Finance Committee

TOWN OF HALIFAX

499 Plymouth Street

Halifax, MA 02338

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday October 5, 2020**

**Committee Members Present**: Melinda Tarsi, Cheryll Zarella Burke, Fred McGovern and Bill McAvoy

Also, in attendance in the audience were: Charlie Seelig, Sandy Nolan, Chief Chaves and Lauren Carmichael

The meeting was recorded by Zoom

**Melinda called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:03 pm**

Melinda suggested the Committee do the interview with Lauren Carmichael, perspective Finance Committee member, to start the meeting.

Lauren introduced herself to committee members and stated that she had an interest in learning more about finances that effect the Town. She said she felt she had much to learn, but she was eager and loved to jump into new projects and learn as she went. Melinda gave Lauren a brief summary of the duties of the Finance Committee and told her they work as an Advisory Board at Town meeting. Melinda advised Lauren she could take some time to think about if she wanted to be appointed or the Finance Committee could take a vote now if Lauren felt comfortable. Lauren said she was comfortable with the idea and looking forward to joining the Committee.

**Melinda entertained a motion to approve the appointment of Lauren Carmichael to the Finance Committee for the longest term still available.**

Motion: Bill

Second: Fred

**AIF**

There were no Reserve Fund or Line Item transfers

**Melinda entertained a motion to accept the minutes from 9/21/20 and 9/22/2020**.

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

Public Participation: Bill asked Sandy if Capital Planning might start meeting again soon since budget season was about to be upon us again. Sandy and Bill agreed the second week in November may work.

Calendar: Melinda said the Board of Selectmen may be able to vote the new members (Tom and Lauren) on 10/13/20 so she suggested we keep our meeting on 10/19/20 to get everyone acquainted. She said after that at the meeting on 11/2 we could discuss if Mondays still worked for everyone.

Melinda discussed the fact that the finance Committee had voted for funding a revision of the Zoning bylaws and the article had passed at Town Meeting. Melinda said that Fred had some questions regarding the handling of the revision and asked Fred to elaborate. Fred said that he had reviewed the Zoning bylaws and found inconsisitencies and clerical errors. Fred wanted to know can the obvious clerical errors just be fixed without going to Town Meeting or does even a data entry error that is obviously clerical have to go through Town Meeting. Charlie said true clerical errors (transcribing) could be fixed internally, but other things may not be able to be changed without Town Meeting. He said we may even want to make all things go through Town Meeting just to make residents feel better about it happening so it is transparent.

Fred discussed that he had concerns with the Finance Committee making recommendations on items like Zoning bylaw changes without enough time to give well informed recommendations. He would like to see some procedures in place so that on Town Meeting floor maybe we can just not give a recommendation or give a better recommendation. Melinda said that the Finance Committee had asked members of the Planning and Zoning Boards to come to Finance Committee meetings but there had not been any participation. Melinda said maybe a better idea is to start to have Finance members go to some of the Zoning/Planning meetings.

Melinda asked Charlie what the workflow might look like for the revision of the bylaws. Charlie said Finance Could take the lead on this issue if they wanted to. Charlie said that normally the Planning Board or the Board of Selectmen might take the lead on such a project but given that there seem to be so many layers of Conflict of Interest, it might be advisable to have someone else take the lead. Melinda asked if this was a situation where an Ad Hoc committee might be the way to go. Charlie said that he honestly felt as if the Finance Committee as the lead might be the best option. They already know some of the issues within the bylaw but really they have no stake in the game. Fred said he had found that Halifax has very minimalistic definitions compared to other surrounding towns. Fred thought this minimalistic approach may be part of the problem and lead to a lot of conflicting sections. Charlie said that the finance Committee could issue and RFP for the project. Charlie felt the best plan was to go out to bid saying that we had $65,000 to spend and asking what the different companies could do for that amount of money. Charlie said that some residents brought up issue with using the Land Use Counsel that we already have, but if we go out to many companies telling them what we have to spend and asking what they can do for that amount, then we can get varying companies. Melinda agreed that it would be good for the Finance Committee to handle this as they are removed from the Zoning/Planning aspect of it. Charlie clarified that the Finance Committee wanted him to start looking into getting RFPs from people for the money the Town voted. Melinda confirmed.

Fred asked what was going on with the Waste Study Committee as he is the Fin Com representative to that Committee. Sandy said they hadn’t met since COVID but that they planned to soon. Sandy said she would forward the email she had from Todd Koep. Fred asked about the survey they had planned to put together. Sandy said that since Town Hall was closed for a bit, they never put the survey for people to get there but they might do an online one. Charlie said they were looking into Survey Monkey.

**Melinda entertained a motion to adjourn at 6:40pm**

Motion: Bill

Second: Fred

**AIF**

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Cole, Secretary \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Fred McGovern, Clerk