

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM, 1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA
WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2019
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The Chair opened the meeting at 6:02 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room

- **Finance Committee members present:** Jen Audley, Fred Bowman, Greg Garrison, and John Hanold. Richard Widmer and Chris Menegoni were absent.
- **Others present:** Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen and Town Administrator Steve Ellis.
- The Chair announced that the meeting is being recorded by MCTV and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting. No one else was recording the meeting.
- In the absence of Mr. Widmer, Mr. Hanold volunteered to take the minutes for this meeting.

Minutes

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of July 10, 2019.

Vote: 4 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Meeting Rules and Norms

Ms. Audley distributed a draft of Rules and Norms for discussion. Her suggestion that a final version be posted on the town website was accepted, and several revisions were made. Final adoption will occur at a future meeting

Committee Clerk Services

Ms. Audley provided examples of minutes from Finance Committees in Brattleboro VT, and Ware and Deerfield MA. The consensus was that Ware's were too brief but that the others provided examples of the level of detail we would prefer. Ms. Olsen projected a per-meeting cost of at least \$42/meeting based on the current method of producing Selectboard minutes. We concluded that a less costly approach was preferable for this Committee, and that minutes could focus on documenting topics discussed, key information, decisions made, and actions to be taken. Further detail on specific discussion points would be available from recordings by MCTV.

Mr. Garrison volunteered to investigate a software application that might be useable, and will take the minutes at our next meeting August 21.

Financial Vision/Values

This item was passed over, in view of Mr. Widmer's absence.

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Calendar for FY2021 Budget Cycle

Mr. Ellis questioned the value of his extensive effort to prepare a Revenue Forecast in late November, in light of the uncertainties in most elements. The consensus was that a later Forecast would not inhibit preparation of departmental budget-requests, and that a good forecast of New Growth could not be done earlier. Ms. Olsen will circulate a copy of the FY2020 forecast for Committee review and comments.

There was discussion of the value of pushing (or pulling) the department requests later (or earlier) and accelerating the report from the Capital Improvements Committee. Input from Gill-Montague School Administration led us to leave the CIC input due-date at November 30, with reliance on Special Article requests for many CIC requests. Ms. Olsen feels that a slightly earlier due-date for spending requests would be beneficial to reduce the amount of material arriving at one time. No specific decision was reached.

Mr. Ellis asked that prior to the beginning of the FY21 budget development process, the committee discuss and decide how to allocate funds derived from potentially substantial but possibly short-term/unpredictable revenue streams (for example, cannabis-related revenue).

Updates

Ms. Olsen reported that Chief Williams does not intend to request a discretionary fund for the Police Department in FY2021.

Mr. Hanold entered into the record his summary of the progress of the state's FY2020. Pending the Governor's review, it appears Montague will receive slightly more state aid than was incorporated in the approved FY2020 municipal budget.

Next Meeting Dates: August 21st, and September 11th

Topics not anticipated within in the 48 hour posting requirements – none

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM

List of Documents and Exhibits:

- Minutes of July 10, 2019
- Ms. Audley's Rules and Norms draft

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- Examples of FinComm minutes: Brattleboro, Ware and Deerfield
- Mr. Hanold's note on the Mass Muni. Ass'n report