

Town Clerk

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TOWN OF SANDWICH

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MINUTES
OF THE
FINANCE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2016
7:00 P.M.
TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM
130 MAIN STREET, SANDWICH, MA

Present: Linell Grundman, Bob Guerin, Gene Parini, Rich Reilly, Jim Lehane and Tom Witham

Also Present: Town Manager George Dunham, Finance Director Mimi Spahr, Fire Chief Carrico and SCT.

ITEM #1
CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM #2
PUBLIC FORUM

None.

ITEM #3
REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of March 29, 2016-

*MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. GUERIN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 29, 2016 AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MR. REILLY.
VOTE – UNANIMOUS

ITEM #4
CORRESPONDENCE, STATEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Grundman noted that Barbara Knight passed away last week. Funeral will be at Christ the King Church in Mashpee.

ITEM #5
TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- Overview of Projected Revenues and Expenses – FY'17 (Final ATM Budget 3/24/16)
- Friday morning most recent Public Safety Building committee meeting.
- General Budget has not changed.
- The total project cost for the public safety facilities is \$17,015,000
- Overview of Financial Summary - Preliminary Opinion of Probable Project Cost – Public Safety Buildings
- We retired a bunch of debt on the schools.
- Overview of estimated new Exempt Debt – Proposed Roads & Infrastructure COE exclusions - \$1.3m per year 2017 – 2020 for road improvements should not be too much of a spike if we figure these things out.
- Mr. Guerin – retiring the debt amount...thinks that the total picture based on tax bills would show slight increases.
- Mr. Dunham noted that there are flyers that the Public Safety group and Mr. Lapp have been working on. The flyer will be presented to the Selectmen at their next meeting for their approval. There are restrictions on how we can advertise the proposed public safety buildings. The Fire Dept. hiring time frame. Friday we got some information from the architects...different from what we had last week.
- Both ballot questions have to pass to go forward. We will put in the bid specs...the East Sandwich building needs to be built first. We will need to hire the staff for East Sandwich in 2017. Back ground checks cannot be done until we have a job to offer. Human Resources Director Marie Buckner can explain all of this better. We need the full \$750,000 for the long term costs for year eighteen (18) and beyond.



-Chief Carrico – We are always in desperate need for additional people. If I were to bring eight (8) people on board right now I would not have anywhere to put them. We need East Sandwich. By having East Sandwich opened and staffed, it is a game changer. The largest population in Sandwich is south of Rte. 6 but the largest call volume is north of Rte. 6. Meets with the Finance Director, Mimi Spahr, every week to keep control of the Fire Department budget. We are very picky about the those we bring on. The Article for the eight (8) EMS is a game changer for the Fire Department. Please consider supporting this article.

Mr. Parini noted that last week this was not recommended for approval by the Finance Committee. Are we being asked to reconsider this vote from last week?

Ms. Grundman – we have more and newer information that points to the need to have the staffing. Both these articles need to pass to go forward with the public safety project.

Mr. Parini – We voted.

Ms. Grundman – We can reconsider the vote...out of courtesy.

Mr. Parini – I voted last week not to recommend. Having this information is good it is due to poor outreach on this project.

Ms. Grundman – I am looking at...yes.

Mr. Reilly – we are not against hiring fire fighters. If you hold the school budget where it is...the declining school enrollment...that is where the money should come from. An override is not going to be a good thing.

***MOTION TO RECONSIDER WAS MADE BY MR. GUERIN.**

Mr. Witham noted that a motion to reconsider has to be made by the person who voted for it.

Mr. Guerin – I think someone should make a motion one way or the other. I don't think anyone is against hiring fire fighters...just not this way.

It was noted that it is time for the boards and committees running this budget to make those choices.

We are going to the voters to permanently go...an override.

Mr. Lehane suggested someone make a motion to reconsider not to support for purposes of discussion.

***MOTION WAS MADE BY MS. GRUNDMAN TO RECONSIDER THE VOTE ON ARTICLE #14
OVERRIDE – HIRING OF EIGHT FIRE FIGHTERS. SECONDED BY MR. LEHANE.**

Discussion –

Concern was expressed by members of the Committee about supporting an override for personnel purposes. Support additional fire fighters but this is not the way to fund it. Question was raised if the Committee has an appetite to propose an alternate budget for Town Meeting to consider or is there any other option besides the FinCom creating its own budget. It was noted that if Town Meeting does not support the \$750,000 override then there won't be any fire fighters at the East Sandwich Station. Would the Board of selectmen support including the \$750,000 in the budget somewhere else.

Mr. Dunham – it would be extremely difficult to do that. \$750,000 is bigger than the three largest budgets. Most all budgets in general government are much smaller.

It was noted that assuming the public safety building passes, it will take a while...what would the harm be to wait 'til next year.

Chief Carrico – right now we are looking at a six month time frame for hiring. East Sandwich project would be on the fast track.

Mr. Guerin – we are discussing the reconsideration...

Mr. Parini asked about cost.

Chief Carrico – Roughly \$77,000 per fire fighter...we receive radio grants.

Mr. Witham – If this passes then this \$750,000 is in the following year and becomes part of the fire department budget. Why not put it there now.

Mr. Dunham – we would exceed our levy limit. The first year we would need roughly half of it.

Ms. Grundman recapped...

VOTE – 1 AYE (Ms. Grundman) / 7 NAYES

Mr. Dunham – Article #2 is the Budget. No changes to the Warrant from last week.

Ms. Grundman noted that we support the hiring of staff but we don't support it by an override.

Mr. Parini – One area of the budget that is troublesome to him is the school budget. 6% increase in the teacher's salaries. That is unsustainable. The more the enrollment decreases the salaries increase. The process or the guidance that the Board of Selectmen provides...it is highly flawed. It is a disservice to the people of the town of Sandwich. There is nothing behind their guidance.

It was noted that the cost per student is less than other towns in the south eastern school systems...the information is on line.

Ms. Grundman agrees with Mr. Parini that the budget guidelines are not good. The real issue is how do we get to those budget guide lines ...not the same each year. It is legal for the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee to meet and discuss these things.

Mr. Dunham noted that originally the budget was 2.8%...level service. We are \$200,000 in the whole with the most recent snow storm.

Mr. Witham – schools, I understand, are the big reasons...how do we lose students and increase the salary budget. Our school budget has some issues. Trying to take personalities out of it, somethings we are over paying for in the school budget. We are top heavy in administrators in the school department. Somethings are part of underfunded State mandates. That is a piece of increased costs. The School Committee was given guidelines...no more than 2 or 3%. We need to consider the school budget ...level fund it next year then we need to make that statement.

Mr. Witham finds the attitudes admirable. Municipal Department heads will try to hold their budget and it costs that should not be. Maintenance...these items need to be in a regular budget. More of the maintenance problems need to be more part of the regular budget. Snow and Ice should better reflect what the budget should be. Good budget, to me, says what to we normally pay for snow and ice and that is what should be in the budget. I get why the \$750,000 fire employees override but I don't like it...I am going to vote for the budget.

Mr. Guerin – We are being asked to consider recommending the budget. I think some responsibility comes with that. We challenged each department to plan for their spending. If we are short some money we need to do a better job listening to one another and think about its implications. Contracts are negotiated. They have become budget short falls. Now this committee has to consider the budget. I am torn...some of the contractor obligations are problematic. It is difficult to recommend this budget.

Ms. Grundman agrees with Mr. Guerin and feels equally conflicted.

Mr. Lehane – I must admit...that was the most thoughtful description of responsibility and this board and other boards in town that I have ever heard. We probably don't want to consider an alternate budget. Some towns such as Scituate...this is an advisory board. Thanked Mr. Guerin.

Ms. Grundman thanked the whole committee.

Mr. Parini – I agree...I like the term advisory but one problem with that..a lot of the time our recommendations are not ever considered. I feel conflicted on this budget. \$24.9 m right now is the total school budget. The increase in salaries is more the 3%.

Mr. Reilly – just because you can raise the taxes doesn't mean you have to and now we have declining enrollment in the schools etc. I think the 'powers that be' should look at the budget and start off with the premise of 3%.

***MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. LEHANE TO RECOMMEND THE FY'17 BUDGET AS PRESENTED.
SECONDED BY MR. WITHAM.**

Discussion-

Mr. Parini – I will probably vote for it even though I thought I would not. I think the Board of Selectmen Would take head of how we feel this even...

Ms. Grundman – I would like added that the school committee should take head. Thank you to Frank Pannorfi for challenging the school committee budget and it did not get passed the Board of Selectmen. The process can help eliminate this. It has to be addressed. We have to listen to each other as Mr. Guerin said.

Mr. Grundman...I am going to vote to recommend this budget that I am comfortable with.

Mr. Guerin – I cannot vote to recommend. I understand all the hard work that has gone into this budgeting process but, backed into this budget are fiscal practices that are faulty and bad management practices. We have observed, commented, asked questions, probed and got some answer and are unsatisfied.

VOTE – 5 AYES / 1 NAY (Mr. Guerin)

Mr. Guerin gave an overview of Fiscal 2017 Budget – Observations and Recommendations of the Finance Committee (Draft by Bob Guerin – FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES – NOT FINAL) on the following topics:

- Human Resources
- Record Keeping/technology resources
- CPC planning and prioritization
- Facilities Management
- Capital Planning and prioritization
- Employee Compensation
- General Discussion

ITEM #6

OLD BUSINESS

It was noted that, during the previous week's meeting when the warrant articles were being voted, two articles (#10 the School Cell Tower and Article #16 Lower Shawme Dam) no motions or seconds were actually taken...Mr. Dunham gave a brief overview and the committee went right into discussion and took a vote.

***MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. REILLY TO RECOMMEND PASSAGE OF ARTICLE #10 AS PRESENTED IN THE WARRANT. SECONDED BY MR. PARINI. VOTE – UNANIMOUS**

***MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. GUERIN TO RECOMMEND PASSAGE OF ARTICLE #16 AS PRESENTED. SECONDED BY MR. REILLY. VOTE - UNANIMOUS**

Ms. Grundman noted that the Comprehensive Water Resource plan will be presented to the Board of Selectmen at their meeting this Thursday, April 7.

ITEM #7

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Grundman suggested there is no need for another meeting prior to Town Meeting on Monday, May 2. It was discussed and agreed that Ms. Grundman, Mr. Guerin, Mr. Reilly, Mr. Witham and Mr. Snyder would represent the Finance Committee on the stage at the time of Town Meeting.

CLOSING REMARKS

ADJOURNMENT

9:10 p.m. *MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE BY MR. WITHAM. SECONDED BY MR. REILLY. VOTE – UNANIMOUS.

Respectfully Submitted,



Diane M. Hanelt, Secretary

Approved: 11/9/16

Supporting Documents:

- Projected Revenues and Expenses – FY'17 (Final ATM Budget – 3/24/16)
- Firing Dept. Hiring Timeframe – Public Safety Planning Project
- Sandwich, Massachusetts Public Safety Facilities (Project Tools)- Preliminary opinion of Probably Project Cost April 4, 2016
- Town of Sandwich Estimated New Exempt Debt
- Estimated new Exempt Debt – Bar Graph
- Flyer of Revised Sandwich Public Safety Project
- Fiscal 2017 Budget – Observations and Recommendations of the Finance Committee
Draft by Bob Guerin – For Discussion Purposes – Not Final