Finance Committee

TOWN OF HALIFAX

499 Plymouth Street

Halifax, MA 02338

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, August 31, 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 reminded the Committee members that they would be joining the School committee meeting at 7:00 for the budget discussions.

Melinda said she would be going out of order to handle some housekeeping items before the meeting with the School Committee.

Melinda said she expected to be able to give Wage and Personnel recommendations to the Committee after the Wage and Personnel meeting on the upcoming Thursday.

**Melinda entertained a motion to recommend a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of $775 for the LED sign**

Motion: Cheryll

Second: Bill

**AIF**

Charlie said that since the recent storm the sign has been broken and he can’t update anything on the sign. Bill asked what testing was done to determine what the issue with the sign was and if in fact the part we were ordering was the proper part. Charlie said the company did a remote call with the Fire Department to run through what worked and what didn’t and they determined the problem.

**Melinda entertained a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes from 08/24/20**

Motion: Cheryll

Second: Fred

**AIF**

Under Correspondence Linda pointed out that the Committee had received a Talent Bank Form for a Thomas Connolly. Melinda asked other members if they would like to have Tom come in and talk to them about joining the Committee. All agreed and Melinda asked Linda to try and set up a time for after Town Meeting for Mr Connolly to come meet the Committee.

Melinda asked Sandy and Charlie if there had been any new correspondence about the budget. Sandy reminded the Committee that there were still two lines of the operating budget that needed to be voted upon before ATM. Stormwater Management and the Building Maintenance Wages line. Sandy said she couldn’t set the amount for the wages line because Wage and Personnel had not yet voted and made a decision about Scott’s rate of pay. Charlie asked Melinda if she knew what Wage and Personnel was doing about it or if she preferred to wait until the W&P meeting on Thursday to discuss it with Gordon. Charlie suggested that Sandy plug in a Grade 14 step 1 as the salary for Scott for this year. Sandy said she would bring those numbers to the next meeting. Charlie said he had no new information about Stormwater Management from Steve. Charlie said he had to talk to Steve and determine what would be done for public relations work for Stormwater and the actual dollar amount that will be spent on wages for highway labor that is not already accounted for in the Highway wages account. Sandy said that if the Stormwater Management line went up to her recommendation then there would still be about $99,000 left on the table. Sandy said that with the negotiations that Charlie had with the Fire department that would be a cost of another $10,440 and the money on the table would decrease to $89,247. Sandy said the Finance Committee would need to keep In mind that if a 1.6% across the board increase is being done on wages then we would need to reserve some of the $89,247 to cover that. Charlie said that in the fire contract he agreed to about a 1.6% increase in their average wage. The figure was $1,044 for 1.6% and they added to the stiped line. Charlie said he believed most other union negotiations would not be done before the Town Meeting but he would probably follow a similar line of increase and the Chiefs contracts and the Wage and Personnel figures would have to be ready for Town Meeting.

Sandy suggested the members look at the Articles tab in the latest spreadsheets for updates figures (which included the money voted for crosswalks) and the Special Town Meeting articles. Sandy pointed out the Town is currently in the red by $105,542 for fund all the articles. Sandy said she used $75,000 as her meals tax revenue. While she thinks that is a conservative figure, she fears it still could be lower given the change in eating habits due to COVID. Sandy said some of the articles need to be removed if the Finance Committee wants to have a balanced budget. Sandy said that the Town is hoping that the CARES act will pay for the COA van and the money won’t have to come from Free Cash. Sandy said that one possibility for freeing up money is that the Hemlock Lane landfill repair may drop as low as $15,000 which would save $55,000 that the Town had expected to have to pay. So, Sandy said if that dropped to $15,000 and the van is funded through CARES then we would be closer to getting a balanced amount for articles. Sandy said if the Cranberry Drive sidewalks come up early in the lottery voting system then it could be voted and we would have to figure out how to fund it. Sandy also said that if the article for the motorcycle gets voted through the Finance Committee might want to consider recommending that the Police expense line be lowered by $3900. Melinda questioned if the $20,000 for the traffic enforcement should be part of the operating budget versus and article. Melinda said it was comparable to the article for the SRO which they already said should be done through the operating budget. Charlie said that the Selectmen want to see the $20,000 separate so they can point to the fact of how much was spent on extra traffic enforcement so there is no question what the money is being spent on.

**Melinda entertained a motion to recommend the Special Town Meeting article for $7,000 for HVAC at Town Hall.**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

Sandy said this was to bring HVAC to the Veteran’s office and the office/closet above it.

**Melinda entertained a motion to recommend the Special Town Meeting article for $30,000 for the Unemployment line**

Motion: Bill

Second: Fred

**AIF**

Sandy said the money does not go back to the general but instead carries forward in fiscal years so if there happened to be extra at the end of the year, it could be used for the next year

**Melinda entertained a motion to recommend the Special Town Meeting article for $70,000 for a new COA van**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

Charlie said that the CARES act money from the County was delivered today (8/31/20). Tom Millias had spoken to the County Commissioners and Treasurer and asked if CARES money could be used to purchase a new COA van and the County had indicated that might be possible. Sandy said it would be better if the Finance Committee didn’t vote for it in the budget because if we budget it, then CARES act money can’t be used for it.

**Melinda entertained a motion to rescind the previous motion**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**AIF to rescind**

**Melinda entertained a motion to recommend the Special Town Meeting article for $20,000 for Traffic enforcement**

Motion: Bill

Second: Fred

**0-4-1 (Melinda, Bill, Fred, Cheryll do not recommend and Drew abstained)**

Melinda clarified that the Board of Selectmen put this article on the Special town Meeting. Charlie said there had been lots of complaints about speeding from residents. The board of Selectmen want to let the residents make the decisions on if they want to spend the money on this. Charlie said the Board of Selectmen want to keep the money separate so there is a level of accountability as to the money being spent on speeding enforcement. Bill asked how it will be tracked to show the money is spent on speeding enforcement. Charlie said they may ask for a narrative on when and where the extra coverage was. Bill asked what the baseline is. Charlie said maybe by the number of citations written or other ideas. Charlie said the Police Chief has told him that they number 1 overall complaint they get is speeding on where the police should spend more money. Melinda pointed out that two years ago it went to Town meeting floor to ask if residents wanted an overall speed limit reduction and residents voted it down. So, this is a good way to see what the residents really want.

**Melinda entertained a motion to recommend $130,000 for a sidewalk between the two Cranberry Drive entrances, for Special Town Meeting.**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**0-5 all voted against recommending**

Charlie said this was a petition article with over 100 signatures. Charlie said it had been a month since the application was sent to the State to see if it could qualify for a grant. Charlie suspects this article won’t pass at Town meeting and he will update the Finance Committee when he gets numbers from the State. Bill said estimates seem very high for a sidewalk that is .10 miles, compared to the cost of paving a street. Sandy asked for clarification on where the sidewalk was going to end. Charlie said one entrance of Cranberry to the other and no more, .10 miles is the correct mileage. Bill asked if anyone else had provided other bids. Charlie said there were no other bids because this was just an estimate from the engineering company and no official bids had gone out yet.

Melinda asked members about meeting before Town Meeting and suggested maybe Friday September 11th at 4pm. Everyone agreed that should work.

**Melinda entertained a motion to adjourn the regular meeting and go to the School Committee meeting at 6:55pm**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

Respectfully submitted,

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

Fred McGovern, Clerk