage was a result of increased gas prices and the unexpecting Veeder rooter replacement due to breakdown.

Todd entertained a motion to recommend the transfer of \$5,870.00 from the Snow and Ice Account into the Gas and Oil Account

Motion: Cheryll Zarrella Burke

Second: Michael Bennett

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters, Cheryll Zarrella Burke & Michael Bennett

This concluded the line-item request for the July 17th finance committee meeting. Todd informed the committee he will send the signature requests electronically for the approved recommendations. This will be available for committee members by tomorrow July 18, 2023.

OPEN MEETING LAW COMPLAINT: Todd states going forward he will now announce members are participating remotely as well as stating it is a remote meeting. This is in response to the recent complaint filed against the committee. Cody responded after the previous meeting to the first open meeting law complaint. Since then an additional complaint has been received. The individual stated the committee did not take a formal vote allowing the town administrator to answer on behalf of the Finance Committee. This was inaccurate as the committee did have a formal vote. The committee is now waiting for the Attorney General's office to respond and make a determination.

CORRESPONDENCE & AS MAY ARISE: Todd informed the members that he has received a resignation email from Johnathan Schmalig. The open position will be posted on the website on August 1st and will be open until the end of August. Caesar will post on the town pages and inform Todd once live.

The only correspondence in the mailbox at town hall was the annual dues invoice from the association of town finance committees' subscription for 2024. The cost of the annual membership is \$190.00 and comes out of the finance committee budget.

Todd entertained a motion to recommend the committee continues the annual association of town finance committees' membership for 2024 in the amount of \$190.00

Motion: Cheryll Zarrella Burke

Second: Michael Bennett

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters, Cheryll Zarrella Burke & Michael Bennett

Todd entertained a motion to recommend members allow Cheryll to sign on behalf of the finance committee on the reenrollment form stated above.

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Frank Johnston

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters & Michael Bennett

(Cheryll Zarrella Burke abstained due to vote allowing her to act on behalf of the committee)

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

NEXT MEETING: Monday August 21st, at 6:00 PM which will take place remotely on Zoom.

Todd Dargie entertained a motion to adjourn at 7:26 PM

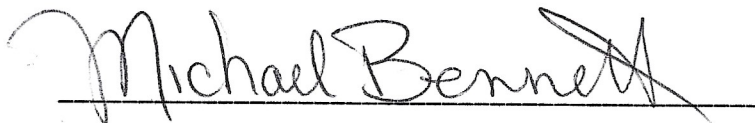
Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Cheryll Zarrella Burke

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters, Cheryll Zarrella Burke & Michael Bennett

EXHIBITS: Talent Bank Form for William J Smith, Department Line items transfer requests & Open Meeting Law Complaint

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Bennett". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Michael Bennett, Clerk