

HOLLISTON FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
January 7, 2014

The Committee convened in Room 105 at the Town Hall at 7:37 PM. Present from the Committee were Chairman Ken Szajda, Vice Chairperson Michelle Zeamer, Dan Alfred, Bill Dowd, Beth Liberty and Brendan Shea. Charlie Kaslow was absent.

1. Minutes – December 10, 2013 – The committee reviewed the draft minutes. Bill Dowd is going to make some revisions and present them for approval at the next meeting.
2. Reserve Fund Transfer Request – The Committee reviewed a request for a Reserve Fund Transfer for the Tree Warden. (Attachment I) Ken Szajda explained that the Tree Warden had identified additional trees in need of removal and that the Highway Department was no longer able to do the work. The money would be used to hire outside contractors to remove the identified trees. Moved by Michelle Zeamer, seconded by Dan Alfred to approve a Reserve Fund transfer request in the amount of \$10,000 to Organization Number 01420 and Object number 52024. Six in favor, none opposed, no abstentions. The motion passed.
3. Stone Report invoice. Ken Szajda asked for consideration of payment of the final invoice from Stone Consulting for the compensation and benefits study. The amount of the invoice is \$5,200. Bill Dowd expressed his opinion that the report was unsatisfactory. Ken Szajda pointed out that in the future, greater care should be taken in crafting a consulting RFP. Bill Dowd also pointed out that the project took significantly more time than anticipated. Moved by Michelle Zeamer, Seconded by Dan Alfred to approve payment of the \$5,200 invoice from Stone Consulting. Six in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.
4. FY 15 Budget Liaisons – Ken Szajda reviewed the liaison assignments to determine assignments for new member Brendan Shea. Ken will make adjustments and circulate a revised list to the Committee.
5. FY15 Budget review schedule. Ken Szajda opened a conversation about the schedule for FY15 budget reviews. There was a consensus that longer Tuesday meetings were preferable to Saturdays. There was also a consensus that budget reviews be concluded by the end of March. Ken agreed to work up a schedule for departments to come in over an eight-week period to meetings that begin at 6:30PM. There was also a discussion about rescheduling the All Boards Meeting. Thursday January 16 was agreed. The FinCom guideline, liaison assignments and review schedule would be presented that time. Bill Dowd pointed out that given the Selectmen's intention to present its department's budgets to the FinCom, FinCom members should be sure to circulate concerns or questions as soon as possible so that those meetings are as productive as possible. The FY15 budget guideline memo was distributed to members. Bill Dowd expressed concern about the fact that unlike prior years, the Town Administrator, not the FinCom, was setting the wage increase percent. Following a discussion,

- the draft language was left unchanged. Ken suggested that members review the back section of the May 2013 FinCom report and come to next week's meeting with suggestions for changes/deletions/additions.
6. Pension Plan concerns – Bill Dowd had raised concerns about the Town's deteriorating pension plan funded status. Paul LeBeau had supplied the Committee with some background data. (Attachment II) Bill expressed his concern that the plan was being managed by a Board predominantly made up of plan participants. This Board was making decisions and changing assumptions in ways that benefitted participants and increased costs. Paul reviewed the Mass General Laws provisions on the composition of the Board. Bill also expressed concerns about oversight of the determination of certain assumptions on benefit elections by participants. Paul LeBeau stated that over the last several years the Town has increased its reserves, set aside funding for OPEB, secured approval for an OPEB Trust, committed to an OPEB funding schedule and secured a higher bond rating, all of which gives the Town credibility in discussing long term liabilities for retirement and OPEB. Bill indicated that he would do more looking into this, and may return to the FinCom for a further discussion.
 7. FinCom Website – Ken Szajda reviewed the history of the development of the FinCom website by a former member. When that member left, the site was not updated. Bill Dowd suggested the site be shut down, as it is incorrect and way out of date. He also suggested that the FinCom move all web content to the Town's website. He further suggested that other Town departments currently paying for separately hosted website be urged to move that content onto the Town's site as well. Paul LeBeau explained that many of those sites had been developed by volunteers back when the Town's site was very limited. He thought that forcing volunteers to abandon their work and force a content move to the Town's website might be difficult. Ken agreed to be the contact point for content that FinCom members would like to add to the FinCom website.
 8. Capital – This discussion was postponed until the next meeting.
 9. Police/Fire Communications – Paul LeBeau advised the Committee that the Police and Fire communications equipment on the cell tower near the High School was in need of updating/replacement. He informed the Committee that the work would be proceeding and funded from the Emergency Management Revolving Fund.
 10. Recording Secretary – There are no candidates. Paul LeBeau suggested that the deadline on the posting be revised to "until filled". Moved by Dan Alfred, seconded by Michelle Zeamer to repost the Recording Secretary's job and indicate that deadline is "until filled". Six in favor, none opposed, no abstentions. The motion passed.
 11. Adjournment – At 9:40 PM, Moved by Dan Alfred, Seconded by Michelle Zeamer to adjourn. Six in favor, none opposed, no abstentions.

Approved __January 28, 2014_____