

**West Newbury Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
Monday, August 28, 2017**

Finance Committee Meeting

Chairman DeLena called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 Building with Mr. Ellis, Ms. Grammer, and Dr. Beaudoin in attendance. Also in attendance were Finance Director Gould and newly appointed FinCom member Mr. Forbes Durey.

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

Transfer Requests

Finance Director Gould reported there are no transfer requests at this time.

Introduction of New FinCom Member

Current FinCom members welcomed Mr. Durey to the committee. The addition of Mr. Durey brings the Finance Committee to a full count of six members. Mr. Durey inquired as to what consists a quorum. Ms. Grammer explained four members are necessary for a quorum. She further stated a member might participate in a meeting via Face Time. However, four members must physically attend for a quorum.

With the addition of Mr. Durey to the committee, Mr. Ellis requested an updated FinCom phone list. *Ms. Grammer will forward a new list to FinCom members.*

Proposed Fall Town Meeting Articles approved at the Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting on August 21, 2017

Ms. Grammer explained the numerical order of articles are subject to change as the review process proceeds. Chairman DeLena explained to Mr. Durey that FinCom produces the booklet for the town meetings. Individual FinCom members author rationales for each FinCom vote. The committee, as a whole, edits the rationales.

Article #2: To see if the town will vote to transfer from Free Cash to the sum of \$144,300.00 to reduce the current year tax rate. By request of the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Grammer inquired as to what led to the selection of the dollar amount. Chairman DeLena remarked the amount was the same as the last tax rate buy down. FinCom members expressed concern that an excess of Free Cash will lead to overtaxing the citizens of West Newbury. Dr. Beaudoin asked if buy downs were common. Finance Director Gould replied tax buy downs, using Free Cash, in varying amounts occur regularly. The exception being in times of recession.

Mr. Durey inquired how an appropriate amount of Free Cash is be determined. Ms. Grammer replied a review of individual department turn backs at the end of each fiscal year will reveal if a department over budgeted. Turn backs flow to Free Cash. This review assists FinCom when reviewing department requests in the next budget season.

Article #3: Groundwater Protection Overlay District

To see if the town will amend the Zoning Bylaw, Section 10 Groundwater Protection Overlay District by amending the Groundwater Protection Map to incorporate 31 Dole Street and Wellfield #1 located at 999 Main Street and to revise the title of the map to correspond to the Zoning Bylaw and to amend the date of the Map in Section 10D. By request of the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Grammer remarked the original bylaw was amended around 2014 to expand the overlay district. This amendment includes the possible site of a new well.

Article 4: To see if the town will vote to transfer from available funds the following sums to pay outstanding bills from prior years' expenditures:

\$1,024.00 for the Board of Registrars FY16

\$389.00 for the Town Clerk FY16

\$57.84 for the Town Clerk FY15

Finance Director Gould stated monies were available at the time. Subsequently, the funds were turned back to Free Cash. Services occurred in previous fiscal years; hence, an article request is necessary.

Additionally, Finance Director Gould remarked if funds were available, the article would pass with a simple majority at Town Meeting. It was not entirely clear whether the funding for this would come from Free Cash or another source.

Article #5: The establishment of a Library Materials Revolving Fund

Library Director Susan Babb requested the town accountant establish the Revolving Fund as a separate account in conjunction with the new Integrated Library System (ILS). The new system allows for credit card payment for lost or damaged books.

Finance Director Gould reported, to his knowledge, the Revolving Fund is used to replace damaged and lost library books. He also stated Ms. Babb is currently on vacation. *Mr. Ellis will follow up with Ms. Babb in order to schedule a meeting with FinCom.*

Article #6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from available funds the sum of \$150,000.00 for the Town Manager's salary, benefits and expenses. By request of the Board of Selectmen

Finance Director Gould stated health insurance costs are included. Ms. Grammer remarked that she was under the impression that all ancillary costs were covered. She also stated the language in the article was somewhat confusing. *Finance Director Gould will request some language changes.*

Article #7: Temporary Moratorium on Marijuana

To see if the town will adopt a moratorium on marijuana establishments.

Ms. Grammer stated the bylaw is similar to one proposed when medical marijuana was first introduced. At the time, zoning was limited to a lot of land behind the state police station.

The currently proposed moratorium would be in effect through December 31, 2018. The moratorium allows the town to research impact on the town and discuss zoning restrictions.

Potential Article: Administrative Assistant Annie Sterling Salary

Finance Director Gould explained Ms. Annie Sterling, Administrative Assistant in the Finance Department, is the lowest paid Administrative Assistant employed by the town. Mr. Bertino began the process to increase her salary. Unfortunately, the process stalled following Mr. Bertino's departure. BOS Chairman Archibald requested Finance Director Gould reissue paperwork necessary to increase Ms. Sterling's salary. Finance Director Gould will draw up a warrant. The BOS will review the warrant at their meeting on September 5, 2017. Chairman DeLena asked if the Personnel Committee were involved. Finance Director replied not at this time.

Process and Facilitation of the Fall Town Meeting

FinCom Fall Meeting Schedule			
Day	Date	Meeting	Notes/Comments
Tuesday	September 5, 2017	Review any new articles	BOS Meeting 9/5 and will forward results to FinCom on September 6, 2017
Monday	September 11, 2017	Meetings with Departments and Committees	
Monday	September 18, 2017	Meetings with Departments and Committees	
Monday	September 25, 2017	Joint Meeting: FinCom, BOS, Town Moderator, Finance Director, and Town Clerk/Counsel	
Monday	October 2, 2017	Final Review of FinCom Booklet	
Monday	October 23, 2017	Fall Town Meeting	
Monday	November 13, 2017	Joint Meeting: FinCom and BOS to discuss results of Town Meeting	
Monday	November 27, 2017	Joint Meeting: FinCom and BOS to discuss upcoming FY19 budget season	

The Finance Director explained the BOS has control of the Town Meeting warrants. However, individual citizens can obtain more signatures in order to bring a request to Town Meeting. Ms. Grammer also stated the BOS has instructed departments to hold off on any requests that can wait until spring.

Tax Buy Down

Ms. Grammer stated the original amount for the tax buy down was \$100,000.00. Eventually another \$44,300.00 was added to that amount.

Finance Director Gould stated that the Free Cash total is not officially available because the Free Cash is not certified. He suggested certification should occur at the end of October. He did add that if Free Cash is not certified, it might affect the tax buy down.

Previously, both FinCom and BOS members agreed the amount of Free Cash should range between 5 and 7% of the overall town budget. The range is from \$700,000.00 to \$850,000.00. Finance Director Gould did not disagree with the estimate of the amount of Free Cash at currently \$1.4M. Ms. Grammer stated there have been some transfers but the amount continues to grow.

Finance Director Gould added by bonding the \$1.7M to pay for the water tower may actually improve the town rating with the Essex Regional Retirement System. West Newbury has an AA rating whereas Newburyport is AAA.

Ms. Grammer suggested revisiting the specific amount for the tax buy down after consulting with Town Counsel and when the Division of Local Services (DLS) certifies the Free Cash.

FinCom Web Page

FinCom members had previously discussed adding a copy of the Massachusetts State FinCom Handbook to the West Newbury FinCom Web page. However, Ms. Grammer reported the file is very large. It was determined to add a drop box to the web site directing interested parties to the handbook. *Ms. Grammer will create the drop box.*

Town Meeting Preparation

There will be a joint meeting with the BOS, FinCom, and the town Moderator on September 25, 2017. The group will prepare for the Town Meeting.

FinCom Booklet for Town Meeting

Chairman DeLena announced a final review of rationales from FinCom members will take place at the October 2, 2017 FinCom meeting. The FinCom Booklet will go to print on October 6, 2017.

FY18 Board of Selectmen Goals

Town Manager

Chairman DeLena inquired if there were a probationary period for the Town Manager. Finance Director was not aware of a probationary period at this time.

Carr Post

There is a possible plan to add a 12-space parking lot beside the Carr Post Building. Chairman DeLena inquired if the issues with the septic had been solved. Ms. Grammer stated she had spoken with the town health inspector. An alarmed holding tank would collect sewage from the building. Due to the fact the building is not in constant use, a contract for on demand pumping can be setup.

Town Center Area Planning Initiative—potential Town sewer project for Town Center.

Dr. Beaudoin reported on the July 27, 2017 working group meeting. He stated the only business representative present were from the body repair shop and Haverhill Bank. The bank recently

installed a new septic system, costing a significant amount of money. Representatives from the businesses with the reportedly failing septic systems were not present. West Newbury Health Agent Mr. Paul Sevigny attended the meeting concerning the potential downtown sewer project. He stated the statutes do allow some “wiggle room” to replace a septic system with basic requirements.

The largest group of people attending that meeting were individual residents from nearby homes. The homeowners questioned the possibility of tying in residential homes to the sewer system. Engineering Firm representatives stated they were designing a sewer plant only for the three businesses and would not research alternatives.

Dr. Beaudoin stated the next meeting of the working group would be on September 26 or 28, 2017. Chairman DeLena inquired if the size of the plot of land and the location for a downtown sewer system has been determined. Dr. Beaudoin said that will be determined at the next meeting. He also reported the goal of the group was to present the facts at the Town Meeting. Mr. Durey suggested they could use the approach of betterment as was done on Plum Island.

Pentucket School Building Committee (PSBC)

Ms. Grammer reported the committee has chosen a design firm; Dore and Whittier Architects, based in Newburyport. Ms. Grammer was pleased to report Dore and Whittier offered an excellent presentation and are energy conscious. Researching the needs of the middle and high schools will occur in September and October. The schools will be in separate wings but will share a common cafeteria and gymnasium. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) is contributing more than half of the cost and is taking an active role in all determinations.

There is some concern that West Newbury is the only one of the three towns involved setting aside funds for the cost of the school. In addition to the overall costs, there are other concerns such as the septic system associated with the building. Ms. Grammer stated a lot of outreach to the communities is important. She reported the school web site posted the building evaluation. The report states the building is in poor condition. If left unaddressed, the result could include a loss in ranking and possible loss of accreditation.

Chairman DeLena inquired if there is a sense of the financial obligation. Finance Director Gould replied it would be unknown for another year. He stated the building is due for completion in 2021.

Updates on Current Town Issues

Cell Towers

Mr. Durey inquired if the proposed cell towers will be back on the agenda at Town Meeting. FinCom members suggested it depends on the BOS who originally requested the towers. If the new water tower could accommodate a tower innocuously, discussions may reopen.

Parking Rules

The Town Clerk and Police Department are collaborating to updating parking rules, providing more clarity and transparency. Once complete, the Town Web Site will include the parking rules.

Old Business

Digital Imaging of Town Records

Chairman DeLena reported the project is now complete. Due to the condition of some of the old town records, the final cost was \$19,500.00. Chairman DeLena reported the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) funded the initial \$11,000.00. Ms. Grammer inquired about the source of the additional \$8,520.00. Mr. McCarron requested a transfer of funds last June/July in order to keep the project on track. The clerk's office was able to absorb the cost. Within their budget.

Meeting Minutes

FinCom members voted to approve minutes of July 28, 2017 with amendments, 4-0-1, Durey abstaining

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa Grammer
Secretary

Meeting materials:

Draft Minutes for Monday, July 28, 2017

Finance Director Gould's spreadsheet listing Administrative Assistant Salaries

Ms. Grammer's spreadsheet summarizing articles

FY18 Board of Selectmen Goals

Article Requests with supporting information