

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
September 15, 2018 – 9:00 a.m.
Long Pond Water Treatment Plant, Gifford Street

APPROVED MINUTES

Present: Keith Schwegel, Nick Lowell, Susan P. Smith, Kathleen Beriau, Joseph (Dutch) L. Drolette, Mary Harris, Peter Hargraves, Judith P. Magnani, Deborah D. Maguire, Jim Marnell

Absent: Ron Dyer, Wendy Vogel

Public Present: None

1. WELCOME

Keith Schwegel opened the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

2. MEETING AGENDA DETAIL

Keith Schwegel began the discussion about the Open Meeting Law regarding Agendas.

The Committee discussed at length the Law and how it applies to the following:

- When to post Agendas
- Agenda Detail requested
- Subcommittees, working groups and single member comparisons
- Complaints filed and how they are handled

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS BEFORE OR AFTER FINCOM MEETINGS

The Committee discussed whether they should move the “Public Comment” Agenda item to the beginning of the meeting, rather than continuing to put it at the end.

4. COMMITTEE MEETING VENUE, DATE AND TIME

The Committee discussed moving the day and time of the meetings. They also discussed whether they would continue to hold them in the same location. The Committee will consider changing the meetings to Wednesdays, with no change in time starting with the Spring Operating Budget after the first of the year.

Keith Schwegel also informed the Committee that their usual venue, the Old Water Department Room in Town Hall, would not be available due to Early Voting on Oct 23rd, Oct 30th and Nov 6th. If the Committee needs to meet on those dates, the meetings will be held at the Gus Canty Community Center.

5. COMMITTEE MEETING CANCELLATION POLICY

The Committee discussed how they would handle inclement weather cancellations. It was agreed that the Committee Chair would notify Committee Members by phone by 5:00 or 6:00 pm on the night of the meeting if it was necessary to cancel.

6. TOWN MEETING AFTER ACTION

The Committee discussed whether they would like to have regular “after-action” meetings after each Town Meeting. It was agreed that they would continue to have these meetings.

7. GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

Keith Schwegel approached the Committee about possibly creating a set of objectives and steps to achieve them as a sort of standard operating procedure for the Committee. The Committee discussed and agreed to allow Keith to write it up and review.

8. PROPOSED CHARTER REVISIONS

Keith Schwegel addressed the current Charter Review Process. The Committee discussed suggested changes as written in a handout that was distributed in the September 11th meeting titled 'Charter Review Recommendations pertaining to the Finance Committee'.

Three Committee members met previously and discussed ideas for changes to be presented to the Charter Review Committee at a later date.

Nick Lowell began the discussion, noting that there are two categories to Charter Review changes; housekeeping to reflect reality (for example, switching the Town Meeting agendas to match the actual schedule) and those that are more detailed and involve policy.

Keith suggested starting the discussion with the housekeeping items.

Topics 1, 2 and 9 involved changed wording and dates for Annual Town Meetings to reflect how they are currently occurring. The Committee agreed with all of these items.

Topic 3 proposed interjecting the Finance Committee into the approval process, in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen, for the Budget Process. Mary Harris explained that the purpose of a joint meeting would include the Committee in the approval process of the Annual Budget. Keith Schwegel commented that he believed that this was in conflict with the Finance Committee's current role, to evaluate the Annual Budget.

Mary Harris suggested removing the wording of "being briefed before the policy is approved" would be more acceptable.

Nick Lowell moved the suggested change

Dutch Drolette seconded

All in favor

Topic 4 proposed including the Finance Committee in the Charter. The Committee is not currently included in the "Elected Committees" roster. The Committee discussed the changed.

Keith Schwegel suggested adding that the Town Moderator should review the language of all changes before submitting them to the Charter Review Committee.

Nick Lowell made a motion for Peter Hargraves to add the suggestion

Deborah Maguire seconded

All in favor

Topic 5 proposed including the Finance Committee in a briefing on new contract negotiations. The Committee discussed the proposal noting that it is outside of the Finance Committee's purview and that all contract negotiations are done in Executive Session which are not available for comment.

Nick Lowell made a motion to indefinitely postpone the proposal

Deborah Maguire seconded

All but Peter Hargraves in favor.

Topic 6 proposed changed the number of required members of the Committee from fifteen to eleven.

Nick Lowell made a motion to accept the proposal as printed

Judy Magnani seconded

All in favor

Topic 7 proposed the allowance of Finance Committee members to hold positions on other appointed Committees, which is currently prohibited. The Committee discussed the proposal.

Deborah Maguire moved for indefinite postponement

Dutch Drolette seconded

All but Peter Hargraves and Nick Lowell in favor

Topic 8 proposed interjecting the Finance Committee into the issuance of the Budget Policy. There was a discussion about the Committee's purpose as published and how this would affect the proposal.

Nick Lowell moved the proposal as written

Judy Magnani seconded

All but Deborah Maguire and Kathleen Beriau in favor

Topic 10 was in support of a previous proposal that was indefinitely postponed

Nick Lowell moved to indefinitely postpone the proposal

Susan Smith seconded

All in favor

9. COMMITTEE REPORT TO TOWN MEETING ON STATE OF TOWN FINANCIAL CONDITION

Keith Schwegel proposed presenting a State of Financial Condition at the Annual Town Meeting for the Operating Budget. The group discussed how it would be presented and what benchmarks would be used.

Nick Lowell moved the proposal

All in favor

10. FINANCE COMMITTEE SUPPORT/EXPLANATION FOR ITS RECOMMENDATIONS AT TOWN MEETING

Keith Schwegel addressed whether the Committee would be amenable to opposing amendments to Articles already recommended, and if the Finance Committee should be more vocal at Town Meetings. The Committee discussed and agreed that in certain cases, it may be beneficial for a representative to speak on its behalf.

He also addressed that he would be speaking to David Vieria (Town Moderator) about the process for writing explanations and recommendations for the Warrant.

11. SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE-PROCESS/PERMISSIONS

Keith Schwegel discussed the distinction of speaking on behalf of the Finance Committee versus as a private citizen on matters presented at Town Meeting. Committee members should represent the Committee's vote if speaking on its behalf. If speaking as a private citizen, affiliation with the Committee should not be interjected.

12. DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET PRESENTATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE

Keith Schwegel proposed having Department heads attend the Committee meetings for certain budget items

13. RESERVE FUND ANALYSIS

The Committee discussed how Reserve Fund Transfers are currently being handled and what procedural changes that they would like to see. Keith Schwegel indicated he would have a discussion with the Town Manager about this process.

14. OTHER BUSINESS

None

15. ADJOURN

Dutch Drolette moved to adjourn at 12:02pm

Susan Smith seconded

All in favor