



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

## Meeting Minutes

**Monday October 2, 2023**

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

**Audience:** Cody Haddad, Sandy Nolan, Edward Bryan, Cesar Calouro & Katie Esposito

**Todd Dargie called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm**

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

**ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING MINUTES:** Minutes from Monday September 11, 2023, have been circulated to the committee for a vote.

**Todd entertained a motion to recommend the meeting minutes from Monday September 11, 2023**

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Jim Walters

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

Cheryll Zarrella Burke (abstained as she was absent for the September 11, 2023 meeting)

**EDWARD BRYAN INTERVIEW FOR VACANT FINANCE COMMITTEE POSITION:** Todd Dargie thanks Edward Bryan for his interest in the Finance Committee. Todd then asks Mr. Bryan to give the committee his professional background and why he would be interested in joining. Mr. Bryan addresses the committee stating he has lived in Halifax for 13 years. He has 3 children in the school system and has been married for 20 years. He is currently employed with the Massachusetts Convention Authority as the Directory of IT Business. Mr. Bryan states he is an advocate for town involvement and would love the opportunity to get participate. He does have former volunteer experience with the town. He has worked on the school council for the elementary school and has also coached soccer and softball. Todd informs Mr. Bryan of the time commitment involved with the committee. The meetings are held remotely two times a month on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month. During budget planning the role is more time-consuming as you are meeting with department heads regularly. Todd states the finance committee must ask the tuff question and vet out requests. Todd describes the committee as the bulldog for the town.

The floor was open to the rest of the committee members looking to ask Mr. Bryan any questions. Frank Johnston went first. He thanked him for applying for the vacant position. Frank then asks Mr. Byran about his time on the school council. Edward responds informing Frank he held a seat on the council for 1 year and did not have any budget responsibilities. Next Jim Walters also thanked Mr. Bryan for his time and interest. Jim's question revolved around his current employer. He wanted to know if the budget was given to him or if it was

something he created himself. Mr. Bryan responded stating he creates the capital budget along with the day-to-day budget. His top revenue last year was \$7 million. He is currently working on a budget of \$4.5 million for business applications. Jim then asks how he would prioritize budgets. Mr. Bryan responded stating that safety and security must be prioritized followed by infrastructure. Todd thanks Mr. Bryan for his interest and informs him that someone will be in touch with him regarding the committees' decision.

**UPDATE ON MR. WILLIAM SMITH AS THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Todd welcomes Mr. Smith to the Finance Committee as he was appointed by the Board of Selectmen last week. This will be retroactive from June 15, 2023, for a 3-year appointment.

**CHAIRMAN UPDATE ON TALENT BANK FORMS FOR CURRENTLY VACANT FINANCE COMMITTEE POSITION:** Todd Dargie informed the committee there have been no additional talent bank forms submitted.

**DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON APPOINTMENT OF EDWARD BRYAN TO FINANCE COMMITTEE:** Todd begins by stating that having a full board would be a benefit to the town and the finance committee. He joined in 2021 and if Mr. Bryan is appointed this will be the first time the committee has been full. Todd opens the floor to the committee for a round table discussion on Mr. Bryan's interview. Michael begins by stating he thought he would be a good fit with his budget experience and his ability to prioritize. Frank seconds that and adds the candidate is available on Mondays, the board will be full and he is familiar with the towns school's system. Franks also seconds moving forward with a vote. Jim also agrees and states his background in IT and budgets will be a benefit to the committee. Cheryl & William agree as well. Todd believes Mr. Bryan would add value and is a perfect candidate for the vacant position.

**Todd entertained a motion to recommend the appointment of Edward Bryan to the Finance Committee**

Motion: Cheryl Zarrella Burke

Second: Michael Bennett

Roll Call: Todd Dargie, William Smith, Michael Bennett, Frank Johnston, Jim Walters & Cheryl Zarrella Burke

*The next step would be having Mr. Bryan appointed by the Board of Selectmen on October 10, 2023, at 6:30pm.*

**FY25 DEPT BUDGET ASSIGNMENTS:** The committee members review the Budget assignments from FY24 and reorganize them to accommodate the FY25 budget as well as the new committee members.

- Frank Johnston: Appeals Board, Planning Board, Building Inspector, Fire and Emergency Management
- Jim Walters: Library, Halifax Elementary School, Silverlake Regional High School
- Michael Bennett: Cemetery, Highway Department, Recycling & Water
- Cheryl Zarrella Burke: Police Department, Council on Aging, Building Department, Civil Defense & Animal Control
- William Smith: Veteran Services, Historic Commission, Historic District, Parks Department & Board of Health
- Todd Dargie: Accountant, Assessors, Collectors, Treasurer, Selectmen/Data Processing & Town Clerk
- Edward Bryan: Conservation, Halifax Lights, Holidays in Halifax, Sealer of weights and measures, youth and Rec & Housing Authority



Sandy will review and update the spreadsheet with revised contact information. Once complete Todd will circulate to the committee members. Todd suggests members introduce themselves as the liaison to assigned departments in the meantime.

**MANAGEMENT REPORT FROM FY22 AUDIT FROM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR CODY HADDAD:** Cody reviews the management letter received regarding the FY22 audit. They had an internal meeting upon receiving the letter with the town administrator, accountant and treasurer to discuss the findings. Cody explains to the committee the audit came back very well with no findings of concern. There were however some recommendations, the first being for the Treasures Office around the policy for old outstanding checks. Linda the treasurer is going to reach out to surrounding towns for their policies and procedures and hopefully adopt them for the Town of Halifax.

Next, the financial software is not being utilized to its full potential. The town is currently in the process of updating their financial software. They are using Softright and will be transferring over to Springbrook which is offered by the same company. Halifax will be the first town in Massachusetts utilizing this new program. Cody is confident that this will be a good fit for the town's needs. The goal is to go live on July 1, 2024, for the new fiscal year. Springbrook is a web-based cloud software.

A recommendation was made for a written disaster recovery plan to be adopted by the town. Cody explains they are in the process of going through the vault and basement to review items they can dispose of and to clean up the vault. Moving forward paper invoices will be scanned into the cloud to eliminate unnecessary paper storage.

Cody then reviews the next recommendation regarding the old outstanding motor vehicle and boat excise account receivables. The town treasure will be cleaning up the outstanding balances. These invoices date back to 2005. Cody states there is not a large outstanding balance, it is under \$10k total.

Lastly posting activities to fund balance accounts. They recommended that no activity be recorded directly to fund balance accounts other than standard year end journal entries and reclassification between fund balance components.

Moving forward when the FY audits management letters are received Cody is recommending there is a joint meeting with the finance committee and the board of selectmen to review findings.

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE ON LINE ITEM/ RESERVE FUND TRANSFER REQUEST PROCESS:** Cody explains to the committee that the new protocol for the line item transfer requests in DocuSign has been tested and ready to be adapted. Once submitted by the department head the request will first go to Sandy & Cody for approval. Then it will go to the finance committee secretary who will then disburse to committee members for signature.

**COMMITTEE LIAISON UPDATES:** Frank and Jim are representing the zoning board. There are no new updates. The next meeting will be on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**CORRESPONDENCE & AS MAY ARISE:** None

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** None

**NEXT MEETING PLANNING:** Monday October 16, 2023 at 6:00 PM, followed by October 24, 2023 for an in person joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen.

**Todd Dargie entertained a motion to adjourn at 7:29 PM**

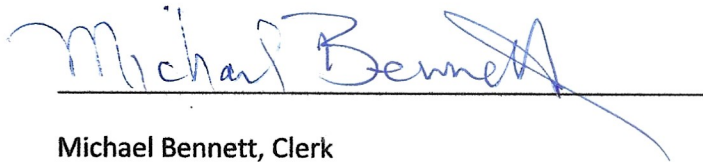
Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Frank Johnston

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

**EXHIBITS:** Talent bank form: Edward Bryan, FY 24 Budget Assignments, FY22 Audit Management Letter

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Bennett, Clerk