



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

Meeting Minutes

Monday February 12, 2024

Committee Members Present (Remotely): Edward Bryan, Todd Dargie, Frank Johnston, William Smith, Michael Bennett & Jim Walters

Absent: Cheryll Zarrella Burke

Audience: Steve Hayward & Darlene Regan, Cody Haddad, Sandy Nolan & 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 FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES FROM February 5, 2024: Minutes from the Finance Committee meeting from February 5, 2024, have been circulated to the committee members prior to the meeting for review.

Todd entertained a motion to recommend the Finance Committee meeting from February 5, 2024

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: William Smith

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

Motion Passes 6/0

DEPARTMENT BUDGET REVIEW – COUNCIL ON AGING: Cody Shares his screen to show the Council on Aging FY25 Budget. Darlene Regan, the COA director, reviews the line items in her budget.

- **116 – Director Salary:** The salary for the COA director was \$67,856 and the requested increase is \$79,018. This increase was related to the findings and adjustment from the wage and compensation study.
- **116A – Wages:** The FY24 approved budget was \$124,085 the COA asked for an increase to \$152,866. The reason behind the increase was mostly due to driver wages expenses. The COA has three van drivers, and it was calculated that each driver works 19.5 hours per week. After a discussion with the Town Administrator the recommended budget was set at \$132,916. This allotted 42 hours per week between all three drivers, which was more in line with historical data from previous years. Darlene states the van usage has increased from previous years due to additional services provided to residents including medical transport.

- **117 Expenses:** FY24 budget was approved at \$9,075, the COA is asking for a budget of \$13,225. The Recommended budget for this line item is \$10,625. Darlene explained the upcoming expenses she is anticipating.
 - The van needs a deep clean and a sticker which they do every year. There are some mechanical and cosmetic issues with the 2013 van including the front grill repair and light issues.
 - Equipment expenses including new speakers (already purchased), upgraded software for the iPads as well as new chairs (as needed).

DEPARTMENT BUDGET REVIEW – HIGHWAY/CEMETERY: Steve Hayward reviews his proposed FY25 budget for the Highway department and Cemetery.

Highway Department:

- The Line items for the wages were already contracted with the union and include the 2% COLA. These include 77 – Surveyor, 78 - Wages, 70 - Clerical Wages.
- Most items are flat funded in this budget. The only notable change is the gas and oil expense increased by \$5,000. (FY24 - \$110,00 to FY25- \$115,866)
- The department has instituted a new spreadsheet where they track their expenses as they come in. This will assist the department with the expense breakdown going forward.
- Line item 83 – Town Roads: Storm Water Management: The consulting fee is \$144,440. The town pays the consulting firm BHB an hourly rate based upon work completed. Steve believes the town has around \$12,000 catch basins. The MS4 and Annual Report can be found on the Towns website. Ed asked why the town doesn't use a competitive bid process to reduce annual costs. The committee requested follow-up regarding the details surrounding the consulting firm currently being used and how long the town has been using their services without a bid process. Also included in this line item is Street Sweeping. The town does not own a street sweeper, so this is a contracted expense as well.

Cemetery: Jim asks Steve about the new excavator approved and purchased in 2023. The old excavator has not been auctioned as of today. The Water Department has an interest in purchasing the excavator from the Cemetery. They cannot do a lateral transfer for the old machine because the Water Department is an enterprise. If the department does not acquire the machine it will go to auction this summer. The money from the sale/auction will go into the General Fund.

It was suggested to have the Highway Department charge a rental fee to the Water department to use equipment. This will assist with repairs and preventative maintenance expenses. Cody informs the committee he will investigate the matter further and follow up about implementing a new rental protocol between departments.

RESERVE FUND TRANSFER REQUESTS: No reserve fund transfers scheduled.

FY25 CAPITAL PLANNING UPDATES: There was a meeting last week with the Highway Department, Building Maintenance and Historic Commission. The committee has concluded their department reviews and are now waiting for the free cash balance. This will be made available in March by the Town Administrator.

ARPA FUND BALANCE REVIEW: This agenda item will be deferred until the next schedule meeting on February 20th.

COMMITTEE LIAISON UPDATES: Nothing to review currently.

CORRESPONDENCE & AS MAY ARISE – Frank asked about the grant awarded to the fire department for safety gear in the amount of \$15,500. Sandy stated this is a reimbursement grant and she will investigate to see how the money will be utilized and report it back to the committee. This is not something that will need the approval of the finance committee. On the application for the grant the department needed to explain what they will be using the funds to purchase. Frank mentioned in the future it may be helpful for the committee to be informed to help with annual budgets and capital recommendation.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None

NEXT MEETING PLANNING: Tuesday February 20, 2024- The committee will be meeting weekly until the Town Meeting

Todd Dargie entertained a motion to adjourn at 7:10 PM

Motion: Michael Bennett

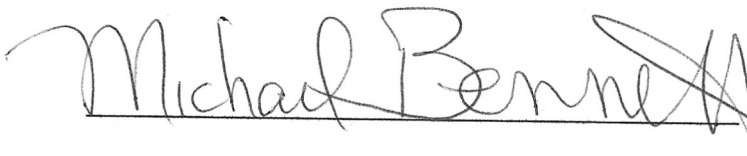
Second: William Smith

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

All in Favor 6/0

EXHIBITS: FY25 Budget Sheet – Town Administrator (Council on Aging & Highways/ Cemetery)

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Michael Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "M" and "B". A long, thin horizontal line extends from the end of the signature across the page.

Michael Bennett, Clerk