

Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 24, 2020 - 7:00PM

* Virtual Meeting*

Present: Christi Andersen, Roland Bourdon, Jason Cole, Mike Majors, Steve Noone, Sahana Purohit, Christine Russell, Dave Wellinghoff, Adam Nolde, Esha Gangolli (Associate)

Ms. Andersen called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM via a virtual meeting with no Committee members in physical attendance and broadcasted via Zoom and Acton TV.

1. Citizen's Concerns

There were no comments from the public.

2. Minuteman Athletic Fields

Dr. Ed Bouquillon, Superintendent of Minuteman Vocational Technical High School presented a 15 slide powerpoint presentation that was well received

Mr. Cole and Ms. Purohit questioned the approval process requiring a special Town Meeting. The answer is that if one member of Town disapproves, then the project is defeated.

3. ALG Update

Mr. Noone shared concerns about the ALG process being moved back and that FinCom's responsibility is to do a long-term plan. Mr. Noone further noted the \$10m in total deficits being displayed in the outer years in the multi-year ALG Plan.

Ms. Andersen commented on FinCom preparing their own 3-year plan as outer years in the ALG Plan come down to the last ALG meeting to discuss.

Mr. Noone commented that he does not want to abandon the ALG process but FinCom has responsibility for a long-term plan. There needs to be a harder look at where spending will be.

Ms. Russell commented that the ALG Plan is getting worse in outer years and that more precision and thought is needed.

4. Reserve Policy discussion

Discussion of Town reserves and the concept of Revolving Funds, Enterprise Funds, and the ABRSD Capital Stabilization Fund. Ms. Russell displayed Mr. Noone's slide on reserves.

Jason Cole does not like 10% ceiling, he's OK with 3% floor.

Discussion of \$2.9m in reserves in Town Enterprise Funds.

Discussion of capital and/or subsidy for the Ambulance Enterprise Fund and the Transportation Enterprise Fund.

Ms. Andersen commented on reviewing Enterprise Fund budgets and 5 year plans. Roland Bourdon and Sahana Purohit commented on reserve policy.

Ms. Russell stated that the Enterprise Fund reserves should not be subject to FinCom reserve policy recommendation. Steve Noone commented on the difficulties in accessing these types of reserves.

Mr. Cole expressed concerns of the Town being over reserved and that "warchesting" will occur.

Mr. Cole gave several examples of questionable spending, in his opinion, including:

- Small Business Grants
- Francis Faulkner Room 204 Bathroom upgrade
- Asa Parlin house renovations
- North Acton Fire Station
- Walker Property

Mr. Majors commented that any numbers we use now are just a guess. We must run some numbers.

Mr. Cole agreed to a 3% reserve floor and commented that this is the year for Tax Relief and it's time to sharpen the pencil. Ms. Russell did not agree.

Mr. Noone commented that the Town has overtaxed and overspent

Ms. Andersen commented that the POV is the most important thing we do

Ms. Russell reviewed the Draft POV. The unemployment rate may have dropped but may not stay low in the future

The Committee reviewed the POV slides.

There was some general commentary.

Ms Russell will do some editing.

Mr. Cole commented that reserves are too high and that reserves should be used to mitigate a rainy day

POV discussion tabled until December 8th

August 8, 2020 meeting minutes were approved, with one change from Mr. Bourdon. All approved, with Adam Nolde abstaining.

Under Committee reports:

- Beaver Dam on Town property

Ms. Purohit commented on the tremendous BoS updates we have been receiving from Selectman Benson. Also reported that Main Street is the site of the Dog Park

Mr. Noone commented on HIT rate hike meeting on December 3rd

Planning Board opposed to Elm Street development

Committee adjourned by a vote of all ayes at 8:56pm