Finance Committee

TOWN OF HALIFAX

499 Plymouth Street

Halifax, MA 02338

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, March 9, 2020**

**Committee Members Present**: Bill McAvoy, Fred McGovern, Cheryll Zarella Burke, Drew McGlincy

Also, in attendance in the audience were: Sandy Nolan, Charlie Seelig,

The meeting was recorded by Area 58

Bill **called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm**

Bill stated that the budgets would be discussed later in the meeting so that other agenda items could move along more quickly. Charlie pointed out that he felt that Executive Session should be the last item on the agenda that should be discussed. Bill decided to start the meeting speaking about Reserve Fund Transfers.

Bill asked Charlie to speak to the email he had sent requesting a possible Reserve Fund Transfer (RFT) of $5,000 for COVID-19 (Coronavirus) supplies. Charlie said he is approached almost daily by different departments asking how we will proceed and handle this situation. He said he has been speaking with Police, Fire and Building Maintenance. Charlie said the Selectmen could declare and emergency and then just spend the money without prior approval, but that process would cause more complications in the long run. He said he would rather ask for the Reserve Fund Transfer since we are approaching the latter half of the fiscal year. Fred asked Charlie if the money would go back into the Reserve Fund if it wasn’t needed. Charlie said that the money cannot be returned to the Reserve Fund. Sandy said we could always set it up as an Article and the money could sit in there until the Selectmen voted to close it. Sandy asked Charlie if he would want to keep the money separate from the Emergency Management money and Charlie said “yes,” this should be separate because since it is so new, we have no idea when it will end. If the money is not spent it will go back into the general fund.

**Bill entertained a motion to approve the RFT request for $5,000 to help cover costs associated with COVID-19**

Motion: Fred

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

Charlie informed the Committee that he would like to ask for $10,000 from the Reserve Fund for the payment of upcoming Law bills through at least April. Sandy Nolan stated she believed this would be the best way to handle things as we are already out of money in the Law account and Charlie keeps having to show up at each meeting asking for several Law account RFTs. Sandy said if there is money left over (which she believes in unlikely) then the money would be returned to the Law account as it is acceptable in this case. Sandy said she believed this was the most efficient way to handle the bills for the rest of the year. Fred had concerns about the amount. He thought it seemed like a large amount at once. He had concerns about if something else extraordinary happened. Sandy said even though it is large, it is a reasonable amount given that we had already spent about 70,000 this year on Law. Charlie said we are very likely to continue to be tied up in lawsuits. Bill agreed that given the math, he felt $10,000 was a reasonable amount to request on the RFT.

**Bill entertained a motion to approve a Reserve Fund Transfer request for $10,000 to cover Law expenses**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

**Bill entertained a motion to accept the minutes of the 3/2/20 meeting**

Motion: Cheryll

Second: Fred

**AIF (Bill abstained since he was not at the 3/2 meeting)**

There was no further correspondence

Under Public Participation Sandy said that she had reached out to Christine Healey from Silver Lake about the $30,000 increase in the Halifax Elementary budget for Title 1 even though Title 1 was being cut. Christine said that not as many children qualified for Title 1 anymore so they were able to cut the program, but they needed to keep the Math Interventionist on. We would no longer get aid for Title 1 from the State because of the cut, but we would still have to fund the Math Interventionist position. Fred asked if the School Committees (SL and HES) would have representatives attend the budget meeting on 3/30/20 after they had given final budget figures to the Finance Committee.

There was some discussion between Charlie, Sandy and the Committee members about approving Article 6 at the increased (from last year) budget figure. Charlie and Sandy both reiterated that Appeals Board and Planning Board lawsuits are likely to continue. We also have negotiations coming up which would require some legal advice, but the lawsuits continuing are the driving force behind the law expenses being so high. Charlie said we currently spend more than most towns are size are spending and maybe if and when these particular lawsuits end we can get more back in line with expenses, but he does not see that happening in the foreseeable future.

**Bill entertained a motion to recommend the budget for Line Item 6 (Law)**

Motion: Fred

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

Bill suggested the members start to vote recommendations on some of the Town meeting articles.

The following is the list of article votes:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Article # | Description | ? or comments | Motion | Second | **Vote** |
| 6 | Reserve Fund | Annual amount | Fred | Cheryll | **AIF** |
| 14 | Plymouth County Extension | Annual amount | Fred | Cheryll | **Aif** |
| A3 | Road Maintenance | Sandy informed the Committee that Cap Planning was going to ask to hold this article for reconsideration so that any “extra” monies at the end of ATM could be put into this article | Fred | Cheryll | **AIF** |
| A4 | Reconstruct roads listed | Sandy said Steve had lowered number to $6,670,125. Charlie said this would have to be debt exclusion as it will not fit under Prop 2 and ½. Fred said maybe if a grow facility goes in, they would have to help pay for a small part of it | Fred | Cheryll | **3-0-1 to not recommend (Drew abstained)** |
| A5 | Maintain and refurbish 11.58 miles of road | Charlie said this again would have to be debt exclusion because it will not fit under Prop 2 and ½  | Fred | Drew | **3-0-1 to not recommend (Drew abstained)** |
| A13 | Bullet resistant vests | Reimbursed by grant | Fred | Cheryll | **AIF** |
| A15 | Assessors Triennial | Sandy says we do some every year for 3 year cycle to avoid getting hit with the bill all at once | Fred | Cheryll | **AIF** |
| A23 | Collection/Pick up of trash at boat ramp and fishing area | Committee members have concerns over the fact there is no oversight of who uses containers | Fred | Cheryl | **4-0 to not recommend** |
| A24 | Crosswalk devices | Sandy says it will be on STM no need to vote |  |  |  |
| A26 | South Coastal Legal Services | Usual amount | Fred | Cheryll | **AIF** |
| A27 | South Shore Woman’s Center | Usual amount | Fred | Cheryll | **AIF** |
| A33 | Drooping portico | Sandy says Scott will give this $10K up so that highway can get doors | Fred | Cheryll | **3-1 to not recommend (Drew against)** |
| A34 | Overhead doors Town Barn | With money from previous article above | Fred | Cheryll | **AIF** |
| A36 | Share ride money | Sandy said this is just for appropriation purposes | Cheryll | Fred | **AIF** |
| A46 | Water Reserve Fund |  | Fred | Cheryll | **AIF** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

The Committee had questions about Article A7 (COA copier) they wanted to know if the figure included a maintenance contract. They wanted to wait for more information from Sue before voting.

The Committee did not want to vote A14 (housing authority reimbursement) until Charlie had the information to prove the figures.

Finance Committee wanted to speak with resident proponent for A17 (truck inspecting)

Charlie said that in Article A18, the resident wants the roads graded and rolled. We do not have a grader or a roller. Charlie and Sandy said the $15,100 does not include rolling. Committee wants more information from Steve

Fred asked Charlie if he had a response on Article A25 to how many phases there would be in the Zoning Bylaw revision. Charlie did not have an answer yet, so Finance did not vote

Article A28, Bill asked for clarification from Sandy. She said in the past the money has been moved by Con Com in order to pay the secretary costs for their Board, however, there is plenty of money in there now and she is going to reach out and suggest they remove the article.

Article A30, new chairs, Fred wanted to know if it was a safety concern and why we needed to buy all 120 at once. They will discuss with Scott.

Article A32, library panels, they want to discuss with Scott how he got the $6,000 figure

**Bill entertained a motion to enter Executive Session and then to adjourn the meeting from there. The purpose of Executive Session was to discuss matters of negotiations funding.**

**Vote: Bill=yes, Fred=yes, Cheryll=yes, Drew=yes**

Respectfully submitted,

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

 Fred McGovern, Clerk