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**MINUTES
OF THE
FINANCE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2014
7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM
130 MAIN STREET, SANDWICH, MA**

Present: Gene Parini, Linell Grundman, Tom Hickey, Mike Dwyer, Mark Snyder, Bob Guerin and Jim Lehane

Absent: Rich Reilly and Matt Terry

Also Present: Selectman Jim Pierce and SCT

ITEM #1
CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

ITEM #2
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ITEM #3
REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of Tuesday, November 18, 2014-

***MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. SNYDER TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 18, 2014 AS WRITTEN. SECONDED BY MR. LEHANE. VOTE – MR. PARINI, MR. SNYDER, MR. GUERIN AND MR. LEHANE APPROVED. MS. GRUNDMAN, MR. HICKEY AND MR. DWYER ABSTAINING.**

ITEM#4
FINANCE COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Mr. Parini noted that the School Committee draft budget has not yet been completed. The soonest we may have it is Monday. The first workshop meeting is scheduled for the follow Wednesday. We may have to take a look at it individually then come up with our own questions. Last year when Dr. Canfield presented the School Dept. budget at the first workshop, he went over the significant changes. This year we can listen to what it entails...hoping that we will have a day or two to look it over. Suspects that the School Committee and we will have some questions.

Mr. Parini is interested in hearing whatever ideas anyone may have.

Mr. Lehane expressed disappointment at not getting the School budget for tonight's meeting and hopes the Committee could get it on Monday with as much detail as possible would be helpful. If each of us shares with the group 2, 3 or 4 ideas we would like to explore with this process. If we could develop an initial list of ideas we'd like to explore and have a discussion...thinks it would be helpful to the Superintendent also.

Mr. Parini agreed...it is disappointing not to have a draft school budget at this time.

Ms. Grundman noted that she is not that disappointed as we don't usually get the budget until later in the process. Spoke generally about closing the school (Wing) in 2015. How many employees are there now



and how many will there be in August of 2015? We need to know exactly what does the School Department need the money for. Are we doing due diligence in planning our resources. Would like to see more specificity in the budget from the School Dept. In closing the school we should talk about the savings.

Mr. Lehane – When the STEM Academy was proposed the plea from the School Dept. was let us bump the budget to get it all in place and you will see the savings.

Noted that there were no municipal pay raises one year.

Questions whether the \$1 million savings will be realized and how it will be used if it is not saved. If it is going to be used for something else, what is the status of that number? Is it coming back in some form or is it being used for something else?

-We read about eighteen new courses at the high school proposed for next year. Of the eighteen new courses etc. such as forensics, will there be any addition to staff?

-Will the pool revenues and expenses be reflected in the upcoming year's budget?

-Class size...currently we have three elementary schools and now we are only going to have the Forestdale and Oakridge Schools. One of the schools is planned to have grades 1 – 3 and the other grades 4 – 6. We can look at the class sizes and personnel (to reduce staff) because you may get more efficient.

-When we only have one building with elementary grades, combining the numbers we may have efficiencies. Would like to know if they have thought about this.

Mr. Parini – In addition to the line item budget that was submitted last year there was also a staff report. For the three elementary schools and details on the number of administrators, educators, status, classes etc. Over all there were about 22 students per educator. We have to find out about this because of the many changes. On the matter of the \$1 million savings, referencing the Board of Selectmen's meeting of December 4, 2014, Mr. Parini noted that there appears to be a \$384,000 difference from 2015 and 2016. Noted that that is a vast difference to the \$1 million savings. Dr. Canfield is interest in having a free full day kindergarten program. Currently parents are paying for full day kindergarten. We need to find out how this is included in their budget.

Ms. Grundman – The Forestdale School is scheduled to have the Pre K – grade 2 and the Oakridge School grades 3 – 6. How many employees and how much does that cost us. There is still concern in the community...is it efficient to do this re-configuration now...where are the changes going to be in the budget?

Mr. Lehane – Was not suggesting that it is the responsibility of the Finance Committee to dictate classes, just asking will we be able to see that the work that has been done.

Mr. Parini – Free day care may make a difference in the funding.

Mr. Guerin asked Mr. Parini if the School Department has any of the initial questions that were submitted from the Finance Committee.

Mr. Parini – No, but is sure they will be answered as we get into the budget. Wanted to hold off submitting the questions to the Superintendent of Schools until we got copies of the budget.

Mr. Guerin – would like to see the School Department high light all new spending vs. prior year...would be helpful.

-information relating to budget line items for 1, 3 and 5 years...looking for trends. Has a keen interest in utilities and their line items for a longer period of time.

-Prior to the closure of the Wing School, what the last 2 – 3 years of operating expenses were as well as for the pool and maintaining of fields over the last many years; the DeConto Stadium costs.

- The cost of full day kindergarten staffing etc.
- The eighteen new courses at the high school will come at a cost...would like to understand it.
- How much money was expended in the last 45 days of the last fiscal year and reallocated.
- Capital Planning – estimates and expenses for capital needs – give to the Capital Improvement Planning Committee and, if they are not, why they are not part of that process.
- Total amount paid to substitute teachers...per diem pay.
- Bussing expenditure and estimates once reconfiguration is done.
- If there are any Administrative Budget changes and how they will budget for them.

Mr. Parini noted that the pool is probably going to be included in their budget.

Mr. Guerin would like to see the numbers over time 2, 3 – 5 years. Is the pool separately metered at the school? Do we know what the utility cost is?

Mr. Pierce noted that, yes, the pool is separately metered.

Mr. Hickey – as maintenance supervisor...there was a meter on the pool.
We have to be careful not to go too deeply. It is up to the School Committee to run the schools.

Mr. Guerin doesn't think any questions he has raised second guess the School Committee.

Mr. Dwyer – Among other things already mentioned what about contracted services. What went up and what went down. On the matter of the Wing School, thinks we have to be careful...\$1 million savings...thinks we have to get off that. There will possibly be some type of reduction, but there are going to be some plans i.e. on the STEM Academy.

- What will be the costs that will occur with the shift from the school to the Town?
- What are the operating costs etc. such as for contracted services?
- We need to talk about Town Meeting and Town Meeting articles.
- Would like to talk about capital planning on both sides.

Mr. Parini noted that, regarding the Special Town Meeting and warrant, the Town Manager has provided the Finance Committee with a preliminary list of articles.

Mr. Dwyer – on the matter of authorizing to bond Marina project...we are asking the citizens of this town to do this and noted that we are going to have an architect offer that it is going to cost \$3 million...without any bid out. Would like to have some support...we should get to a level to go out and get legitimate 'order of magnitude'. Competitive bids prior to bonding. We cannot continue to have architects tell us about cost estimates. We need to increase more credibility about the process. We need to create some transparency. Would like to have the Chairman and himself advance that at the appropriate time.

Ms. Grundman – Agrees with Mr. Dwyer...it is extremely appropriate for the Finance Committee to look at the process if it is a financial issue that will impact the town. Also, wants to find out about the \$1 million savings and pool funding...has it come to the CIPC?

When you have the highest taxes on Cape Cod and you keep coming back to the people and asking for more; we should be looking at everything in the budget including capital.

Mr. Dwyer- thanked Ms. Grundman for her support. Is impressed with the process for Capital Planning it is just the items that should be consider by the CIPC. Feels an 'Order of Magnitude Budget' should be considered. Trying to be more transparent financially and be more transparent to the community such as

What is the marina building costing these days? I know there is a tremendous amount of planning going on for all the many projects in town.

Ms. Grundman – maybe \$500,000 for the capital budget should be revisited. Changes should be made for better transparency and credibility.

Mr. Parini – this will be an agenda item.

Mr. Lehane – thanked Mr. Hickey for reminding us what our job is not...telling the School Committee how to run the schools. We have a right to ask lots of question about how they come up with the numbers. I think we have the sacred responsibility to the citizens of this town that when you propose that they accept the budget that they have an extreme level of confidence in the budget that we have asked all the questions and that we are looking out for them.

Mr. Lehane noted that for three years he ran the Community School and the School for Early Learning. He is a resource to his fellow members of the Finance Committee. Mr. Guerin was on the School Committee. As for information about the pool, Mr. Hickey was head of the maintenance department for the schools for many years.

It was noted that the pool is a losing proposition. The most expensive thing you will ever do. We never made any money on the pool...we always lost money on the pool but other courses offered by the Community School picked up on the expense.

It was noted that there is a discreet budget from the cell phone tower contract that no one can touch that can only be used for maintenance of the athletic fields at the high school. There is about \$75,000 in the account right now to maintain the athletic fields including the DeConto Stadium. Maybe contracting with an outside company to maintain the fields, which requires special maintenance, should be considered?

-There were five schools in the district...the Community School was one of them.

Mr. Snyder – is here for the tax payers in town and feels most everything that he was going to suggest has been talked about. Is concerned not just about the schools but also the town.

Mr. Parini – The process for the workshop...suggests the Finance Committee attend the first work shop, listen to Dr. Canfield...be open to the question and answer periods then we will submit anything we have not had answered in writing. Any other questions?

Mr. Hickey noted that the FinCom used to have certain people going to certain meetings and reporting back to the FinCom.

Mr. Parini – like liaisons.

Mr. Hickey – Yes, the liaisons can report back to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Parini – I think that the Capital Improvement Planning Committee, the School Committee and the Upper Cape Cod Technical School would be good groups to have a liaison for

Mr. Hickey – suggested that he could put together a list of the committees that may be good to have a liaison for.

Mr. Parini – yes.

Ms. Grundman – as a follow up to Mr. Hickey’s suggestion, you are not suggesting the FinCom members not attend the workshops.

Mr. Hickey – No.

Mr. Snyder noted that he is glad that Selectman Pierce is present at this meeting.

Mr. Dwyer would like these questions for the School Committee by the beginning of next week.

Ms. Grundman suggested sending question to the School Committee Chairperson. Perhaps Chair to Chair.

Mr. Lehane – referenced the workshop with the Finance Committee and the School Committee and asked for an overview of what happens.

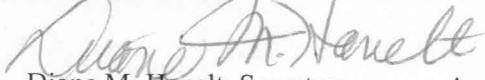
Mr. Parini – it will be held at the high school library. It will be on equal footing. There will be a lot of give and take.

ITEM #6
ADJOURN

8:25 p.m.

***MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE BY MS. GRUNDMAN. SECONDED BY MR. DWYER
VOTE – UNANIMOUS.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Diane M. Hanelt, Secretary

Approved: 1/20/15

Supporting Documents:

None