Finance Committee

TOWN OF HALIFAX

499 Plymouth Street

Halifax, MA 02338

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday November 30, 2020**

**Committee Members Present**: Cheryll Zarella Burke, Fred McGovern, Melinda Tarsi, Tom Connolly, Lauren Carmichael, Bill McAvoy and Drew McGlincy

Also, in attendance in the audience were: Charlie Seelig, Chief Chaves, Gordon Andrews, Tom Millias and Sandy Nolan

The meeting was recorded by Zoom

**Melinda called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 6:14 pm**

Melinda asked Charlie to speak about the email he had sent regarding budgets. Charlie said, he mentioned in his email that things looked a little rosey when he first ran the numbers. He said however, that the did the research and part of it is because the Town had about $125,000 left that ended up not being used in FY20. He said that even after he took the standard $303,000 off the top (which is the Finance Committee preference to not tax to the levy) we still had a cushion of about $500,000 to work with. He said that level service budgets definitely seemed like a reasonable request for FY22. He didn’t think cuts would be necessary. He said, that of course if there was any major disruption that could throw everything off but in general a level service budget seemed very likely. Charlie said local receipts seem to be maintaining. He mentioned that of course, meal sales tax had gone way down but that the Town does not rely on that money as part of its operating budget. He felt that for right now the numbers look good and of course we will review it again in a few months when we have a better idea of what State Aide would look like. Charlie suggested maybe FY22 would be a good time to be in a holding pattern and see if things are really as good as they seem for FY23. Someone asked if there were any large Capital Plan items coming up again. Sandy said the believed the Fire was all set. The Police would probably want their two cruisers again. The Highway may be back for the sweeper and the backhoe. Charlie said to keep in mind that the Town may have less free cash because we may need to spend some money on COVID related issues that did not get reimbursed through federal funding or Plymouth County CARES. Drew asked when we would start seeing artlicles for FY22. Charlie said that is what his email and this discussion were about. Sandy said by January we ask the departments for budgets and unusual requests. Gordon said he wanted to put the Town on notice that the school had decided to make all the long term substitute positions extend through the full year instead of ending in December. Sandy mentioned that she was hoping that the State would soon be approving her Free Cash figure. Sandy believes it will hopefully as much as last fiscal year if not more. Sandy said that is a good back up for the Town if CARES falls through or doesn’t cover all our expenditures. She mentioned that maybe some of that money could be used to help pay for the long term subs Gordon mentioned.

Melinda asked Charlie on a side note if the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen would need to schedule a date for what used to be the Wage and Personnel Public hearing in January. Sandy asked if maybe pushing it to February was a possibility since we might have better numbers by then. Charlie said the bylaw said it would be the end of January and yes the Finance Committee and the Selectmen would handle holding the meeting and could always open the meeting and then adjourn to a later date.

Charlie asked Melinda what the Finance Committee wanted the budget letter to department heads to say.

**Melinda entertained a motion to ask departments to level service their FY22 budgets.**

Motion: Tom Connolly

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

Tom questioned if there was anything significant that usually occurs only in the 4th quarter of the year that Finance should be considering while looking at the budgets. Charlie and Sandy agreed that not usually with the exception of some reoccurring debt payments. The heavier load tends to take place at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Melinda took a moment to clarify that Finance Committee members act as liaisons only to departments. They do not advocate for the departments. They just pass information from the departments they are in charge of to the Finance Committee members. The department head will get a chance to advocate for themselves when they meet with Finance. Melinda floated the proposed changes for liaison assignments to the other members. Bill said the changes looked fine to him. Drew asked what he should do as a liaison. Melinda explained you need to email or meet with each department you cover. Cheryll said she was fine with splitting up her departments if need be. Melinda asked Linda to put together some different scenarios of liaisons based on the number of Committee members on the Finance Committee. Melinda also mentioned that she thought succession planning was important for the committee. She said maybe some of the members should consider if they wanted to run for Executive Board positions. Melinda said in the next meeting we should vote on reorganization.

Gordon asked to have the budget letter also say to make the finance Committee aware of any COVID expenses which might still need to be covered in FY22.

Calendar: Members agreed that 12/7 and 12/21 were the best meeting dates for December

Tom Millias wanted to mention when considering budgets and liaisons hat recycling might require more work then usual becasu the Town might take over the Recycling part of the program.

Meilnda asked Linda to add the bill for the ATFC to the next agenda to be paid.

**Melinda entertained a motion to accept the meeting minutes from 11/16/2020**

Motion: Cheryll

Second: Fred

**AIF (bill abstained since he wasn’t at the meeting)**

There were no Reserve Fund Transfers

**Melinda entertained a motion to adjourn at 6:53pm**

Motion: Cheryll

Second: Fred

**AIF**

Respectfully submitted,

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

Fred McGovern, Clerk