Finance Committee

TOWN OF HALIFAX

499 Plymouth Street

Halifax, MA 02338

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday May 24, 2021**

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

Also, in attendance in the audience were: Charlie Seelig, Chief Chaves, Sandra Nolan, Gordon Andrews, Michael Bennett, Martha Hall and Michael O’brien

The meeting was recorded by Zoom

**Fred called the meeting to order at 6:04pm**

**Fred entertained a motion to Accept the minutes from 5/10/21**

Motion: Cheryll

Second: Joe

**AIF**

Fred asked Michael Bennet (who was interviewing to be appointed to the Fin Com) about his background and what attracted him to wanting to serve on the Finance Committee. Michael said that his background was in IT and in many diverse areas of IT. The members introduced themselves to Michael and gave a little background about themselves as well. Fred then ran through what the Fin Com does, the usual schedule of when they typically meet and that they now also act as part of the board overseeing Wage and Personnel employees. Tom Connolly added that he feels if is always good to have varying perspectives on the Fin Com as it is a better representation of the Town. Both Fred and Tom commented that members don’t always agree with each other but that it is a very respectful group. Fred asked Michael if he would still be wiling to take the position if he is approved by the Fin Com and Selectmen and he said he would.

Martha Hall joined the meeting at 6:17 and was interviewed as another candidate for a position on the Fin Com. Martha said she had been in Halifax since 2014 and that she wanted to get involved at this point. She said the last couple of town meetings drew her attention to the Finance Committee. She explained her background in publishing and the financial side of it and how she had helped her companies grow. She said she works from home and can make meetings. Tom asked Martha’s opinion of the last town meeting. Martha said there currently seems to be an overlay of suspicion from certain people and it makes her uncomfortable because that is not her experience in this town. She is hoping she can help to change that overlay of suspicion. She wants to be part of the solution.

Fred welcomed Michael O’brien to the meeting. Everyone introduced themselves again. Michael filled everyone in on his background and his work with fundraising and budgets for the school system he works with. Fred explained the timeline that the Fin Com usually adheres to, such as when budgets are first issued, deadlines to meet, etc. Mike asked Fred if Fin Com meetings were always Zoom. Fred said prior to COVID they were not, and they were later (7pm) but they have been Zoom since COVID and a bit earlier (6pm). Fred asked Charlie if the Town would be going back to in-person meetings and Charlie said it depended on the legislature. Michael said he felt he could make meetings. He said he has only been in Town six months and missed Town meeting because it conflicted with his coaching requirements, but he had been following the Town’s electronic email news for over a year because his family had been hoping to move into Halifax.

Mark Bobrowski joined the meeting at 6:45pm. Mark was there to represent the law firm who won the bid for the Zoning RFP. Mark said he has worked with about 110 Towns including Middleboro, Hanson, Rehoboth and some of Cape Cod and many towns in Western Mass. He said his first plan would be to start with a diagnostic overview of the bylaw. He had already looked through it extensively and said better definitions of some things are necessary. He said after cleaning up de usually does 4 themed meetings. Then he does a First Draft of the new version of the bylaw. He said about 75% of the current bylaw would survive but about 25% will be suggestions on what could be changed. Then comes a second draft which tries to bring everything up to Town Meeting Standards. He said he normally meets with members of the planning board, zoning board, and building inspector. Fred said that is who he would like to see in on the meetings also. Mark said that sometimes it can take up to 15 drafts before it is settled. Charlie asked Mark when he initial meeting might happen. Mark said how about the diagnostic meeting on 6/21. Mark said he needs to rewrite the whole non-conforming section because definitions are key. Charlie asked the Fin Com if they would like him to invite the other suggested boards/positions to attend the meeting on 6/21 and all members agreed that would be the best plan. Charlie said he would extend the invitation for 6/21 at 6pm. Mark said he would see the committee again on 6/21.

Fred returned to discussions regarding the candidates. Fred said that tying the calendar in with the candidates, he would like to recommend at least 2 people to the Selectmen now, so they could be approved on 6/18 before Fred is not reappointed on 6/15. He said we could also vote to recommend an alternate member now in case Deb Pasquale decides to resign. He said he had reached out to Deb, who had not been able to attend town meeting any of the nights and was awaiting a response. Fred asked Charlie if an alternate would be allowed. Charlie said he would recommend an “If/Then” type of recommendation. Joe said he thought that was probably the best way to go. Tom said that they were three great candidates and if someone was an alternate or “shadowed” that would be a great way to learn until a vacancy occurred.

Fred suggested we set meetings for 6/14 and for 6/21.

Joe said his first choice would be Martha Hall. He liked her straight out and then his second choice would be Michael Bennett. He said he just really liked Martha’s answers and the fact that she wanted to bring new perspective and help with a smooth transition. He said he liked Michael Bennett next because Michael mirrored what they were losing in Fred (a perspective with IT experience). He said Michael O’brien would be his alternate choice only because he thought the other two presented so well.

Cheryll like Michael Bennett and then Martha. She agreed with Joe that Michael Bennett mirrored Fred’s IT experience and could offer opinions on IT projects. She thought Martha presented very well. Drew said he thinks things seem good with those people. Fred said Michael Bennett filling the viewpoint of IT would be a good fit for what they would be losing. He thought Michael O’brien probably had similar perspectives to Drew, as they were both interested in the environment as well, so if he had to put one person last it would be Michael O’brien but only because he liked variation in the perspectives on the Committee.

**Fred entertained a motion to recommend Martha Hall and Michael Bennett to be appointed to the Finance Committee and Michael O’brien as the alternate if Deb didn’t resign but as a regular member if Deb did resign before the BOS meeting on 6/8.**

Motion: Joe

Second: Tom

**AIF (Fred abstained)**

Fred brought up the idea of reorganizing but Tom and Joe both said it would be better to wait until 6/14 to reorganize with the new members.

**Fred entertained a motion to approve the Line Item transfer of $350 from Library Clerical Wages to Data Processing Part time wages.**

Motion: Cheryll

Second: Tom

**AIF**

**Fred entertained a motion to approve the Line Item transfer in the amount of $14,000 from Water Wages full time to the Wager superintendent salary**

Motion: Cheryll

Second: Joe

**AIF**

Charlie mentioned as an aside that Kingston had approved the Silver Lake Assessment and Halifax would likely need a Special Town Meeting to fund its share of the Assessment. Charlie said with the Stabilization fund for Silver Lake not being approved by the Towns, it is likely you might start to see capital projects being put in the budget.

Under public participation, Drew mentioned that he wanted to make sure the Town is reaching out to Guardian to set up electronic charging stations for cars here at the Town Hall.

**Fred entertained a motion to adjourn the public meeting at 7:28pm.**

Motion: Cheryll

Second: Tom

**AIF**

Respectfully submitted,

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

Tom Connolly, Clerk