Finance Committee

TOWN OF HALIFAX

499 Plymouth Street

Halifax, MA 02338

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday April 26, 2021**

**Committee Members Present**: Fred McGovern, Tom Connolly, Cheryll Zarella Burke, Drew McGlincy

Also, in attendance in the audience were: Charlie Seelig, Chief Chaves, Sandra Nolan, Toni Ross, Gordon Andrews, Sue Lawless, Jean Gallant, Chief Chaves, Chief Viveiros, Ashley Disesa, Troy Garron, Cesar Calouro, Kendra Kelly, and Tom Millias

The meeting was recorded by Zoom

**Fred called the meeting to order at 6:13pm**

**Fred entertained a motion to accept the meeting minutes from 04/12/21**

Motion: Cheryll

Second: Tom

**AIF**

Fred asked if we had new vocational numbers but Sandy said we did not. She said the State had extended the deadline for choosing Vocational options to 5/1/21 and she hoped we would here soon.

Charlie said the house numbers versus the Governor’s budget had no significant differences between them. He said the Town did about the same but Silver Lake made out not as well. They lost about $30,000 they were expecting but that would have to be made up by Silver Lake because they had already set the budget.

Charlie said he thinks he has enough information about the Grade 6 and Grade 7 positions to put something together by the end of the week and get it out to the Fin Com and the Selectmen for review so they can take a vote on 5/3/21 if they want.

There were no Reserve Fund Transfers

Fred asked Charlie what he thought about the RFP for the Zoning Bylaws since he was supposed to review them since the last meeting. Charlie said he preferred the Bobrowski proposal because it involved a lot of public participation. Fred said he liked a lot of public participation as well and he prefers to get as much done as possible for the money we spend. Tom said he preferred the “general smooth over” of the whole bylaw versus focusing on just one or two major areas. He said he would rather clean it all up as much as possible and then focus on the tough areas. Cheryll agreed with Tom. Drew said he doesn’t have too many opinions on this matter. Fred said he liked the proposal that had all the definitions up front because that is what he saw in many other Towns and it led to less confusion. Fred asked Charlie what the next step would be in the process. Charlies aid the Finance Committee would vote to award the contract to one of the companies and then if the company was still up for the project, the Fin Com could vote whether or not to pursue the project once they saw the fine detail of the contract. Fred asked Linda to add an agenda item to vote to award the RFP on 5/3/21. Tom asked when the last time a general review had been done was, and Charlie said not in a long time. Tom said he definitely preferred the proposal (Bobrowski) that offered more of a general clean up then.

Drew said he heard we had a way to EV charging stations at the Town Hall. Drew said he would like the fin Com to vote on it. Fred asked Drew exactly what he wanted Fin Com to vote on, what would be the process. Drew said he really liked the National Grid proposal from what he had seen because the Town would not necessarily have to pay for the service. Charlie said the Town has already applied for an EV Station through National Grid and the Town is just awaiting a decision from National Grid. Charlie said he doesn’t see that Fin Com would have to do anything at that point, they aren’t really involved in the process. Tom Connolly asked if this would be a revenue opportunity for the Town. Charlie aid probably it would be net neutral because it is a good thing to offer the citizens so we probably wouldn’t charge them for doing something good for the environment. He said the only concern would be that eventually we may have to pay for maintenance so maybe there would be some kind of fee established that would help cover those costs. Tom said that would be good because he was aware that to fill a Tesla is about $10.

Fred asked Cesar to discuss the Asset Management System. Cesar said Dude Solutions offers a bundled platform for work order and asset management. He said it would be specifically for Building Maintenance and the Highway Department. Cesar discussed in detail how the work order system would work and be a benefit to the Town. He said it would be used for the public at some point too, for example if they were to want to request the Highway department to go fix a pothole on a street they could do it through the system. Cesar said Highway would not use it immediately. There are other things that need to be done first. Cesar said that Scott and Steve had both agreed, however, that they would use it. Cesar said he told them that if we were spending the money they would have ot use it. Fred asked if it would be used by Building Maintenance to keep track of materials for jobs. Cesar said maybe, but that would be added later, he said materials are more tools than assets. Tom asked Cesar what the migration path for the data upload would be. Is it a manual upload or does Dude Solutions do it for you. Cesar said only Building Maintenance information would be uploaded, not Highway. Tom asked if there would be labels on assets for scanning of barcodes. Cesar said yes. Fred asked if the system would meet the standards of what the auditors were looking for when they talked about a Fraud Risk Management assessment. Charlie said there are currently bids out on the Fraud Risk Assessment and he thought they might state what kind of system would work. Fred asked if Fin Com voted for this system would there then be a risk that this system would not be up to the standard that the Fraud Risk Assessment required. Cesar said he would think this one would be ok. It was asked if this inventory system would include IT equipment and phones. Cesar said he may eventually add IT on to it. Cesar then said he may try to get his own system for IT management. Tom asked if this system for IT would be sunsetted? Tom said he is concerned that Fin com spend the money on this system and then there is no follow through because Cesar is too busy without enough hours to get to the work. Cesar said each department would be responsible for their share of inventory upload. He said they could use their existing Excel spreadsheet data to put it into Dude Solutions system. Fred asked if this would add more hours to Cesar’s job or help streamline things for him. Cesar said there is some heavy upload at the start but then nothing else. Cesar said he would not use this system for IT.

Sandy said she had asked for a joint meeting of the Selectmen and Fin Com since they now represented the Wage and Personnel employees. She wanted the boards to please consider giving the employees a 1% increase in wages as a priority, She said we currently fund the $75,000 Reserve Fund from Raise and Appropriate. She said we could this year take that $75,000 from Free Cash instead and that would free up enough money to give a 1% increase. Sandy said it would cost about $53,000 to give a 1% raise to everyone but the school employees. She hadn’t included the total of the cost for school employees because she doesn’t have the information from the schools in order to determine what 1% would be. She said everyone has had an increase in the cost of living and many employees worked very hard over the last year. She would like the Selectmen and Fin Com to recognize this and let the employees know they are a priority. She said the employees are the biggest asset. Fred asked what the current tax rate is with no changes to the budget. Sandy said that is hard to predict, and she couldn’t just say because it involves a lot of factors like house assessments etc. Fred asked Gordon if he had information on the School budget’s impact. Gordon said that he wasn’t really sure of what the impact would be at this point. He did say that if you take the $75,000 from Free Cash instead of Raise and Appropriate maybe there are other things you might want to prioritize over the 1% increase. Tom Connolly said he thought Sandy’s request was reasonable but this might just be the year where the Town can’t do an increase at all because we are already into the $300,000 buffer if the school budget goes through. Jean asked Gordon if the School budget included a 1.6% increase for the employees. Gordon said Silver Lake had the increase in their budget but the Halifax Elementary School did not. Fred asked the Selectmen for their thoughts. Tom Millias said that the Selectmen are still in contract negotiations so he didn’t know if he should say anything. He does however understand both sides of the commentary though. Sandy said she is just asking Fin Com to consider the employees as a priority. Gordon said he thinks all the Fin Com members should consider what their top priorities are before they take a vote. He also said that he thinks the Reserve Fund should be kept as part of the operating budget and not taken from Free Cash.

Under correspondence Linda reviewed the email from the Fire Chief clarifying that the increase in overtime for the Fire Admin would be offset by a change to the fire wages.

There was no public participation.

Fred said the next meeting was scheduled for Monday May 3rd and then they would have one before Town Meeting on May 10th.

There was no executive session needed.

**Fred entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20pm**

Motion: Cheryll

Second: Tom

**AIF**

Respectfully submitted,

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

Tom Connolly, Clerk