

HAMILTON FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting

Via Zoom 817 3238 6956

Passcode 901924

April 7, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Members Present: John Pruellage, Valerie McCormack, Christina Schenk Hargrove, and David Wanger.

Others Present: Dyan Katz, Finance Director, Carin Kale, Town Clerk, Rick Mitchell, President, Hamilton Development Corporation

This meeting was called to order by John Pruellage at 6:05 p.m. with a quorum established via Zoom.

Roll Call: Valerie McCormick – aye, Dave Wanger – aye, Christina Schenk Hargrove – aye, and John Pruellage – aye. Nick Tensen was unable to attend the meeting.

1. Call to Order by Chairman

John Pruellage shared that FinCom would review the warrant articles this evening and would vote formally on the articles at the Board of Selectmen joint meeting on Monday, April 12, 2021 when Nick Tensen would be present.

2. Discussion regarding FY2022 town budget, including any revisions to proposed budget numbers

Mr. Pruellage shared that he had spoken to Town Manager, Joseph Domelowicz before this evening's meeting and there was not an interim draft of the budget yet because it still needed to be finalized but it would be ready in the next day or so.

Dyan Katz reported that since last meeting, she had been recording changes with the budget handbook and had been keeping track of the school's final numbers as well as any other amendments that had been made.

Ms. Katz had also been helping David Wanger with OPED questions that were brought up at the Board of Selectmen meeting with regard to where they were today versus where they would be years down the road and would be able to respond to those questions once the official document had been accepted. An actuarial service could be purchased for a small fee to help answer those questions more accurately if so desired before the Town Meeting.

Mr. Pruellage reported that Town Manager, Joseph Domelowicz told him that budget numbers had improved since the last budget meeting and that they would have more levy capacity than

originally thought and that the indicative tax rate was now below \$18. Final numbers would still need to be plugged into the commentary once they were available.

Mr. Pruellage proposed that FinCom meet on Wednesday, April 14, 2021 to look at the final commentary version before submitting it to the Town Manager by Friday. Ms. Katz agreed to review the final numbers at that point as well. The tax rate impact for the warrant will be determined once the numbers are finalized. The capital portion that was funded by free cash would be a separate addendum.

3. Discussion regarding ATM warrants and potentially voting FINCOM recommendations on the same

Members of FinCom walked through the draft of the warrant articles one by one and made commentary changes as needed. With Ms. Katz's and Mr. Domelowicz's help, FinCom would need final numbers by Wednesday to be able to finalize the commentary as it will be going to the printer by Friday.

Mr. Pruellage commented that the introduction would be a combination of the draft report and the annual report and would cover some of the challenges the town had faced. A section would be added about the budget process this year as well as some commentary introducing that as well.

1-1 – Election of Officers (will be a question on the ballot) the debt exclusion would be better explained in the commentary for the Town Hall article 2-16.

1-2 Town Officers and Committee Reports

1-3 Consent Motion

2-1 Compensation Classification Tables – Ms. Katz commented that the table was available. FinCom planned to use the Compensation Classification Table to include a list of position changes that were added or adjusted for the school and the town, union and non-union.

2-2 Prior Year Bills - \$57.50 from Treasurer's Office collection firm

2-3 General Town Departmental Appropriations – will finalize once numbers are available. Mr. Pruellage commented that challenges and reservations would be mentioned in the commentary.

2-4 Capital Expenditures – final numbers would be needed to write the commentary. Mr. Pruellage noted that the town generated more free cash than was expected in 2020 but that the free cash would not always be used for capital expenditures. FinCom discussed potentially adopting a policy for this.

2-5 Capital Stabilization Fund – the new target might be increased based on what the final numbers were. Ms. Katz verified that a transfer was made at ATM which increased the total amount.

2-6 Annual Financial Actions – actual numbers were needed.

2-7 Pool – Discussed eliminating the pool and merging the 2 together and would include commentary that these are revolving funds and do not have an effect on taxes. If the pool had

been included in the Parks and Recs fund, the fact that it was closed due to the pandemic would have been netted out. Because of the deficit a transfer was made at STM.

Carin Kale commented that because there would be a bylaw change with the Revolving Fund consolidation, it would need to go before the Attorney General before financial decisions could be made. It could still be a warrant item but it might not be effective until July 1st as it would be about a 90-day process although retroactive.

2-8 Hamilton Development Corporation – This was based on revenue generated in years past and the dollar amount would be added by the Board of Selectmen.

With regard to the Meals Tax, Rick Mitchell shared with FinCom that the Hamilton Development Corporation (HDC) had proposed that 75 percent of the Meals Tax would go to the HDC and 25 percent would go to the town and that they were anticipating a significant reduction from prior years due to COVID.

2-9 OPED – The last paragraph would be changed to reflect that the matter had been rectified.

2-10 Patton Homestead Operating Budget – Paragraph needed about the renter.

Mr. Wanger raised the issue of the termination provisions in the Patton Homestead contract and commented that the town could only terminate for failure to generate revenue if it was a mutual agreement. FinCom agreed to leave this out of the commentary at this time.

2-11 Stabilization Fund transfer – Mr. Pruellage commented that as of February, it would have been at 5.1 percent with the transfer while free cash would be at 5.4 percent. It may change slightly with General Fund budget changes but this would be the last transfer before the Town Meeting.

2-12 - Capital Stabilization Fund Transfer – It was not clear as to whether this article should be on the warrant but will clarify at Monday night meeting with the Board of Selectmen.

2-13 – Community Preservation Budget – Questioned whether there were 3 different articles for Community Preservation (2-13 through 2-15), tennis courts and Town Hall or if there were just 2 different articles. Will clarify at the Monday night meeting with the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. McCormack reminded FinCom that she would need to leave so they skipped to 3-1.

3-1 Chebacco Road – No financial implication for this article as it refers to moving the road to protect natural resources.

3-2 and 3-3 Library – The cost would be a reduction because the installation and operating costs of the library would be reduced for both towns with the pilot income going solely to Hamilton.

Ms. McCormack left the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

2-16 – Town Hall Building Project – FinCom members agreed that a reference should be made to the fact that the project originated as a result of the Town Meeting that rejected the hiring of experts and gave the task to citizens who then created the Town Hall Building Committee.

Mr. Wanger and Mr. Pruellage thanked Ms. Schenk-Hargrove for coordinating the commentary on the warrant articles.

4. Committee Member and Liaison Updates

Mr. Pruellage reported that the Board of Selectmen would be putting together a steering committee for the Master Plan. The committee would have 9 members, 5 of which would be representatives from specific town boards and at least 4 members would be of citizenry at large. FinCom would like to have a member as part of the committee but the bylaw might be restrictive. Mr. Pruellage will be checking with lawyers to determine if FinCom would be able to participate and if not, a FinCom liaison member would be involved at the very least.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by David Wanger at 8:34 p.m.

Seconded by Christina Schenk-Hargrove.

Roll Call Vote: David Wanger – aye, Christina Schenk-Hargrove – aye, and John Pruellage – aye.

Unanimous in favor of voting members.

Documents:

1. Warrant draft