Finance Committee

TOWN OF HALIFAX

499 Plymouth Street

Halifax, MA 02338

**Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, May 4, 2020**

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

Also, in attendance in the audience were: Sandy Nolan, Charlie Seelig, Chief Chaves, Jean Gallant

The meeting was recorded by Zoom

**Melinda called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm**

Melinda asked Sandy Nolan and Charlie Seelig for a brief update on the budget process. Sandy said she had spoken to Christine Healey and the School was still getting numbers together for Charlie (who had requested the figures for wages be split out to only represent steps and not COLA). Christine had just emailed the figures at about 5:59pm and Sandy had not had a chance to review the numbers but said she would with Charlie in the upcoming week.

Melinda mentioned that there was an email earlier in the day from Charlie to the Finance Committee confirming that the $163,000 listed for the dispatch budget was the correct amount.

Sandy mentioned that she had spoken to the Fire Chief and he had said that the $26,000 voted for Medical supplies (an increase of $1,000 suggested by Sandy) was ok with him. He felt the number was reasonable.

**Melinda entertained a motion to recommend Line 69 Dispatch Services budget at $163,000**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

Melinda said that Line 40 the Custodial wages had to wait for the recommendation from the Wage and Personnel Board because it would change depending on whether or not they recommended the combined position of Scott Materna as head of the Building Maintenance for both the Town and HES School building. She said W&P should have recommendations next week.

Melinda asked about Line 206 – Medicare Town Share- Linda Cole, Asst Treasurer said that the $130,000 budget which was a slight increase over the FY20 line at $128,500 would be a safer bet. She said it is hard to predict the detail work (which is what seems to be driving the Medicare account up) but given the recent history, it might be safer to vote the $130,000 because we have no choice but to pay the Town share whatever it is.

**Melinda entertained a motion to recommend the Medicare Town Share line at $130,000**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

Melinda said the Law Line (line 6) has been an ongoing discussion. Sandy said we had $74, 439 still available at this time, it could be slightly more, between $75, 370-$78,207 depending on what they do with the custodial wages line. Melinda wanted to clarify that the amount of $74,439 did not include the money for articles. Sandy confirmed that was true. Sandy spoke about the truck inspection article. Charlie said Harold Sprague would likely pull the article he had submitted on Town meeting floor and the Selectmen might instead suggest an article for $20,000 for Traffic enforcement across the full town. Mr Sprague and the Chief had agreed that traffic enforcement might be a better way to go. This would put it up to the residents to decide if they thought traffic enforcement was a priority. Sandy confirmed it would not be a Raise and Appropriate article. Sandy said the only article left that would be a Raise and Appropriate article would be the one for the School Resource Officer at $36,000.

**Melinda entertained a motion to recommend article A16 for the School Resource Officer**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

Melinda clarified this would be for a part time SRO for the middle school. Melinda said she and Bill were on the Committee last year when the same article had come up. She and Bill had opposed it based on the funding scheme. They did not like that it was an article vs being part of the school’s operating budget. Melinda said she personally would not vote to recommend it because we are holding the line on not adding new positions to other Town departments and so she didn’t think it would be equitable to add a position to the school department. Bill said he would not recommend it because the funding scheme had not changed. Chief Chaves said he thinks the article is not the way to go and he has made his opinion clear on this matter. He believes the position is a good idea, and he supports the SRO at the middle school, but he believes the funding should be in the school budget. Drew said he thinks it makes sense that the school wants a SRO at the middle school. Bill asked how other municipalities have handled this in regional school districts. Chief Chaves clarified that the Town in which the school is located oversees supplying the officer (unless they are willing to give that right to another Town in the district). The Chief said he had check with Freetown/Lakeville and it is in Freetown’s police budget. He said he had also spoken with the Old Rochester School District and they have the funding as part of the Assessment where each Town is paying a portion of it through the school budget. Melinda said she believed based on her research that Bridgewater/Raynham also has the funding through the School budget.

**Vote: 1-3 Drew for, Melinda, Bill, Cheryll opposed Fin Com will not recommend**

Melinda said that since we had about $78,207 still left on the table the Finance committee should talk about the Law account again. Melinda asked Charlie and Sandy for a possible number for increasing the Law account. Charlie would like to see it at around $90,000 for now. He said Amanda Estates is still a costly matter for FY21 and contract negotiations are still open with most of the unions because everything got put on hold due to COVID-19. Charlie said even at $90,000 he might have to tighten the reigns on the use of the Land Use Counsel but at least it would give him a little cushion to work with. Charlie said we should possibly add $20,000 to the Law account but everything is up in the air right now waiting on the figures from the Schools.

**Melinda entertained a motion to recommend Line Item 6-Law at $90,000**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

Melinda asked if the Finance Committee should make recommendations on the Articles at this point. Charlie said it would be a good idea since at some point, we may have a Town meeting.

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| Article | Description | ? or comments | Motion | Second | **Vote** |
| 5 | 2 million for roads | Sandy said Steve would like to pull this article |  |  |  |
| 6 | Backhoe | Sandy said Steve said he could wait another year on this. Sandy said we could maybe put ½ away this year. Bill said he believed Capital planning did not recommend this | Bill | Cheryll | **0-4 do not recommend** |
| 7 | COA copier | Melinda said Sue Lawless said this is a priority due to inhouse newsletter printing | Bill | Cheryll | **AIF** |
| 8 | Fire Engine $600,000 |  | Bill | Cheryll | **AIF** |
| 9 | Two police cruisers | Melinda said in line with usual policy | Bill | Cheryll | **AIF** |
| 10 | Dispatch radio upgrade | Upgrade 8 exisiting, two for new cruisers, plus 5 extra. Bill asked if new cruisers have radios and the Chief said they are not part of the package.  | Bill | Cheryll | **AIF** |
| 11 | Harley Davidson | Capital planning does not recommend. Chief said we could get local grants for funding lease for another year | Bill | Cheryll | **0-4 do not recommend** |

**Melinda entertained a motion to recommend the Line Item Transfer of $8,200 from the Snow and Ice account to the Telephone account**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

**Melinda entertained a motion to adjourn at 6:59pm**

Motion: Bill

Second: Cheryll

**AIF**

Respectfully submitted,

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

Fred McGovern, Clerk