

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes

Date: February 24, 2020

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Present: Noonan, Cofske, Kuphal, Kupcinkas, Cooney, O'Connell

Absent: Kennedy

Meeting called to order at 6:32p.m.

Present at meeting: Kaye Peltier, James Kelley, and Scott Despres

Motioned by Kupcinkas, seconded by Noonan to accept the minutes of January 14, 2020 as written.
Unanimous.

Jen O'Connell: We will be cancelling next Monday's meeting since we have a meeting scheduled for Saturday. I had intended on having Blackstone Valley Tech come tonight, but I felt that the Reserve Fund Transfer for the Town Manager Screening Committee would be lengthy. The Screening Committee is looking into hiring a consultant to do the search.

Kaye Peltier: We have been meeting for about 4 weeks. We have reviewed the process from the last screening committee. We would like the opportunity to have a search firm. The Selectmen would have to approve this process. We would need money to do this. We would like to take the hybrid approach. Most Towns operate with an initial screening committee and then bring it to the Board of Selectmen. Some Towns have the Board of Selectmen take care of it themselves, while other Towns hire a consultant firm to do the search. The last screening committee used about \$40,000. On average, in recent months, the cost has been \$28,600. The screening committee unanimously voted to ask for \$25,000. We could ask for the money at Town Meeting, but that would not be feasible. Another option was to ask if there were any other funds available, which there are none. This is why we are asking for a Reserve Fund Transfer. I did speak to Andrew about a 33B transfer at the end of the year, which he said he believes there will be funds available.

Steve Noonan: What is the situation with the boiler at the Fire Station?

James Kelley: We are checking to see if insurance will pay for some of it.

Steve Noonan: How much will this cost.

James Kelley: It is a lot of money.

Bert Kupcinkas: It is probably about \$50,000.

James Kelley: It is around that amount.

Steve Noonan: That is one of the problems with using the Reserve Fund for the search committee. If we need to use \$50,000 for the Fire Department and the \$25,000 for the search committee, then we would be out of emergency money. The search firm should be fully funded if their search brings us a potential candidate.


David J. Noonan
Nicol A. Cooney
Albert P. Kupcinkas

Jen O'Connell: What is happening with the money in the salary account of the Town Manager?

James Kelley: That is where my salary is coming from.

Jen O'Connell: What about your salary in the Human Resource Budget?

James Kelley: The School is still paying their portion of the salary. Justine has taken over the administrative duties of the Human Resource Director.

Dave Cofske: Does the Town Manager come from a certain pool of candidates?

Steve Noonan: You make up a job description and they have to follow it.

Kaye Peltier: We have a job description which is what was used in the last search. There is a process because of the Charter. There are some constraints based on the Charter. We have a good basis to start with.

Jen O'Connell: How much is this going to cost us through June?

Kaye Peltier: I am not sure about the salary. We would go by what has been recently used for a salary. It depends on experience also. I cannot say if we will end up spending more than our last Town Manager.

Jen O'Connell: I realize that the salaries are going up. We have to hire someone that will be in line with those that they are supervising. It would probably be comparable to the Superintendent of Schools, whose budget is similar to the Town's. I feel that the people on the screening committee should be able to screen the candidates.

Scott Despres: How do you advertize to get the most exposure? How far out do we advertise? A search firm would be able to reach out to those people.

Kaye Peltier: We will be interviewing the candidates, not the search firm. We will not be recruiting the candidates.

Jen O'Connell: I am against having a search firm. Were you impressed with any of the three candidates that the search committee sent to you previously?

Scott Despres: No, I was not, but my colleagues may have been. Town Managers are recycling within the State. There are only 200 Town Managers in the State. We could have an Assistant Administrator handle this position. We still have the applications from the last search committee. We could go back and ask them to re-apply. I am not in favor of a search firm myself. I asked a search firm if they could give us names of people that would fit this position. They said that they don't work that way. They would be the ones that make the calls to these people. I just don't feel that this is money well spent.

Kaye Peltier: A firm would actively recruit candidates and assist the screening committee. They can act as an intermediary. They can help sell the position. Candidates and employers can do searches on the municipalities. They also assist with in-depth background checks.

Kevin Kuphal: What are we looking do approve tonight?

Kaye Peltier: We are looking for prior authorization of monies for us to continue.

Steve Noonan: I am still opposed to a firm unless they agree to only being paid if we seat someone in the position.

Scott Despres: I think that was the stipulation in the last process. If we didn't pick any of the candidates, they would select others on their dime.

Kaye Peltier: We would still have to pay them for the interviews.

Scott Despres: If the committee gives them a certain criteria, we could probably be looking at around \$10,000. The last firm did a complete workup of the Town before they started a search. We already did this, so it shouldn't have to be done again. Without a search firm, we would be limited on who we gat

for candidates. I am not 100% opposed to a search firm; I would just like to know what you would do with the money if it is approved.

Dave Cofske: I would like the committee to find out what the requirements are and come back to us with a firm figure.

Kaye Peltier: We gave to do a request for quotes in order to continue with this. My goal for this evening is a commitment from you to sign off on this.

Jen O'Connell: We should either support or reject an RFQ. I think we are interested enough to have you come back with more information. We would like something very specific on what money is going to be spent.

Dave Cofske: I would like to see what our search committee is looking for in a search firm.

Jen O'Connell: I would like to have the committee give Kaye a show of hands on who would be okay with hiring a search firm with the stipulation that we set the scope on what we need.

No one was opposed to a search firm as long as the scope is set by the committee.

Jen O'Connell: Our next meeting will be on March 7, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. We are cancelling Monday night's meeting.

Jen O'Connell: How much Free Cash do we have?

James Kelley: We have \$2Million.

Nicole Cooney: We were supposed to get a report on what was spent so far in FY2020.

Jen O'Connell: Did Andrew print out the reports?

James Kelley: He did print out reports for the Board of Selectmen.

Jen O'Connell: The first thing we should go over at our Saturday meeting is the revenue estimates.

James Kelley: I used the Governor's numbers in the Cherry Sheet. New growth was \$823, 123 this year. Next year is between \$300,000 and \$325,000. Free Cash is about \$2Million. I am looking at paying off the BANS. I would like to put between \$300,000 and \$350,000 into a Health Insurance Stabilization Account. We could be looking at a double digit increase within the next couple of years. Next year should be around 4%. I would be putting between \$200,000 and \$250,000 into Stabilization, \$150,000 into OPEB, \$100,000 into Retiree Buyout and \$926,000 into various Capital Purchases. We are \$4,000 to the good with a balanced budget as of right now. DPW will be hiring a Director. We are doing a background check right now. I am recommending that \$665,000 be borrowed for the design and plans for a new Fire Station. I am not recommending the Police Station.

Jen O'Connell: One of the things we should look at is not taking the levy to the 2-1/2%.

James Kelley: If you don't take it, you will never get it back. It is a lot smarter to go to the 2-1/2%. There will be no new positions on the Town Side.

Steve Noonan: Will we have budget information for our Saturday meeting?

James Kelley: Once I have my two meetings, I can have the books prepared.

Dave Cofske: Some of us would like to have it sent electronically.

Motioned by Kupcinkas, seconded by Noonan to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. Unanimous.