Finance Committee

TOWN OF HALIFAX

499 Plymouth Street

Halifax, MA 02338

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday October 25, 2021**

**Committee Members Present**: Cheryll Zarella Burke, Michael Bennett, Michael O’Brien, Jon Schmaling and Todd Dargie

Also, in attendance in the audience were: Sandy Nolan, Charlie Seelig, Jason Viveiro, Chief Chaves and Toni Ross

**Cheryll called the meeting to order at 6:08pm**

**Cheryll entertained a motion to accept the minutes of 9/27 (all but Todd), 10/4 and 10/18 (all but Cheryll)**

Motion: Michael Bennet

Second: Michael O’Brien

**AIF**

There were no Line Item or Reserve Fund Transfers

Sandy discussed the lack of responses for information on the Wage study. She said both Charlie and Linda had investigated it with very little positive responses. Sandy wanted to know if the Fin Com was interested in using ARPA money to hire someone to do the wage study. She suggested other towns may know of someone who does this. Cheryll agreed there has been little information. Mike O’Brien said he personally was in favor in looking into using someone. Michael Bennett said it was probably a good idea to see if someone else could look into it. Todd was also in agreement to try and look. Jon said starting by at least getting a quote would be a good step. Sandy said she would try to investigate it within the next week and try and get an idea on price. She would then take it to the Selectmen.

**Cheryll entertained a motion to approve going out to find prices for a company that could do a wage study.**

Motion: Michael O’Brien

Second: Todd

**AIF**

The Fire Chief came in to discuss moving a long-time employee (Palma) from Step 1 to Step 4 (a move of more than one step requires approval of Fin Com and Selectmen). The Chief said Palma was put back to a step one when he returned as a call fire fighter after having left full time service. Mike O’Brien questioned if it was Step 2 to Step 6 or Step 1 to step 4. The Chief said he was not sure on the exact numbers, but it would be to the top step. Charlie said he believed call fire only went to Step 6. Todd asked what grade the employee was in and what the dollar change would be. Jason said he was a paramedic lieutenant. The Chief said it would be $1-$2 and maybe about $400 impact on the budget. Mike O’Brien said it made sense to him. Jon agreed it seemed reasonable. Chief Viveiros said that Palma is not looking for any back wages and he is fine with it just being fixed going forward.

**Cheryll entertained a motion to move Lieutenant Palma to his top step.**

Motion: Todd

Second: Michael Bennett

**AIF**

Cheryll said there was no new information on wage and personnel. Charlie said that there is some information on a new recording secretary for the Board of Selectmen. He said it is because the BOS are meeting much more than they used to. Almost three times as much. Charlie said it is not a position under Wage and Personnel. There is a part in the bylaw that allows for a temporary position to be created until next ATM. Charlie said that he thought a Grade 2 would reflect the responsibilities. He understands that our Grade 2 wage is low. He said you could raise it to another grade but that meant it would insinuate that the responsibilities were the same as others with graded responsibilities. He said maybe make it an ungraded position with an hourly wage. He expected the BOS to vote on it the next night. He said maybe the BOS would make a formal request on Tuesday and it could be voted by Fin Com on the next Monday night. Charlie said he thought he had sent information about it to Fin Com but they all agreed he didn’t send it. Charlie said he would make sure they got it. Mike O’Brien said he would like to wait until the Board of Selectmen discuss it and make a formal request. Cheryll agreed with that. Everyone agreed to wait.

The only correspondence was what Charlie sent about HVAC in the schools. Charlie said the State may now allow some money for projects and so the BOS are looking into getting some of that money towards this project. They are trying to do both Silver Lake and the elementary school. Cheryll asked if we could use ARPA money and Charlie said yes but we are also trying to get some of the State’s ARPA money as well because it is about $13,000 per classroom.

Cheryll said we are scheduled to meet every Monday.

Charlie let the Committee know he would work with them on budget projections, but he would be leaving Halifax on November 20th and he will be the new East Bridgewater Town Administrator. He said there is a possibility the BOS would come to Fin Com for money to hire a recruiting firm. Charlie said he had no idea how much that would cost. He said depending on what the board wants; it may increase the costs. Cheryll said she was sorry to see him leave. Charlie said the timing was good and he hoped it was a door opening and not a door closing.

**Cheryll entertained a motion to adjourn at 6:31pm**

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Michael O’Brien

**AIF**

Respectfully submitted,

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

Tom Connolly, Chair