



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

## Meeting Minutes

**Monday September 11, 2023**

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

**Committee members absent:** Cheryll Zarrella Burke

**Audience:** Cody Haddad, Sandy Nolan, William Smith, Cesar Calouro & Katie Esposito

**Todd Dargie called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm**

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

**ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING MINUTES:** Minutes from Monday August 21, 2023, have been circulated to the committee for a vote.

**Todd entertained a motion to recommend the meeting minutes from Monday August 21, 2023**

**Motion:** Michael Bennett

**Second:** Frank Johnston

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

**UPDATE ON MR. WILLIAM SMITH AS THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:** The finance committee took a formal vote on August 21, 2023, to recommend William Smith to join the Halifax finance committee. They are currently waiting for the appointment committee to meet which is tentatively scheduled for the end of the month. Cody informed the committee this will be conducted remotely on Zoom. During the August 21<sup>st</sup> meeting the committee members also appointed Cheryll Zarrella Burke to represent them on the appointment committee.

**CHAIRMAN UPDATE ON TALENT BANK FORMS FOR CURRENTLY VACANT FINANCE COMMITTEE POSITION:**

Todd Dargie informed the committee he did receive a talent bank form today from Mr. Edward Bryan which was circulated to the other committee members prior to the meeting. Todd asked Katie, the Finance committee secretary to contact the candidate and to see if he is available to interview during the next scheduled meeting. Todd also asked Cesar to repost the vacant seat on the town's website as soon as possible to allow additional residents to apply if interested. Todd addressed the audience and encouraged town members to apply especially females to allow for a diverse committee to represent the population of Halifax.

**FY25 DEPT BUDGET ASSIGNMENTS:** Todd addressed the committee members regarding FY25 budget assignments. He asked if they would like to keep the same assignments as they had in the past or if they would like to switch and learn a new department. Jim Walters requested that the previous assignments be circulated

before a FY25 budget gets formally assigned. Another point made was there are currently two vacant seats. The goal of the committee is to get these seats filled soon, which would allow for a fair divide of the towns budget assignments among all members.

**WAGE STUDY UPDATE FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR CODY HADDAD:** Cody Haddad informs the committee that the classification study has begun for the Town of Halifax. The study will assist the town by making recommendations on the reclassification and grading of various positions. The funds from this study were allocated from a grant awarded from the state and therefore is a cost-free benefit to the town and its employees. The company hired is Gov HR, they work with many municipalities and are very familiar with how government agencies operate. There is a meeting scheduled with all staff members this week regarding what will be required during this process. The board of selectmen are also meeting on September 26<sup>th</sup> and will discuss holding a special town meeting in December regarding wage and personnel line items. Prior to this town meeting the wage and personnel committee will also meet to make their recommendations. Cody explained the remaining funds from the grant will be used to update and rewrite the current job descriptions.

**CAPITAL PLANNING PROCESS FLOW REVIEW & FY25 PLAN:** Town Administrator Cody Haddad discussed with the finance committee about implementing a 5 Year Capital Plan. This is a common practice in towns and a tool to help prepare for future expenses. Cody will meet with each department head and issue them a capital request form. The department heads will then be responsible for meeting with their team and completing the form by prioritizing the requests by importance. The Capital Committee will be meeting to discuss the adoption of the 5 Year Plan. If they move forward with the process, they will be requesting the recommendation of the finance committee. Todd Dargie informed the committee he is an active member of the capital planning committee which includes a member from the board of selectmen, a member from the finance committee, the town accountant and two members of the community that are not employed by the town.

**OPERATING BUDGET PROCESS FLOW REVIEW & FY25 PLAN:** The Town Administrator Cody Haddad believes the town can adopt a more efficient procedure for the budget process in the future. His suggestion is to have the administration more involved in the early stages. The department head, town accountant, town administrator and the finance committee liaison will meet in a joint meeting to review the budget. After this meeting the final draft will be created and ready for recommendations. Next step would be the finance committee having the department head join them in an open meeting to review and answer any questions. Cody believes being more proactive and having town account and town administrator involved from the beginning would simplify the workload for all parties.

The next proposed change would be to have each department create two proposed budgets. This year he is asking them to create a level service budget but then also asking them to prepare a budget with a 10% cut that would not affect the town in a negative way. They will then provide a written memo explaining the cuts and the effects they would have. Cody states this is a good exercise for departments to see where they could be saving and also to justify their expenses. This would be a benefit to administration in the scenario they do need to cut costs in the future.

Todd Dargie agrees this would be a benefit to the town and a good process to adopt moving forward. Cody is going to present the Finance Committee with a draft memo at the next meeting to get feedback.

**COMMITTEE LIAISON UPDATES:** Representing the Zoning board are Jim Walters and Frank Johnston. They are currently updating the towns bilaws. They have successfully completed steps 1-3 and are moving on to step 4 next week. They will also be updating the language and preparing for upcoming housing projects in the future.

Todd Dargie is representing the Capital Planning committee. They have not had a meeting recently and did not have an update to provide at this time.

**CORRESPONDENCE & AS MAY ARISE:** None

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None

**NEXT MEETING PLANNING:** The next meeting is scheduled for Monday October 2, 2023, at 6:00 PM followed by Monday October 16, 2023, at 6:00 PM. The committee agrees they will now prepare for two meetings a month on the first and third Monday going forward in preparation for budgets.

**Todd Dargie entertained a motion to adjourn at 7:07 PM**

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Frank Johnston

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

**EXHIBITS:** Talent bank form: Edward Bryan

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