

HOLLISTON FINANCE COMMITTEE
JUNE 27, 2013
MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 7:35PM.

In attendance: Ken Szajda, Michelle Zeamer, Dan Alfred, Bill Dowd
Absent: Charles Kaslow, Michelle Johnson

A Selectmen's meeting was also called to order at 7:35 PM. In attendance was Chairman Jay Leary and Kevin Conley. Jay Marsden was absent.

Minutes: Michelle Zeamer moved, seconded by Dan Alfred that the minutes of June 11, 2013 be approved as submitted. Four in favor, none opposed, none abstaining.

Transfers:

1. Margaret Fitzpatrick appeared to present a request for a line item transfer in the amount of \$2,025.50. She explained that the transfer was necessary due to the fact that the FY13 budget utilized a gift account to cover departmental expenses. It was not known until late in the year exactly how much would be needed. She explained that this situation will not re-occur in FY14 because the budget had been funded with Town funds. Mr. Dowd asked if the funds had already been expended. Ms. Fitzpatrick responded that yes they had. Mr. Dowd pointed out that due to the late date in the fiscal year, it appeared that there really was no room for discussion or debate and that the FinCom has no choice but to approve this and all other line item transfer requests. Mr. Szajda acknowledged that was true for this year because many of the requests had been intentionally delayed to year-end to see if, or how much was actually needed. In addition, Mr. Szajda pointed out that most of the departments seeking line item transfers had advised the FinCom of that potential earlier in the year. Mr. Dowd suggested that line item transfer requests be handled differently going forward to avoid the mandatory approval by the FinCom and Mr. Szajda agreed. Moved by Michelle Zeamer, Seconded by Dan Alfred to approve the transfer of \$2,025.50 from Organization 01542, 52170 to 52100, Personal Services.
2. Chief Moore appeared to present a request for a line item transfer in the amount of \$1,228 for supply expenses such as paper, portable radio batteries, ammo cleaning supplies and janitorial supplies. Moved by Michelle Zeamer, Seconded by Dan Alfred to approve the transfer of \$1,228 from Organization 01210, 53031 Vehicle Repairs to 54000 Supplies.
3. Paul LeBeau, Town Administrator explained a line item transfer request from the Treasurer/Collector in the amount of \$400. The funds were used to purchase toner and print cartridges which were more costly than anticipated. Moved by Michelle Zeamer, Seconded by Dan Alfred to approve the transfer of \$400 from Organization 01138, 52150 to 54200 Office Supplies.

4. A request for a line item transfer in the amount of \$433.42 from the Library was considered. The need for the transfer was because there is no longer a Library Supply Cooperative. That resulted in higher quantities needed for discounts as well as higher shipping charges.
5. A request for a line item transfer in the amount of \$3,356.52 from the Town Clerk was considered. The need arose because of the extra cost of programming the voting machines for the additional elections. The request was Organization 01162 Elections from Object 54200 to Object 52190.
6. A request for a line item transfer in the amount of \$83.75 from the Conservation Commission was considered. The need for the transfer was the result of a calculation error on the Conservation Agent's salary. The budget was set up for 52 weeks and there were actually 52.149 weeks in the fiscal year.
7. A request for a line item transfer in the amount of \$15,000 from the Fire Chief was considered. Mr. Szajda reported that based on a conversation with the Chief, there had been several vehicle and facility repairs during the fiscal year that were not anticipated. Some of these events were several months ago. Mr. Szajda communicated to the Fire Chief that it is important for the FinCom to be advised on a contemporaneous basis when such events occur so that they do not surprise the Committee at year-end. Mr. Alfred expressed a concern at the relatively large unexpended balance in personal services. Mr. Leary replied that since the expenditure of those funds is the result of fire call-outs, a lower call-out rate could result in lower payroll expenses. Moved by Michelle Zeamer, Seconded by Dan Alfred to approve a line item transfer in the amount of \$15,000 from Organization 01220, 51000 Personal Services to 53000 Repairs.
8. A request for a reserve fund transfer in the amount of \$400 from the Planning Board was considered. Mr. Szajda reported on a conversation he'd had with Karen Sherman. It appears the legal expenses for which funds are being sought relate to an appeal of a Planning Board action. Since the Planning Board budget does not have funds for legal expenses, when they are incurred, Reserve Fund transfers are typically required. In this case, the legal expenses related to an appeal that the Board was advised against by Town Counsel. Further, Mr. Dowd pointed out that the legal services invoice attached to the request is in the amount of \$650, not \$400. Further, he also noted that the "Explanation" section of the request form is completely blank. Ms. Zeamer inquired if the legal action was against the Planning Board or each individual member of which one is her husband. Not knowing the answer, she opted to abstain from the discussion. Mr. Alfred expressed his disapproval of the request. After discussion, no action was taken.
9. A request for a reserve fund transfer in the amount of \$245.29 from the FinCom was considered. Mr. Szajda reported that the cause of this request was that the FinCom's secretary is also employed by the School Dept. On occasion, her hours with the FinCom were at time-and-one-half overtime due to payroll rules. This means that the budget at straight time was not sufficient. Mr. Dowd pointed out that like the Planning Board request, the

explanation section was blank. Mr. Szajda filled it in. Moved by Michelle Zeamer, Seconded by Dan Alfred to approve a Reserve Fund transfer in the amount of \$245.29 from the Reserve Fund to Organization 01131, 50070 Personal Services.

10. Three requests for Reserve Fund transfers related to snow and ice removal were considered. Mr. Szajda explained that while these costs may be rolled over into the next fiscal year, if the Reserve Fund at the fiscal year end is sufficient, the Town typically covers any excess expenses from the Reserve Fund. Moved by Bill Dowd, Seconded by Dan Alfred to approve Reserve Fund transfer requests as follows:

All from Reserve Fund to Organization 01421, Snow and Ice

To Object 50135, \$3,917.19

To Object 52200, \$23,155.56

To Object 5421, \$8,884.48

At the conclusion of the discussion on transfers, Mr. Leary inquired if the FinCom really intended to not approve the Planning Board request, the result of which would be that a vendor who provided services in good faith would go unpaid until the fall when it would be put to Town Meeting as an unpaid bill. Mr. Dowd acknowledged that Mr. Leary had made a good point and Moved to approve the Planning Board Reserve Fund Transfer request in the amount of \$400 to Organization 01172, 52190. Mr. Szajda Seconded the motion. Mr. Alfred was still opposed. Two in favor; Szajda and Dowd. One Opposed; Alfred. One abstention: Zeamer. The motion carried. Mr. Szajda said that he would prepare a letter to the Planning Board expressing the FinCom's reservations about both the content and process problems with their request and circulate it to the full FinCom.

Comp and Benefits study

Mr. Leary reported that the School Committee was not able to join the meeting as had been planned. It was decided to postpone the discussion on the Comp and Ben study to a later date when the School Committee could be represented.

Water Dept.:

Mr. Szajda observed that the Water Dept. had recently held a hearing to consider a 9% rate increase. Mr. Szajda reiterated that the Water rate revenue covers the Water Dept. budget and reminded all that the FinCom has expressed reservations about the Water Dept.'s finances for at least the last three years. Mr. Dowd commented that he had not received any responses to the several questions he posed to the Water Dept. back on June 19. He asked if anyone knew how the hearing concluded. Mr. Leary reported that the Board had actually voted a 15% rate increase. When Mr. Dowd asked the basis for such a change, Mr. Leary responded

that it was in fact the result of one of Mr. Dowd's questions about the depletion of Water Surplus. Mr. Alfred suggested that the conversation would be more effective if the Water Commissioners were in attendance. Mr. Dowd asked about the allocation of the OPEB appropriation to the Water Dept. in the very same way other benefit costs are allocated. Mr. LeBeau confirmed that the Water Dept. was not allocated a portion of that appropriation FY 14; there was an allocation in FY 13. It was agreed to continue this discussion to a future meeting at which the Water Commissioners were present.

Next Meeting:

After checking calendars, July 16 was chosen as the next meeting date.

Adjournment:

At 9:30 PM, Moved by Dan Alfred, Seconded by Bill Dowd to adjourn the meeting. All in favor.

Approved 11/19/13