

West Newbury Finance Committee
Minutes of the meeting
Monday, May 1, 2017

Chairman Codair called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 Building with Ms. Grammer, Mr. Ellis, Mr. DeLena, and Mr. Phillips in attendance.

There being no public comment, the Committee considered its agenda.

Review of the Town Meeting Process

Chairman Codair opened the discussion by stating the meeting proceeded well overall. In the future, FinCom will suggest to those submitting article and budget requests to include a 2 to 3 sentence narrative highlighting key points. The current Article and Budget Request Forms contain a section for such a summary. In order to expedite the next budget review, departments, boards, and committees will be encouraged to include summary narratives.

Mr. Phillips proposed establishing a deadline for submission of information for a review meeting with FinCom. He stated several requestors forward information late Monday afternoon, mere hours prior to the review meeting. This practice does not allow FinCom members adequate time to review the requests. Chairman Codair suggested FinCom set firm deadlines, perhaps one business day prior to the meeting.

Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) and Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

Ms. Grammer stated it has been difficult to follow Capital Improvement and Community Preservation projects in an individual building. DPW projects now tend to be grouped according to the most cost efficient approach, rather than pre-stated plan for a given asset. She cited the library as an example. Also, both the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Library Board of Trustees have requested CPC funds for separate projects at the library.

Preparation of the FinCom Booklet

Last minute changes of Articles have made preparation of the FinCom Booklet particularly challenging this year. Article revisions necessitate the need to reopen FinCom discussions, a re-vote by the committee, and a possible revision of the rationale. On a positive note, Ms. Grammer remarked FinCom experienced greater interactions with the Board of Selectmen (BOS) this year.

Town Manager Status

The period for approval by the state is not established. However, Representative Leonard Mirra had previously remarked when presented to the state the transition to town management should be approved.

Distribution of the duties of FinCom members

Previously, Secretary Grammer was FinCom's main contact with various departments, committees, and boards. Ms. Grammer has followed up with groups regarding budgets and Article Requests. Unfortunately, each group has its own set of dynamics. She cited the Housing Authority had fallen

off the radar until this year. Chairman Codair stated the new Housing Authority Executive Director Ms. Tracy Watson comes with a great deal of knowledge and was helpful explaining the dynamics of the Housing Authority.

Mr. Ellis has agreed to follow up with groups regarding budgets and articles. He did request an updated contact list. Ms. Grammer has started a contact list. Ms. Winglass, executive administrator for BOS is also revising the contact list. Ms. Grammer remarked several contacts have changed over time. *Mr. Ellis will follow up with all the contacts during the month of June.* Mr. Ellis stated he is glad to follow up with departments and committees. However, he is reluctant to be involved in preparing the calendar scheduling the various groups. Ms. Grammer stated, in future, she would prepare the agenda to state invited departments and committees. Ms. Grammer suggested the Finance Director or Town Manager would assist FinCom to book departments and committees.

FinCom Business

Chairman Codair stated FinCom has received no new transfers.

Mr. Ellis remarked, during the Town Meeting, it was difficult to hear while on the stage. Ms. Grammer suggested he contact Ms. Winglass regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) obligations of the town.

Ms. Grammer stated she would like the town to consider a façade easement to preserve historic properties. Mr. DeLena remarked the community value is in the exterior of homes. This would in turn maintain the historic appearance of the town. If passed, homeowners could petition the CPC to preserve their homes.

Ms. Grammer suggested FinCom should meet in June to address transfers and conduct committee elections. Chairman Codair remarked that due to personal commitments she would not be able to remain on the committee in FY18. She is willing to assist when needed but is unable to remain on FinCom. Chairman Codair asked if other members knew of other residents who are interested in becoming FinCom members. Mr. DeLena stated his neighbor Mr. Tony Sutton might be interested.

Ms. Grammer will attempt to obtain transfer requests prior to the June meeting.

Mr. Ellis inquired if it were permissible for him to vote via skype. *Ms. Grammer will consult Mr. McCarron as to the possibility.*

Meeting Minutes

FinCom members voted to approve minutes of April 10 2017, with corrections, 4-0-1, DeLena abstaining.

Future FinCom Meeting

Monday, June 12, 2017

- 7:00 p.m.-address transfers and committee elections

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer
Secretary

Meeting materials:

2012 Town Credit Rating
4/10/2017 Draft Meeting Minutes