

HAMILTON FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of Meeting
November 1, 2017

Members Present: Darcy Dale, John Pruellage, Phil Stearns, Nick Tensen, and David Wanger (Chair)

Others Present: Allison Jenkins, Jeff Hubbard (Selectmen), Marisa Batista (Finance Director) and Jane Dooley (Assessor's Office).

This Hamilton Finance and Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm at the Public Safety Building.

Public Comments

None.

Discussion regarding Warrant Article 2-10 (Town Clerk compensation) and voting on recommendation for STM.

David Wanger commented about the e-mail documentation that had been sent and received since the previous meeting. According to Mr. Wanger, the first e-mails were positive but then became more negative. Despite the declining positivity, Mr. Wanger thought there might be potential for positive momentum. John Pruellage was enlisted to join Mr. Wanger in moving the conversation in that direction. Mr. Wanger thought that all the elements that were on Allison Jenkins' draft had been agreed to except for time off for necessity. Once relationships were restored, the episodes would be worked out, but that was not a sufficient assurance for an agreement. Ms. Jenkins had shown grace and sensitivity and Andrea Carlsen had perceptions that could be overcome by further discussion. Mr. Wanger engaged Bill Wilson and Michael Lombardo, which eventually culminated in a meeting Monday afternoon before the Selectmen's meeting.

Mr. Lombardo reportedly agreed to become further engaged and met with Ms. Carlsen on the day of the meeting. The last issue had been resolved to a point that Article 2-10 would be subject to a recommendation of no action. The agreement set forth a measurable structure going forward to determine if there would be issues in the future.

David Wanger said it was a public issue. The status quo had a superstructure of understanding as to elements such as record keeping for attendance with a full time return date as a salaried position. Mr. Wanger noted there was not a great deal of time to find a solution and that he was concerned regarding a public display of issues that would be better left private. Clear expectations would be established. If the outline was not adhered to, the topic would need to be looked at in a more stringent approach at April Town Meeting. Nick Tensen wondered if the position might be better as an hourly position. Mr. Wanger viewed the solution as an interim step to gain stability.

Jeff Hubbard said avoiding public discussion regarding an employee on leave was a positive

approach. John Pruellage added that if a change was eminent, it should be conducted at the beginning of the fiscal year. Jane Dooley asked if the Town Clerk was planning on agreeing in writing, to which David Wanger responded the agreement would be via e-mail. Ms. Dooley wondered if the recording of time off would occur. Allison Jenkins responded that reporting would be for exceptions (time off) similar to other Department Heads. No leisure time absence would be available for FY18, but tracking for time off for family illness would be allowed. Ms. Dooley and the Committee agreed that the taxpayers deserved to have a full time Town Clerk. The Committee would meet at 8:30 am before Town Meeting to vote with the Selectmen.

Allison Jenkins stated that if the change to Town Clerk hours was not moved forward at STM, she would move it forward at ATM.

Allison Jenkins wanted to discuss an e-mail from Darcy Dale, who wanted to go forward in reconciliation. Ms. Jenkins said she believed the e-mail had been directed to her character and that she was angry. Ms. Jenkins said she had shown the e-mail to others, who also reportedly thought it was a personal attack of her character. While Ms. Jenkins added that she intended on making the document public, Ms. Dale responded that it was already a public document. Ms. Dale also responded that she was sorry Ms. Jenkins felt the way she did.

Marisa Batista said the Town Clerk's absence had affected Town Hall morale. Ms. Batista said other employees were taking on the responsibilities without additional compensation. David Wanger said the FinCom had been alerted to the situation on October 10, 2017. John Pruellage said it was fair to look at the situation next year now that the framework had been set up for an objective way to consider the data. Ms. Batista said the Accounting Department could create a code to track attendance even though the position did not have sick, vacation, or personal time allotted to it. Nick Tensen added the tracking would be time out of the office.

David Wanger said Allison Jenkins stated she had brought the subject up last spring. John Pruellage said he recalled that Michael Lombardo said there was nothing he could last spring to offset absences of the Town Clerk, except have additional time for the Assistant Town Clerk. The Assistant position was posted as full time, while the previous assistant was not full time. The budget for FY18 had been increased for the assistant to become full time. Phil Stearns thought if the position was to become hourly, over time would be an issue as the position required long days around election time. Marisa Batista discussed making the position appointed rather than elected. Darcy Dale and Phil Stearns recalled that Ms. Jenkins said there could be tension in that the Town Clerk was responsible to the residents rather than the Town Manager if the position was elected as compared to being responsible to the Town Manager if the position was appointed.

Discussion regarding Warrant Article 2-8 (Capital Stabilization Fund), including vote to reconsider recommendation for STM.

David Wanger said the Selectmen had decided to recommend no action while the FinCom had previously recommended favorable action. To have the article without funding would be a useless endeavor even though everyone was in favor of the concept. The Selectmen wanted to get Financial Policies in place before setting up the fund. November 8, 2017 was the initial meeting for Financial Policies. Mr. Wanger was hoping for a reconsideration. Nick Tensen said there was no sense in creating friction at Town Meeting. John Pruellage and Darcy Dale agreed that confusion would not be a benefit. Phil Stearns recalled the previous discussions but was happy to wait until spring to set up the fund.

Motion to reconsider the FinCom vote made by Darcy Dale.

Seconded by John Pruellage.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Motion to recommend no action on 2-8 made by Nick Tensen.

the By-law or the validity of having a varied housing stock. It was agreed that the Planning Board had conducted a great amount of work, but John Pruellage announced that the Planning Board vote had not been unanimous in support. Mr. Tensen said he believed the Town should try the By-law as it was not different from a single family home and was approved via a special permit from the Planning Board. Darcy Dale recalled that Bill Wilson wanted to try one project and determine how positive it was and place a moratorium on the rest until the first was evaluated.

David Wanger said the FinCom had invited the Planning Board to its meeting to discuss the By-law, but no one else showed up to protest the proposal. The first time counter positions were heard was at the Board of Selectmen meeting. Mr. Wanger was impressed with Jeff Hubbard's presentation and also concerned about the inconsistency of materials, in particular the map.

Motion made by John Pruellage to reconsider recommendation for the Cottage Housing.
Darcy Dale seconded.

Vote: Majority in favor 4:1. Nick Tensen voting nay.

Motion to recommend no action on Cottage Housing made by John Pruellage.

Darcy Dale seconded.

Vote: Majority in favor 4:1. Nick Tensen voting nay.

Discussion of Association of Town Finance Committees' Annual Meeting.

Nick Tensen said that based on the information he received at the meeting, he came to the realization that Financial Policies needed to be in place for bonding. Phil Stearns said he had studied the information regarding electronic media. Influencing other members via electronic media would constitute a violation of the Open Meeting Law. Mr. Stearns said he had learned about collaboration with other towns and the grants that were available to study the collaborations. Mr. Stearns had learned that other towns were sharing IT, finance directors, and town managers. Consortiums of towns in the hill country had 14 different entities subscribing to an ala carte sharing vehicle. The information noted that saving money was not the goal rather than improving services. Mr. Stearns noted that everyone was frightened of changing the character of their town, but the reality was that it was just a service being provided.

Committee member comments/reports.

The Town of Wenham had adopted fiber recycling and the Town of Hamilton would consider the same. Darcy Dale thought water would be an emergent issue with people currently spending money for home water treatment plants to mediate water problems due to the filtration plant issues. Michael Lombardo would give a water update at the beginning of Town Meeting. John Pruellage was in receipt of a letter from the attorney at Gordon Conwell regarding PILOT.

The Longmeadow land issue was summarized by Jeff Hubbard. The Towns of Hamilton and Wenham had stated that they had no need for the land. The Longmeadow Study Committee was trying to get the School involved in taking a position. It was agreed that the Town of Wenham would not want to pay their apportioned share of the acquisition.

Minutes

Motion made by John Pruellage to approve minutes from August 23, 2017 September 13, 2017, September 27, 2017, and October 3, 2017.

Seconded by Darcy Dale.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Adjournment

John Pruellage made motion to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Nick Tensen.

Vote Unanimous to adjourn at 8:56 pm.

Prepared by:

Marcie Ricker

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Attest

Date

11/20/17