May 19, 2021

Meeting of the Finance Committee held on Wednesday, May 19, 2021, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Conference Room.

Members present: Eric Gregoire, Chairman, Anthony Alves, Susanne Boyea, Joan Cavallo, Maureen Downing, Richard Moskal, Christopher Ganhao and Beverly Tokarz

Members excused: Nicole Parker

Kim Collins and Ellie Villano were also present

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

At this time Mr. Gregoire turned the gavel over to Ms. Downing for the purpose of reorganizing. Ms. Downing, acting as Chairman stated that there will be election of officers. She will call three times for nominations for each office separately and then will close the nominations and then a vote will be taken.

First call for nominations for Chairperson: Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to nominate Eric Gregoire as Chairperson.

Second call: Moved by Mr. Ganhao, seconded by Mr. Moskal to nominate Anthony Alves as Chairperson.

Third call for nominations was called and closed for Chairperson.

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First call for Vice Chairman: Moved by Mr. Gregoire, seconded by Ms. Boyea to nominate Anthony Alves as Vice Chairman

Second call for nominations for Vice Chairman. Third call for nominations was called and closed for Vice Chairman.

First call for nominations for Secretary: Moved by Mr. Alves, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to nominate Beverly Tokarz as Secretary

Second call for nominations for Secretary. Third call for nominations was called and closed for Secretary.

There was a unanimous vote by show of hands voting for Eric Gregoire as Chairman

There was a unanimous vote by show of hands voting for Anthony Alves as Vice Chairman

There was a unanimous vote by show of hands voting for Beverly Tokarz as Secretary.

Ms. Downing closed the nominations as the reorganization of the Finance Committee was completed.

Mr. Gregoire took back the gavel and continued the meeting as Chairman.

There are no visitations or correspondence. There will be updates on the building projects.

Ms. Downing said that everything as of the last meeting is on schedule and going smoothly. There is another meeting on Thursday evening. She remarked that its wonderful to have such a huge project be so organized. Ms. Moskal asked about the budget. Ms. Downing answered that it's right on line. The bottom-line budget is close to fifty million. The Town will get back a percentage of that money. Mr. Alves asked when the old building will come down. Ms. Downing said when the new building is completed. Mr. Moskal asked about tours. Ms. Downing said there will be tours as soon as the building is close to completed.

Mr. Moskal shared that the Center is still on a limited basis. They serve over 200 lunches on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. They have a contingency of $789,000. They're still looking at that number to be $500,000 at the end. They need kitchen utensils, security cameras, a lawn mower, a snow blower, shed and a full-service generator and other external items. Ms. Downing asked if the $500,000 contingency was taken off the top of the estimate or added on to the estimate. Mr. Moskal said the project was 9.8 million dollars. They will be $500,000 under that. Ms. Collins thinks that all the money was borrowed because they felt that it would be complete and everything would be payable prior to their next borrowing. She will check with the Treasurer. The generator would be for the whole Senior Center. Ms. Downing said that the facility then could be used as a warming center in case of a disaster.

New Business: Update on Year-end Transfers

Ms. Collins sent out a report with all department's general expenses, personnel services etc. Nobody is really running over-budget, that they would need transfers. The only one she received was from the Clerk's office. She was looking to move $3,600 from Elections in to the Clerk's department to cover old book bindings, which need to be archived. One book binding is $3,600. She will look into obtaining grants, etc.

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Transfers have to be approved by the Board of Selectmen by July 15th. Ms. Collins gave the departments until the end of May to submit their transfers. She will then create a spread sheet with all the transfers and then the Finance Committee would meet at a regular meeting prior to the Selectmen's meeting to give recommendations and approval for any of the transfers. The committee will meet on the 16th and the Selectmen on the 22nd. Mr. Gregoire said that last year, there were many requests, but background information was not available. He feels that it's in the committee's best interest to send something to the departments and have them provide an explanation of their transfer requests. Depending on their requests, we would schedule those departments that the committee has questions for. Mr. Gregoire would like the transfers a week before the meeting. Ms. Collins will have the transfer to the committee by the 4th. Also Reserve Fund requests will also be taken up at that time.

Department Liaisons: Mr. Gregoire feels that each member could be in charge of 2 departments. He would take the Board of Selectmen and Town Accountant as his liaisons. For the larger departments two members could be in charge of them. He would like the committee to inform him of what departments they would like. Ms. Boyea said that during budget time, the members would meet with their departments. Mr. Gregoire feels checking in, in the fall and summer would be good before leading into budget time to see how much engagement the departments would be interested in throughout the year. Ms. Downing said that everyone would get a notification with the liaison list with contact numbers and then in the fall contact departments to see if help is needed. At year end there should be serious contact. Ms. Downing would like to take on the Police

and Fire Departments with Mr. Ganhao which also include the EMT's and Ambulance. Ms. Cavallo and Ms. Boyea will take the School Department. Ms. Cavallo will also work with the Board of Health. Ms. Tokarz will take on IT Department and Town Clerk/Elections. Mr. Alves will take on the Hubbard Memorial Library, Council on Aging and Veteran Services. Mr. Moskal will take on the DPW, Landfill, Snow and Ice, Sewer Enterprise.

Mr. Gregoire discussed the budget process, and how it will be approached next year. There will be conversation with the Selectmen, Ms. Collins and Ms. Villano. One thing he would like to accomplish is to put together a multi-year plan, before talking about departmental requests to see what the picture will be, to include the best- and worst-case scenarios. Ms. Downing gave a review of what took place in the past years. Everything hinges on what the Selectmen would like to do going forward. The Budget Sub-committee was formed, but that fell by the wayside. The Finance Committee is a recommending body but there needs to be a Board of Selectmen that are really interested in going forward. It is written that Ms. Villano in her position can do the budget with Ms. Collins, the committee reviews it and makes a recommendation. The committee can be involved in whichever way they choose. The committee can't set the directives. There needs to be a discussion with all parties involved to decide what their direction and ideas are. Ms. Downing feels that the Budget Sub-committee should be strengthened and act as a financial advising committee to the Town. There should be certain goals to deal with whatever the financial situation brings going forward. If they feel that they don't want any plans going forward and want to work year to year, let them proceed like this year and the committee won't meet with the departments at all. Ms. Collins and Ms. Villano can meet with the departments and then the committee will look at the budget and go from there. Mr. Gregoire said that the Selectmen were open to wanting to adjust the process, look at how things are going, how to better communicate with requests. Ms. Downing said that members have been on the committee for years and there is a lot of financial knowledge that has developed. Ms. Tokarz asked if it would be in the committee's best interest to have a meeting with Ms. Collins and Ms. Villano as to how the procedure of the budget works now, for the last two years, so that the committee can be on board with them as they streamline the budget. There is a difference as to how it's been done. They do a great job, but the committee is not aware of what they are doing and there is a disconnect. If they could explain the procedure, it would be beneficial to everyone. Ms. Collins said that there definitely has to be some kind of meeting of the minds. There is a budget Sub-committee that does have representation from different committees, but the committee is not getting the full benefit of hearing what is going on. This year, the timing, pandemic etc. everything played a role in the process. She said nothing was different, this is the same way they created the budget as every year prior. She thinks the confusion that came about was it's been a couple of years since anybody was able to ask for anything. With the pandemic, budgets were cut. There were things that people needed and asked for at the last minute and went straight to the Selectmen. The requests didn't go through the committee, Ms. Collins or Ms. Villano. It went directly to the Selectmen. That was a direct result of the pandemic, cutting the budget and departments needing and wanting things. There wasn't enough time for the committee to meet with all department because of the deadlines put forth by the Selectmen and at the last moment, the Sub-committee had to make decisions as to adding some requests and taking out requests that were not affordable. As that was happening, they were meeting with the Selectmen and if approved, those items had to be added. The plan going forward would be that Ms. Collins and Ms. Villano create the budget and submit it to Town Meeting. Finance Committee

reviews it and recommends whether or not they approve of it. The plan going forward is that Finance will communicate with departments throughout the year. Ms. Collins would like the committee to get monthly reports, just like departments do to see what is happening. There will be a deadline to submit requests to Ms. Villano and the committee to review and give recommendations. She feels the biggest help would be meeting with the liaisons, to help the departments prepare their requests. Ms. Boyea asked when did the departments sit down with Ms. Collins and Mr. Gregoire, to make the changes? Ms. Collins said the changes were made from requests that people put through. When some of the department heads met with the committee, they were confused relative to the second column, on the Level 2 budget. Ms. Collins stated that the only way they would have a Level 2 column was if they requested additional money. Ms. Collins said that the departments did know that. Ms. Downing feels that the departments didn't realize that some of their budgets were cut. Ms. Downing said, the departments brought in their budgets with their extra requests and some didn't get the message. In the past, there would be a letter, a guideline from the Selectmen that would give them information regarding percentage increases and other guidelines made by a certain date and brought back to the Selectmen. The Selectmen overrode the original parameters regarding new positions, and put them through. There needs to be a conversation. Mr. Gregoire said if there is going to be a process, there is not a budget bylaw. It's a line in one section of the bylaw that talks about the budget and that's what is being interpreted around the whole process. There needs to be adjustments or another avenue for the process. Ms. Downing feels that the process should start earlier so that, if needed, there would be enough time to hold a second meeting with some of the departments. She said that the committee had liaisons for years. She doesn't think that is the issue. It helps when departments come to the table, because the members would understand their department needs. There wasn't a chance to meet with departments till the very end of the process. She doesn't believe that monthly reports would be beneficial. The committee doesn't need to be doing accounting. If there is a problem, Ms. Collins could notify the committee and have the liaison meet with them. Everyone has to be on the same page and there has to be timing issues and start the process earlier. By January 1st., the committee should have some direction, so that communications can be processed and everyone knows the deadlines etc., if that is what the Selectmen wants the committee to do. Mr. Gregoire feels the timing this year was the result of the pandemic and that delayed the process, but agrees with Ms. Downing. He feels the monthly budgets are useful for him. Ms. Downing doesn't feel that Ms. Collins, Ms. Villano and the Budget Sub-committee have time to be looking at a three-to-five-year plan, within the budget season. Maybe that work could be done off-season. Mr. Gregoire agrees. Ms. Cavallo asked if there was a Long-Range Planning Committee. There is, it's still established, but not active. Ms. Collins thought it was a capital committee. Ms. Downing said that the original goal was to bring forward projects that would be long range projects, that would affect long range planning.

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Boyea to approve and sign the Finance Committee Minutes of April 7, 2021 as written.
Vote: 8-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Boyea, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve and sign Finance Committee Minutes of May 10, 2021.
Vote: 7-0-1 in favor. Ms. Downing abstained

Moved by Mr. Moskal, seconded by Ms. Downing to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 7:23 p.m.
Vote: 8-0 in favor

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