Finance Committee

TOWN OF HALIFAX

499 Plymouth Street

Halifax, MA 02338

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday , April 11, 2022**

**Committee Members Present**: Michael Bennett, Cheryll Zarella Burke, Jon Schmaling, Tom Connolly and Todd Dargie.

Also, in attendance in the audience were: Cesar Calouro, Sandy Nolan, Chief Chaves, Darlene Regan, Matt Durkee and Sue Lawless

**Tom called the meeting to order at 6:00pm**

**Tom entertained a motion to accept the minutes of 3/28**

Motion: Michael

Second: Todd

**AIF**

Tom asked Matt Durkee to speak about the HES intercom system article. Matt said there had been issues with it for the last several years. He said the system is proprietary based and so there is only 1 vendor who can perform maintenance on it and some sections of the building don’t work. The gymnasium is constantly not working and that can create problems in cases of school wide announcements. He said the new system would bring spaces to a consistent usable system and would also replace all the clocks with clocks that have an auto adjusting feature. He said that currently about half the clocks have to be manually adjusted in case of power outages. The new system would add a user friendly bell system that could be automated from one central screen and programmed to certain custom bell schedules like half days. Matt said he had presented this article request to the Capital Planning Committee in February and warned there might be a price increase by town meeting. He said he was pleasantly surprised to learn that the price increase is only about $200-$300. Tom asked what the new prie is and Matt said it was $38,793.51. Matt said they have been working toward fully integrated systems throughout the full region buildings. It would allow the Superintendent to speak with all classrooms at the same time and it would allow for prerecorded messages in case of emergency so that someone doesn’t have the pressure of thinking to make the correct announcement instead they just press a button for that situation and the recording plays. Matt said they will be able to reuse a lot of the exisinting wiring and speakers and that is helping to keep costs down. Tom said Matt answered most the the questions the committee had and he appreciated the thoroughness. Tom questioned Sandy what the article was for in the Capital Plan and Sandy said the $38,000 was available within the capital plan money.

Tom asked Sandy what kind of impact giving a 1% increase to employees would have on the budget. Sandy said it would still leave the budget approximately $119,000 under the levy limit, with a mostly flat budget and only accounting for contractual obligations otherwise.

Sandy said the updated budget sheets and warrants for ATM and STM are now viewable in the Shared One Drive folder. She said there are only a few articles that she had to mark with “Fin Com Recommendation at Town Meeting.” She said that one of them is the $11,000 to replace the Town Hall front doors. She had forgotten to get it on her list but it is in the warrant at the Fin Com can make a recommendation at Town Meeting. She said the current front doors stick and it stops them from locking as they should some of the time.

Sandy said she has asked the Board of Selectmen to go over the articles for Town Meeting and make recommendations on those articles and she suggested that the Fin Com and BOS meet to talk about financials before town meeting. Tom thinks this is a good idea.

Cheryll asked about the Silver Lake tennis courts. She said that she noted it said the Finance committee had recommended that article, but she did not believe they had voted on it. Linda clarified that it had been voted at the 3/28/22 meeting with a 4-1 vote to recommend and Cheryll had voted against it. Sandy and Linda clarified that it was different from the vote the year before at Town Meeting because this year the article was reading that the money should come from the Silver Lake Stabilization fund that was set up when Pembroke withdrew from the Regional School system.

Tom asked Darlene what it was she wanted to speak about. Darlene said she wanted to run through the plan and pictures for the current Halifax museum to be repurposed to a COA center and for Pope’s Tavern to become the new museum. Darlene emailed the pictures to Linda who shared them on her screen. Darlene said there was also a virtual walkthrough that she could share with interested residents. She said she wants to start to get people excited about this project and spread the word that the money is already available for the project and it won’t cost more in taxes. She said she can use connections she has established in the last 10 years to get grans for programs at the new center. Tom said it will be important for Darlene to make sure there are crips answers on programming to go on in the building because no one will want a new building where there is nothing happening. Tom asked if there was a reason the 1.5 million left from the bond was decided to be put towards a COA building. He said he knows the Police, Fire and Town Hall buildings probably all need infrastructure work as well. Sandy said the cost of the work that has to be done at those buildings would be far more than the money available. This would be a good use of the money to make a building that would be good for future use as well. Darlene said this new building would allow for more private conversations with clients and is better access for handicap usage.

Tom asked if there were any Reserve Fund Transfer Requests. Linda said there were not.

Susan Lawless said that she wanted to let the Fin Com know that there may be a need for a Special Election to replace the outgoing Treasurer/Collector. She said she doesn’t know yet what the Board of Selectmen plan on doing but she wanted to let the Fin Com know it may be a possibility which would require money. Tom said he would think the Board of Selectmen would have to answer some questions about that first, like why they wouldn’t appoint an interim. Sue said she had been told the election could be in June or July. Linda said keep in mind that could mean this fiscal year. Sandy said the BOS had not put an article in for Special Town Meeting, so if they held it in June they would have to try and find a line they could transfer money from to pay for the election. She said if they do it after July 1, they could try and raise the E&R budget line on town meeting floor. Tom asked Sue if the BOS had given her any sense of timing and she said they had not, she only knew they had it listed as an agenda item for Thursday night.

**Tom entertained a motion to adjourn at 6:33pm**

Motion: Michael Bennett

Second: Jon

**AIF**

**Respectfully submitted,**

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

Michael Bennett, Clerk