

MINUTES

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting: February 23, 2022

Present: Jerry Cerasale, Chair; Steve Cole, Vice-Chair; Mary Shaw, Clerk; Roy Merolli; George Deptula; Tom Gardner; Peter Wade; Rick Knight; Russ French (arrived 5:04); Jacqui Beebe, Town Administrator; Art Autorino, Select Board Representative; Rich Bienvenue, Assistant Town Administrator/Finance Director; Silvio Genoa, Director of Public Works; Adam Bohannon, Police Chief.

Members Absent: None

Jerry Cerasale called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM. This is a remote meeting via Zoom.

- **Approval of Minutes**

- Deferred to begin next agenda item.
- Addressed @ 6:41 pm.
 - Regarding the 2/9/22 draft meeting minutes George Deptula offered the following amendments:
 - Pg. 2, under the bullet for Finance Committee submitted questions to Fire Department, sub-bullet should read “Staffing of ambulance runs, and amount of time spent at the hospital.”
 - Next meeting date should be 2/16/22, and Russ French arrived at 5:15pm.
 - Motion by Mary Shaw to accept the minutes of 2/9/22 as amended, 2nd by Rick Knight. Roll call vote was unanimous. 9-0-0
 - Regarding the 2/16/22 draft meeting minutes the following amendments were offered: Add Silvio Genoa, DPW Director as an attendee; add next meeting date of 2/23/22.
 - Motion by Mary Shaw to accept the minutes of 2/16/22 as amended, 2nd by Rick Knight. Roll call vote was unanimous. 9-0-0.

- **Discussion of Town Budget for Police & Dispatch, & Water Enterprise.**

- Police Chief Adam Bohannon provided an update of the Police Department activities for the past year and addressed how the upcoming budget provides for existing services and addresses anticipated needs, including the upcoming accreditation process.
- Discussion and questions from Committee members on the Chief’s presentation.
 - Jerry Cerasale asked/discussed the issue of staffing and the number of officers on a shift at different times during the year. And inquired about the training officers receive and our ability to recoup training costs if/when they leave. Chief Bohannon explained the costs involved and that we do get repaid for the cost of the program, but not all costs.
 - George Deptula inquired about the effect of being fully accredited. Chief Bohannon explained that assures the community that not only certain policies and best practices are in place, but that they are also being followed and part of the departments operations.
 - Rick Knight inquired about whether the costs of the School Resource Officer are reimbursed. Chief Bohannon explained that roughly 50% of the cost of the SRO’s salary is reimbursed by the Nauset District.

- Roy Merolli inquired about the accreditation process and the involvement of outside assessments. Chief Bohannon explained that the Mass. Accreditation Commission does perform independent assessments as part of the process and that records retention and evidence room practices are part of that review.
- Mary Shaw inquired about:
 - the availability of the PD generator and the reason for the generator failure. Chief Bohannon explained the PD has its own generator and the reasons for the failure during the last storm.
 - Mary Shaw thanked the Chief for his frequent updates via the “Code Red” system and inquired about the number of people subscribed. Chief Bohannon explained the number of people reached via the system (approximately 8,000 phone numbers), how to sign-up, and the various ways the system provides communication, other than just land-line phones.
 - Mary Shaw also inquired about the funding of the Animal Control Officer. Chief Bohannon explained that \$30,000 is included as an expense item, which is paid to Wellfleet as part of an intermunicipal agreement to share this service.
 - Mary Shaw inquired about changes in the budget related to the Taser Program. Chief Bohannon explained how the request for new Taser’s are a significant improvement in the product and technology, and explained how the budget changes represent a change from an ownership model to an lease/operational model that provides for regular maintenance, battery and technology updates on an ongoing basis.
 - Mary Shaw inquired about the retention of police officers and is there anything we can do to improve employee retention? Chief Bohannon explained that our salary levels are competitive, but that housing is an issue. The biggest loss in recent years is that the summer police officer program is no longer feasible and used to be the biggest recruitment tool. Additionally, Mary inquired about the feasibility of regionalization of services. Chief Bohannon replied that there are opportunities to share services.
- Silvio Genoa presented an update of the Water Enterprise Fund Budget and on the status of the water project and number of connections that have been made or pending.
- Rich Bienvenue indicated that the budget is anticipated to be funded by water rates. Alternatively, an option is to utilize water fund retained earnings in lieu of revenues.
 - Steve Cole inquired about the involvement of the Department of Revenue in the tax rate setting process. Rich Bienvenue explained their role and indicated that surplus water rates become Water Retained Earnings, similar to Free Cash, but for the Water Fund. Water Retained Earnings typically are used to fund the eventual Water Capital Plan.
 - Steve Cole inquired about the shared costs between the general fund and the water fund. Rich Bienvenue indicated that the current budget does not provide for funding any costs included in the general fund, nor for any indirect cost allocation. However, as we near completion of build out, this issue will become more relevant as the impact could perhaps become greater. Typically, most communities identify that there are costs and charges between each fund that essentially net each other out.
 - Mary Shaw inquired about who would be handling in-house billing of water billing, if implemented. Silvio Genoa explained how the water department

would handle the work. Rich Bienvenue added how the Finance Department would approach the process and provide for appropriate level of internal control.

- Russ French inquired about the percentage of commercial properties connected vs. residential, which turned into a discussion about methods of charging water rates and providing for higher use in the summer season. Water rate study as we approach build out is in order.
- Mary Shaw inquired about the number of applicants for the connection betterment process. This process and associated regulations are in development and will be approved by the Select Board.
- Peter Wade inquired about PFAS/PFOS and water quality. Silvio Genoa answered that Eastham has received a clean water award for 2021 and continues to pass several various tests that are ongoing and that to date no PFAS/PFOS or other contaminants have been detected. Discussion regarding communication related to the successes of the water system.

- **Discussion of Finance Committee Letter for Town Warrant.**

- Action/discussion on Finance Committee letter deferred.

- **Vote on Finance Committee Appointment.**

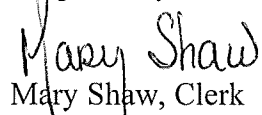
- Item deferred to discuss upcoming Committee meeting schedule under new business.
- Returned to this agenda item at 6:36 pm.
- Roy Merolli recused himself from the discussion on the Finance Committee appointment.
- Motion by Steve Cole, 2nd by Rick Knight to nominate Roy Merolli as the Finance Committee appointment to the Finance Committee effective July 1, 2022. Roll Call Vote: 8-0-0 (Merolli recused).

- **New Business**

- Jerry discussed upcoming schedule and dates. Consensus is to not hold a meeting on 3/1/22 and have next meeting on 3/9/22 at 5:00pm. Upcoming education budget review on March 16, 2022 – invite to the Select Board to attend.

- **Adjourn** – Motion by Steve Cole to adjourn the meeting, 2nd by Russ French. Roll call vote 9-0-0, approved. Meeting adjourned at 6:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Mary Shaw, Clerk

