Finance Committee

TOWN OF HALIFAX

499 Plymouth Street

Halifax, MA 02338

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, August 10, 2020**

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

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

The meeting was recorded by Zoom

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

Melinda asked Sandy and Charlie if they would like to speak about any new budget information they may have received. Charlie said the DLS had sent out an email that said that as sure as anything can be at this point, State Aide will be the same in FY21 as it was for FY20. Charlie said the Governor could always change that later, but at this point, this can pretty much be taken to the bank. Charlie felt that if DLS was willing to send this email, they had good information that the Governor was making public funding a high priority. Charlie said this was good news and would allow us to move forward after Town Meeting to set the tax rate and send out the bills on time for a November 1st payment date. Charlie said he and Sandy had been very conservative with their numbers erring on the side of the worst-case scenario for revenues and assessments. He said the DLS appreciated this. He suggested Fin Com look at the budget line by line and figure out exactly where they may need to go up on numbers, but not to raise the overall budget. He feels that Fin Com should leave as much money as possible on the table just in case FY22 isn’t good because the economy doesn’t bounce back the way the State is hoping it will. Charlie said he does not recommend an overall wage increase even if we leave $500,000 on the table. Sandy said that the additional State Aid (per the DLS figures) that we hadn’t accounted for gave us about an extra $450,000 to work with. Sand said she looked at the Law Account, Town Reports, Elections and Registrations and adjusted some of those figures up because we knew we were shorting them. She said she spent about $292,080 to increase those lines as well as a few others like the insurance account (to keep our liability coverage where it should be). She said if the Student Resource Officer gets voted through that would be another $36,000 taken off the $450,000. She said the Assessors were also asking for an increase in the Overlay account as they have been seeing a lot of abatements. She said that would still leave an additional $111,427.00 left on the table for a total of $411, 427.00 on the table. She said in the budget she gave the Fin Com she went to the school account and reverted back to the budget that included the 2% off for a wage increase and with the lower amount for the buses because this is the figure the Fin Com approved for the budget line. Sandy said she raised the health insurance budget by about $32,000 also because we had several new employees take insurance and the Assistant Treasurer had let her know that the account would likely be short using the figures available today. Sandy said she also reviewed departments that had requested Line Item Transfers to make sure they were funded to a level that would realistically work. Sandy said that if the Fin Com is going to consider increases to any other lines, she strongly suggested they consider the Stormwater Management line. That line had gone way over in FY20 and it might be less in FY21 due to the fact that a lot of FY20 was engineering costs, but she wants to make sure they have enough funds.

Melinda suggested that liaisons reach out to the department heads they work with and find out if they want to talk to Fin Com about any other specifics.

Melinda said she wanted to hold off on passing along any Wage and Personnel Recommendations until she confirmed with Gordon Andrews that Fin Com would be discussing them just in case Gordon wanted to be at the meeting as he is the other Wage and Personnel rep.

There were no RFT or LIT requests.

**Melinda entertained a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes from 07/13/20**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**AIF (Fred abstained as he was not at the meeting on 7/1/20)**

Melinda said there had been correspondence from Barbara Gaynor about the increase in the Elections and Registration budget.

Linda Cole said there was also correspondence from Sue Lawless at the COA about a new van. Melinda said Sue was going to look at the van capacity and see what other Towns use for a large van. Charlie said Sue had looked into it and the current one holds 14-16 people, but Sue said they don’t ever really have that many. She wanted to get one for 10-12 people which was the standard in most towns. Melinda asked if it wasn’t on the warrant if it could even be brought up for town meeting. Charlie said that it was likely that the Selectmen will hold another Special Town Meeting on the same day as the ATM and then they would put the COA van as an article on the STM.

Sandy pointed out to the Fin Com members that on the articles budget sheet, the articles are already in a deficit and there are many articles that don’t even have dollar amounts yet. She said that if they are considering things like adding the COA van on a STM, she would like them to consider an increase to the Unemployment line as well. We are starting to see a climb in unemployment costs.

Public Participation: there was none

Melinda said we should hold all Mondays in August for now. Melinda emphasized that all members should reach out to their departments and email them to see if they wanted to meet with Fin com on 8/17 or 8/24 and she reminded members that the School Committees and Administration would be at the next meeting.

**Melinda entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:26pm**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

Respectfully submitted,

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

Fred McGovern, Clerk