

Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2020
7:30 PM
Town Hall – Room 204

Present: Christi Andersen, Roland Bourdon, Tom Farley, Steve Noone, Sahana Purohit, Christine Russell, Al Vlajinac (Associate)

Absent: Jason Cole, Mike Majors, Dave Wellinghoff

1. Opening

Chair Roland Bourdon opened the meeting at 7:30 pm.
This meeting was recorded by Acton TV.

2. Public Participation

Acton resident Terra Friedrichs spoke. She thinks Acton Officials should:

- Focus on public necessity housing for low income and disabled Acton residents vs subsidizing a market demand at the upcoming Housing Production Plan Forum.
- Further subsidize the Walker Property to house low income and disabled Acton residents which would also reduce the Acton Housing List.
- Create a Housing Trust to do more rehabs of existing buildings.
- She also requested that FinCom change the public participation to the end of the meeting or allow the public to speak on separate issues before a vote.

3. Additional Budget Discussions

Minuteman Vocational Technical HS Assessment

Town Manager John Mangiaratti gave an update on the status of the Minuteman Assessment for next year. Selectmen Jon Benson and David Martin also spoke.

- Early budget projections given to ALG in December were based on departmental requests which can be different than the superintendent's ultimate request.
- He will have more details soon. Town managers will be going to a meeting to discuss the upcoming assessment on Friday. Also John will be collaborating with Regional School Committee Rep Pam Nourse and speaking directly to the superintendent.
- The Finance Committee wants to schedule the Superintendent to come in to talk. Pam Nourse will be speaking to ALG next meeting.

Municipal Budget

John Mangiaratti also spoke regarding changes to the Town's Municipal Budget.

- The Town Manager's recommended budget was just voted in by the Board of Selectmen.
- Originally he had presented a 2.5% increase in the operating budget and a 3% increase in overall spending.

- The capital plan spending had included over \$900,000 for high priority capital needs. Of that amount, \$185,000 was allotted for overhauling the dispatch software systems and related equipment alarm systems. The Town received a \$150,000 grant which reduced the amount of that project down to \$40,000.
- The Board of Selectmen voted to ask the Town Manager to change his funding recommendation on the River Street dam. He had budgeted \$138,000 to start addressing the problem but will instead seek funding through the CPC.
- Freed up funds will be reallocated for some sustainability projects:
 - Hire a contractor to serve as a sustainability coordinator as recommended by the GAB. The original recommendation was for a part time position, but the contractor will fill the role on a short term basis to meet that need.
 - Add two additional electronic or hybrid additional cruisers to the police cruiser fleet replacement schedule.
 - Install additional charging stations at public facilities throughout the community.
 - Supplement funds already allocated to the BOS's street tree planting program.
- Also \$60,000 of the reallocated funds will be used for a long term facility capital planning study. In 2015 staff completed an assessment of facilities but an implementation plan/investment strategy is still needed.
 - Will present to the BOS on this in February.
 - Develop a strategy to transition Town buildings away from using fossil fuels
 - Aligning roof reconstruction with installing solar panels.
- Results in a net reduction to the capital spending package of \$23,000 which reduces total spending package down to 2.94%

ABRSD Budget

- Tuition for all day Kindergarten has been reduced.
 - Was that decision made with just parents in mind or taxpayers as a whole?
 - Now it may be harder to raise tuition in the future.
- The increasing use of reserves to balance the operating budget may affect bond rating and squeezes out new initiatives.
 - Compensation growth continues at 4%, but we only have a 2.5%-3% revenue model
- There is an increase of disadvantaged kids attending AB but Town median income continues to grow.
 - More data needed on Boxborough's contribution to the numbers.
 - 40B projects may be the cause but some are not complete or have senior residents.

4. Finance Committee Business

A. Approval of meeting minutes

There were no meeting minutes available for review.

B. Committee Liaison Reports

Committee Members who are liaisons to Committees that met during the interim between last FinCom meeting and this meeting gave reports as to what occurred at those meetings. Tom

Farley CPC liaison gave out a handout as part of his review. Discussion arose over continuation of the current CPA tax surcharge.

5. Adjournment

At 8:55 pm, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

'26 Liner' Document

CPA Funds Handout

Respectfully submitted,

Finance Committee