

Minutes of the February 2, 2023 Finance Committee

Members	Absent	Other
Shaun Galliher	Russ Parks	Bob Graves, Town Administrator
Heather Brown	Jim Chivers	Candy Galeucia
Bonnie Conner		
Mary Rice		
Sara Baumann		
Tracy Lussier		

The meeting was opened at 6:31 pm.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes of the January 5, 2023 meeting as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Galliher reported that he received a letter of interest to join our Committee from Candy Galeucia. A motion was made and seconded to recommend her appointment to our Committee. The motion passed unanimously and will be sent to the Select Board for their vote. Both boards must approve the appointment which is until the next election in May of 2023.

Chairman Galliher asked if anyone had any questions on the Accountant's report. Heather Brown mentioned two accounts that went over already Winter Roads and Board of Health. Chairman Galliher explained that the Select Board did vote to let the account go over, and it is the only account they can do that for. That typically happens every year because costs are so unpredictable depending on the weather. Bob will check into the BOH account, but said two properties are in the eviction process and can be costly with notices, and court dates. Bob will update the committee by email.

Bob reported that Jamie had one of the highway trucks towed to Springfield because of a problem in the rear end. Jamie was told they were going to start on it today and update him. He also reported that it cost \$1,200.00 to tow it. Jim Fox did look at it but thought it should be towed because of possible warranty issues.

Bob also reported that the compactor for the transfer station that has been on hold for several years, with some funds allocated, has now increased in price from approximately 35K to over 120K. The Committee discussed a cardboard compactor that may save us some money but there are pros and cons to doing that.

Bob went over some of the things discussed at the joint meeting last night with the Water/Sewer Commissioners (SB members), the W/S Committee, and Dave Prickett from DPC Consulting. We all recognize that costs are increasing, regular maintenance needs to be done and our Reserve Accounts need to be increased to address these anticipated costs.

Pittsfield just upgraded their facility and the costs will be shared by Dalton and Hinsdale. Pittsfield bills Dalton and Dalton bills Hinsdale. Rates need to be increased and the public will need to be made aware of that and why. Dave will go over all our data and report back as to how we prioritize and achieve those goals, including rate increases at a meeting of these same Committees on February 22, 2023 at 5:30 pm.

Bob reported that he has submitted the Grant request for the Fire Department Tanker. He is concerned if it will be accepted because the Financing is just a "proposal" and not a final approved document. He was also told that to secure that financing, they must have a VIN number. That number cannot be generated until the chassis is built. He is hoping that can be done by the Federal Fiscal year of September 30th.

The Assessors, Laura Galliher, Viv Mason and Bob Cimini were present to explain their request for a Reserve Fund Transfer of \$653. That is the amount that will be short for the Vision Software payment. The correct amount of \$7183. was requested but for an unknown reason, the old figure of \$6,530. was entered into the account making this billing shortfall. A motion was made and seconded to transfer \$653.00 from the Reserve Fund to the Assessors Vision Software account. The motion passed unanimously. The Assessors and the Committee discussed the issues with RRG our Assessing firm. They are working on these issues and the solutions going forward.

Heather Brown presented her Police Wage analysis report. This was not an easy process as some departments never got back to her. Chief Rathbun did reach out and was able to get some responses. Heather said it was hard to figure the base pay rate because each department has different incentives that are in addition to the base rate. Some are education, clothing, wellness, physical fitness, EMT, and First Responder that bump up the pay. Her spreadsheet includes the Town/City, population, average income, tax rates, area in square miles, Wages, Chief, Sargents, full time and part time officers. This report may help us determine how we move forward to increase our Police department wages. Our department is about in the middle of this analysis report.

Bonnie Conner, 7 Town School Advisory, explained some of the issues that Committee is dealing with and the frustration surrounding their inaction to date. Chairman Galliher explained what they are working on and why. It all centers around all Towns having a vote, as opposed to how they voted on the new school, simple majority. They had promised they would not do that again if we (the Town) withdrew the lawsuit, which we did. The advisory Committee with 2 members from each of the 7 towns is tasked with putting that promise in writing so it never happens again. It has been 2 years already and nothing has been done. Their meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 15, 2023 and also on Zoom.

Chairman Galliher reported that the School Committee Budget has increased 6% and a meeting to present that is scheduled and can be accessed on line. He encouraged everyone to attend or review it on line.

Chairman Galliher and Bob explained that Jamie Callahan, Road Superintendent, has located and gotten quotes to replace the small excavator. The SB met with Jamie and agreed that he can move forward with that purchase with CH 90 funds. He will get 35K in trade for our old one.

Bob reported that a State Inspector was here to inspect the boiler room and discovered there is no CO detector there. Bob asked why that wasn't discovered on 10 other yearly inspections done by this same inspector. There was no clear answer but one is now in there.

Bob also reported that our Ambulance service is having trouble getting and retaining EMTs. That seems to be happening everywhere and we will need to see what we can do going forward in order to retain this service. Currently, Hinsdale had over 300 calls, some answered by Lanesborough, Becket, Windsor, County and Action Ambulances. Of the 170 Hinsdale was able to answer, Dan Brown (Hinsdale Fireman and EMT) responded to 168 of them. This is not sustainable by one person, we need to do something.

Bob reported that the Budget process has started and all requests should be submitted by February 17th. He will be sending that information to everyone. Our Saturday meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2023 beginning at 8:30 am in the meeting room at Town Hall. The Budget should be completed by mid April to be ready for the Annual Town Meeting May 10, 2023 at 7:00 pm at Kittredge School. The election is

the following Saturday, May 13, 2023 at Town Hall.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 8:00 pm, the motion passed unanimously. The next regular meeting of this Committee is Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the downstairs Community room at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Rice, Secretary