Finance Committee

TOWN OF HALIFAX

499 Plymouth Street

Halifax, MA 02338

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, April 27, 2020**

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

Also, in attendance in the audience were: Sandy Nolan, Charlie Seelig, Sue Lawless, Scott Materna, Chief Chaves, Jean Gallant, Holly Merry and Barbara Gaynor, Pam Adduci and Gordon Andrews

The meeting was recorded by Zoom

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

Melinda asked Sandy Nolan and Charlie Seelig for a brief update on the budget process. Sandy discussed her proposed work on the budget (see attached sheets). She discussed the Assumptions she had used for revenue forecasts and then she suggested the Committee look at the Expend Spreadsheet and vote more possible decreases. She had put some suggestions for possible decreases on the spreadsheet. She said her recommended areas to lower the budget were what Charlie had used in his “Working budget” (see attached). Charlie discussed his working budget. He said if we make all changes and have money then left to work with the Finance Committee should see if they can add back in steps to everyone but that would be predicated on taking he school budget back to FY20 levels (same as everyone else). Charlie said he had heard from the Fin Com in Kingston and they are also asking schools to lower the Silver Lake Assessment. Gordon said the State might be redoing minimum contribution requirements for the region and Halifax should be cautious because how much we must contribute may increase.

Melinda reviewed that last week Fin Com voted on most of the expense lines for the budget and they had put the wage lines on hold. She said Fin Com reached out to departments for input and Fin Com also realizes that some lines involve legal obligations that must be considered. Melinda asked Sandy to walk Fin Com through the spreadsheet and Sandy’s new recommendations. Sandy said she had adjusted some of the wage lines because there was pay in there for holiday pay on non-working days and that she did include giving steps in the wage lines.

Melinda asked about Line 206 – Medicare Town Share- Charlie said the Medicare is a legal obligation to pay and because we have had an increase in Police details it has been high. We don’t know what next year will bring. Sandy said she would feel better if Fin Com could manage to put that budget to $130,000 versus the FY20 amount. No vote was taken

Melinda asked about Line 207- Town Insurance- Melinda wanted clarification on Sandy suggesting it decrease by $23,500. Sandy said Charlie would speak to it because Insurance was his area. Charlie said we are not fully covering the Elementary School. His original request included enough money to increase coverage on the Elementary School and increase coverage for 111F wages. Charlie said the 111F wages coverage had not been increased in 15-20 years, so it was out of date. Charlie said while he would like to see more money available for coverage, he felt it was less of a priority than some other obligations.

**Melinda entertained motions to approve the following line items**:

The following is the list of lines approved:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Line item | Description | ? or comments | Motion | Second | **Vote** |
| 207 | Insurance | $257,500 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 142 | Music Rights | $366 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 130 | Y&R Director Salary | FY20 level $17,739 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 128 | Y&R Wages | Increase due to minimum wage $17,799 \*\*\*\*1 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 125 | Library Director Salary | $68,818 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 126 | Library Wages | $168,807 (new employee for decrease hourly rate) \*\*\*\*2 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 116 | COA wages | $183,803 \*\*\*\*3 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 112 | Health Inspections | $75, 768 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 111 | Health Clerical | $43,836 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 106 | Recycling Wage | $$70,685 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 104 | Recycling Clerical | $31,418 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 93 | Water Super Salary | $84,541 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 94 | Water Wages | $204,966 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 95 | Water Clerical | $44,214 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 79 | Highway Clerical | $42,926 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 78 | Highway Wages | $309,732 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 75 | Silver Lake Assessment | $at FY20 $4,594,943 \*\*\*4 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 71 | Elementary School Costs | At FY20 $5,659,147 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 69 | Dispatch Services | KEEP HOLD Charlie hasn’t confirmed the #s yet |  |  |  |
| 66 | Animal Control Salary | $19,422 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 61 | Building Inspector Wages | $74,768 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 53 | Fire Wages | $1,011,141 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 52 | Fire Clerical | $37,915 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 51 | Fire Chief Salary | $125,000 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 47 | Police Clerical | $47,375 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 45 | Police Wages | $1,157,341 \*\*\*\*\*5 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 44 | Police Chief Salary | $115,614 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 40 | Town Building Custodial | HOLD \*\*\*\*\*\*\*6 |  |  |  |
| 38 | Building clerical | $11,714 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 37 | Regulatory Clerical | $74,107 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 31 | Wage and Personnel Clerical | $0 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 30 | E&R | @ FY21 $21,980 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 28 | Town Clerk Clerical | $32,182 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 22 | Treasurer Collector Clerical | $135,883 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 18 | Assessor Clerical | $64,410 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 17 | Prinicpal Assessor Salary | $77,817 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 19 | Assessor Expense | @ FY21 $14665 \*\*\*\*7 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 10 | Fin com Clerical | $4,520 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 4 | Selectmen Clerical | $83,586 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |
| 58 | Medical supplies | $26,000 \*\*\*\*8 | Bill | Fred | **AIF** |

\*\*\* 1 Gordon questioned if there were no summer league or summer camps if we would need less money for this. Sandy said camps are usually paid out of the revolving accounts and wouldn’t affect this. This is the wage account for wages paid year-round for things like Saturday gym time.

\*\*\*\*2 Jean said she wanted to make sure the library stays certified (see email). Jean said the money just must be appropriated but not spent. She said if they appropriate it and ask her not to spend it, she won’t. Jean is concerned if school doesn’t go back to FY20 like everyone else, it could look as if the library is being treated unfairly which is against state regulations. Sandys said the library is being treated the same as everyone else. Melinda asked if we should wait on the library until we vote the school (once Fin Com gets more info from them). Sandy said Fin Com can vote wages and salary because it is the expense line that would be affected.

\*\*\*\*\*\*3 Melinda took a minute to point out that Sue Lawless had sent in an email (see attached) noting that she was concerned with making sure the COA gets the new copier because they will be doing the newsletter in house starting in FY21

\*\*\*\*4 Melinda asked Charlie if they should vote back to the FY20 amounts or wait for more information. Charlie suggested they just vote back to FY20 now given what we know and we can change it later if need be

\*\*\*5 Melinda questioned if this figure included the stipend for one of the officer’s getting his bachelor’s degree in December (per an email she received from the chief). Sandy said it did not but asked the Chief if that $2900 could be absorbed through his overtime budget which they usually turn a good chunk of money back over from. Chief Chaves said he felt confident that the OT budget could cover it. Melinda asked if that figure also encompassed the sick buyback. The Chief said they had removed it for FY20 because no one was retiring but he wants to make sure it is back in FY21. Sandy said the sick buy back is included in the figure

Sandy Nolan suggested not voting the library expense line for now because if wages goes up the expense line goes up also because it is part of a formula for library grant funds.

\*\*\*6 Melinda questioned if the position changes for Scott Materna had to go to W&P first for a recommendation. She suggested Fin Com wait for the recommendation

\*\*\*\*7 Holly said the extra $1500 she had asked for was for a contract with PK to value 504 differently which is a State mandate.

\*\*\*\*\*8 Sandy said she agreed with the Chief that they would probably spend more then the requested $25,000, especially with all the PE equipment now needed during COVID-19. The Chief was not present, so she suggested at least raising it to $26,000

Line 6 – Melinda said this line for Law needs to be considered again. She said the majority of the Reserve Fund is getting used to fund Law bills. Charlie said we could drop off the amount of time we use the lawyer, but he didn’t think that was likely or advisable. Charlie said this is one account that should be a priority to give money to if it is available but he thinks Fin Com should wait until they are done with everything including the schools, to see what they have to work with before they up the Law budget. Sandy said she had been doing adjustments to the budget based on tonight’s vote and she thought we roughly had about $75,919 in the black. Sandy thought we should use some of that money towards the Law budget. Charlie said we could take $20,000 and put it in Law but we may need to adjust that figure again if we end up needing that money elsewhere. Melinda asked if we should wait for more information and Charlie said Fin Com would probably not get any newer information before next week. The Committee agreed to just HOLD the line for now.

Melinda asked if Fin Com should work on the articles. Charlie said maybe Fin Com should hold off on articles for now because the priorities may have changed substantially since early March due to the COVID crisis. He said feelings may have changed on where Free Cash should be spent.

There were no Wage and Personnel recommendations tonight

There were no Reserve Fund Transfer requests

**Melinda entertained a motion to accept the minutes of the 4/27/20 meeting**

Motion: Bill

Second: Fred

**AIF**

Linda Cole said all correspondence had been discussed during the budget discussions. There was no public participation

Calendar- The Fin Com agreed to set aside 5/4 (Fred will not be available), 5/11 and 5/18 at 6pm meetings

As May Arise- Gordon said HES school committee would be meeting on 5/11 and Melinda said hopefully they would have information to discuss with Fin com on 5/18.

**Melinda entertained a motion to adjourn at 7:24pm**

Motion: Bill

Second: Fred

**AIF**

Respectfully submitted,

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

Fred McGovern, Clerk