

Minutes – Acton Finance Committee
May 26, 2009, 7:30 p.m.
Town Hall

Pursuant to a notice duly posted with the Town Clerk and with a quorum of members present, the Acton Finance Committee convened at 7:30 p.m. on May 26, 2009 to review various matters.

Members present for the meeting: Herman Kabakoff, Chair, Maryann Ashton, Vice Chair, Pat Clifford, Pat Easterly, Bob Evans, Bill Mullin, Kent Sharp, Doug Tindal, Steve Noone and Associate Member Brandy Brandon.

Chairman Herman Kabakoff called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Public Participation

None.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of March 24, April 8 and May 12 were all approved unanimously.

Introduction of Karen Kucala

Mr. Kabakoff announced that Ms. Karen Kucala, recently appointed Town Accountant, will now be acting as liaison to the Finance Committee. The major function of this position is to facilitate communication with Town Hall, especially with respect to data gathering. Mr. Kabakoff was thrilled and hopeful that this role would aid our efforts. Mr. Mullin cautioned that this liaison position should not act as a substitute for FinCom members doing their own research and analysis and all agreed that it should be so. Committee members welcomed Ms. Kukala and wished her well.

Town 3rd Quarter Results

Town Manager Steve Ledoux and Finance Director Steve Barrett presented 3rd quarter results. Bottom line is that the Town is running about a \$720k deficit, comprised mainly of \$120k in state revenue cuts and \$550k reduction in local revenue. Offsetting this deficit is about a \$500k reduction in fy09 expenses, leaving a gap. The Town is looking at various options. Snow and ice is approximately \$200k over budget, which can be rolled to next fiscal year if need be. Mr. Ledoux said that no final plan is in place. Just to state the obvious, he said that there would be no “year-end” spending.

Finance Committee Assignments and Meeting Schedules

Chairman Kabakoff delivered 1) a list of assignments and 2) a proposed meeting schedule. All concurred with the list of assignments. Some general discussion followed about the meeting schedule and, specifically, that there are some Fall conflicts with the Planning Board. The Chair said he would resolve the conflicts.

Flint/Tuttle Sewer Discussion

Mr. Sharp presented findings from his investigation of the Flint/Tuttle Sewer proposal that is slated for a Special Town Meeting at the end of June. Mr. Mullin tried to clarify that, 1) now, no significant Town-wide funds are in the plan and 2) the NPV of the interest rate subsidy from the stimulus funding made the net subsidy substantially greater than the 8.8% previously mentioned. Mr. Evans focused on the issue of equity of payment and asked to be shown why it is appropriate to have different prices for essentially the same service (sewer betterment) in different parts of town and at differing times of creation. Mr. Tindal focused on the notion that an important part of the approval of sewers was that the Town would bear little or no expense, as the benefit is for only a few people and not for the whole Town. Several members desired more precise cash flow information, as well as full financials. Members also wanted to better understand the plan for repayment of “supersizing” the system. As well, Ms. Easterly and Mr. Evans sought to get “a global picture” of the status of sewers in Acton. Ms. Ann Chang of the Sewer Action Committee offered to put together this information.

Mr. Kabakoff stated that we should probably be prepared to vote at the next meeting.

Committee Reports

Normal reports of committees were discussed briefly.

Motion and Vote: Ms. Easterly reported from the Acton Public Schools with respect to the Douglas at Dawn program. As per law, any expenditure above the limit previously approved must be voted by FinCom. This has no impact on Town finances, as the funds are raised through the program. Mr. Noone moved “To amend the level of spending for the Douglas at Dawn program in FY 09 from \$206,500 to \$250,000”. Mr. Mullin seconded. The vote was unanimous, excepting Mr. Sharp, who abstained.

Adjourned

Mr. Sharp moved to adjourn (seconded by Ms. Clifford) and the meeting was adjourned sometime at 9.38pm.

Respectfully submitted by William C. Mullin, Clerk.