

Minutes – Acton Finance Committee
March 24, 2009, 7:30 p.m.
Public Safety Facility Building

Pursuant to a notice duly posted with the Town Clerk and with a quorum of members present, the Acton Finance Committee convened at 7:30 p.m. on March 24, 2009 to review various matters.

Members present for the meeting: Steve Noone, Herman Kabakoff, Mary Ann Ashton, Pat Clifford (came after Town Hall meeting on WRGrace @ 8:20 pm), Pat Easterly, Bob Evans, Bill Mullin, Kent Sharp, Doug Tindal, Associate Member Maynard (Brandy) Brandon

Others Present: Bob Hertz, Sharon Smith McManus, Jonathan Chinitz, Heather Harer, Jo-Ann Berry, Peter Grover, Franny Osman, Jim Citro, Jim Yarin

Chairman Steve Noone called the meeting to order and offered an overview of the agenda and a preview of upcoming meetings, including pre-Town Meeting meetings.

Public Participation

Jonathan Chinitz asked Steve Noone to attend the ABRSC meeting on Thursday night, March 26, to discuss the process about how we move forward on researching, quantifying, etc., on cost-savings. He also expressed concerns stemming from a copy of a campaign ad from the Action Unlimited which he believed implied that the cost-saving suggestions from Fincom are ready to go forward. Mr. Chinitz believes that some of these have to do with collective bargaining, and some are not legal to enact. He emphasized to the Finance Committee that we need to try to work together to find creative ways to provide the continued level of service to make this work.

Chairman Noone indicated that he had sent a letter to Superintendent Bill Ryan and Town Manager Steve Ledoux, asking them for feedback about general criteria related to the list. He said that from this feedback the Fincom would develop a shorter list that could be evaluated and time for implementation estimated.

After discussion among Finance Committee members, Bill Mullin moved that the chair and clerk devise a two sentence statement to be sent to the Beacon and the Acton Forum. Pat Easterly seconds. After further discussion, Mr. Mullin amended his motion that the chair and clerk should craft a press release and submit it to whatever media might be available. The amended motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Mary Ann Ashton presented minutes for the February 26, March 3, and March 10 meetings. Mr. Mullin moved, and Mrs. Easterly seconded. All minutes were approved unanimously.

Historic Commission Article 47

Peter Grover, Acton Historical Commission, provided background to the Finance Committee about the proposed bylaw revision. The current bylaw was developed in 1989 calling for 6-month delay. State historical commission is recommending that we revise to lengthen the time and address some other housekeeping issues. He pointed to some “failures” of the current bylaw, such as the River Street mill

and Central Street ice house; successes include Miller's house on Route 27. In 2006 Massachusetts conducted Historic Landscape Inventory, which recommended the length of the delay should be extended. MHC is recommending longer delays to save significant structures. Four or five towns in the state have 18 months, 45 have 12 months.

Finance Committee members asked questions and discussed. After discussion, Doug Tindal moved to recommend the bylaw revision, and Mrs. Ashton seconded. The vote passed with a 5-1-2 vote.

TAC Article 15

Franny Osman presented an overview of several transportation problems in town, including train station parking congestion as well as other issues identified through United Way and other various public forums. The Transportation Advisory Committee has worked with MAPC and other transportation experts, who identified the Suburban Mobility grant as a source of funds for Acton. The proposed article requests \$25,000 for part of the town's match for a \$160,000 grant to provide extended shuttle service to address transportation in Acton. The extended hours would provide transportation for commuters to the train station from a remote parking lot, and would also be able to provide some on-demand transportation service for those who are not currently served by the COA van. In addition to the \$25,000 request in this article, Acton would also contribute \$7,500 from commuter lot meter fees.

Finance Committee members asked questions and requested further information. After further discussion, the Finance Committee requested that Franny Osman and other members of the TAC attend the Finance Committee meeting before Town Meeting with the additional information and the completed grant proposal, and the Finance Committee would vote at that time whether to recommend.

Articles 3-8

The Finance Committee considered the remaining articles on the Consent Calendar, which had not previously been considered by the Committee because the information was incomplete at that time. After noting that the information was not complete, Herman Kabakoff moved, and Mrs. Easterly seconded. All articles were approved unanimously.

Article 10 – Ambulance Enterprise Fund

Mr. Evans moved that the Finance Committee recommend Article 10, and Mr. Mullin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

Clerk Mary Ann Ashton moved that the committee go into Executive Session under General Laws Chapter 39, Section 23B, paragraph (3), for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining. The committee was polled individually and unanimously agreed to enter into Executive Session. The committee returned to open session at 9:45 p.m. to adjourn.