

Town of Bedford Finance Committee

Town Hall, Selectmen's Meeting Room

February 27, 2020

Minutes

Members in attendance: Ben Thomas (Chair), Elizabeth McClung (Vice Chair), Paul Mortenson, Stephen Steele, Karen Dunn, Stephen Carluccio (by telephone) and Erica Liu

Others in attendance: Victor Garofalo, (Finance Director, Treasurer); Ed Pierce (Select Board); Margot Fleischman (Select Board); Bill Moonan (Select Board)

Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

REGULAR BUSINESS

1. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

Chair Thomas opens discussion. Describes the website that is now up on the Town's webpages for the Fire Station. The website answers many questions about the project and Annual Town Meeting Article 26.

ARTICLE 25

Library HVAC Replacement

Chair Thomas states that the members have seen the email memos exchanged between the Facilities Director, Town Manager, Finance Director and the Finance Committee Chair concerning this project and the requested funding.

Member Steele states that the effective Net Zero specifications cost was \$149,000. From the original proposal, they also added on additional costs reflecting equipment purchases being accelerated from previous plans that otherwise were not Net Zero compliant.

Member Dunn notes that it seems that most of the items were close to the end of their useful life.

Member McClung asks what is the consequence of turning your back on fossil fuels. They will be making it impossible to use fossil fuels.

Chair Thomas states that the impact on the Police Station is that it will be all electric. No fossil fuels. According to the Net Zero people, this will reduce carbon emissions but the energy costs to heat the building will increase.

Discussion of de-carbonization efforts at State level with Governor Baker's stated plan being Net Zero by 2050.

Member McClung asks about the electricity being generated from fossil fuels at the source.

Discussion concerning that the Commonwealth sets specific goals or requirements for how much of the electricity that comes into the Commonwealth is from zero emission sources such as hydropower, nuclear, solar and wind. All are zero emission sources of electricity and at the state level there is a requirement that a certain percentage of the electricity coming into the Commonwealth be zero emission and that percentage is going to go up.

Member Steele asks if we ever will be to the point where our non-fossil fuel generation will be maxed out? As a state.

Discussion of the need for new and further sources of generation.

Member McClung asks about the potential for a general loss of power, i.e., a blackout, if we get to all electric and what is the backup?

General discussion concerning back-up generators running on fossil fuels.

Member Liu asks if it would be more effective to wait a few years until the solution gets to be more economically cost effective. For example, there is no recycling for solar panels so they end up in the landfills which then poison the environment. Also the electrical components will also be disastrous in the landfills. Also, manufacturing solar panels is extremely high energy sensitive. It, therefore, depends on how you define Net Zero. Wouldn't it be more effective to wait for new and effective and cost efficient equipment and technology?

Chair Thomas states that we can't wait for new technology. This is for new building construction going in now so it has to be ready to go now.

Motion to recommend approval of Article 25 by Member Mortenson

Second by Member Steele.

Chair Thomas asks Member Carluccio, who is attending by telephone, if he has any questions.

Member Carluccio states he does not.

Chair Thomas takes poll of members' votes.

Vote: 8-0-0

Motion carries.

Chair Thomas states that the only warrant issue left for discussion is Article 26 which we will discuss next week.

Chair Thomas moves on to the discussion of Finance Committee write-ups.

2. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WRITE-UPS

ARTICLE 1 –

Member Mortenson recommends language change to match what the Bylaw says.

ARTICLE 2

Ok as is.

ARTICLE 3

Ok as is

ARTICLE 4

To be indefinitely postponed.

ARTICLE 5

Member McClung wrote this based on the Article's covering the cost of planting and replacing trees. Write-up edited to be more specific about the Revolving Fund allowing for the maintenance, replacement and planting of trees.

ARTICLE 6

Discussion of minor editing the current language. Agreed with proposed edits.

ARTICLE 7

Discussion of minor editing the current language. Agreed with proposed edits.

ARTICLES 8 THROUGH 21

Chair Thomas suggests lumping these all together. Members discuss and agree to minor edits.

ARTICLE 22

Members discuss and agree to edits to list Planning Board changes made since Special Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 23

Discussion of editing the current language. Agreed with proposed edits including reference to Finance Committee's believing in supporting Capital Assets as supporting the health of the Town.

ARTICLE 24

Police Station project.

Discussion of use of the term demographics. Agree to expand that term to include reasons for need for additional space which include current active demands on the department resulting from increase in resident population and current demographics including daytime population.

Also discuss reasons for increase in cost including upgrading systems though out the building on an accelerated basis.

Decision made to continue the discussion of this write-up to next week's meeting.

ARTICLE 25

Library HVAC Replacement

Discussed in detail earlier in this meeting.

ARTICLE 26

Fire Station project – Land Acquisition

This will be discussed in detail at next week's meeting.

ARTICLE 27

Demand Fee Increase

Finance Director Garofalo will prepare a short summary which will be discussed next week.

ARTICLE 28

PEG Access Budget

Discussion of editing this write-up to note that this entire budget is fully funded by the cable companies (Comcast and Verizon).

ARTICLE 29

Agree that this write-up is fine as is.

ARTICLE 30

Agree that this write-up is fine as is with the addition of language to confirm that this does not authorize pay increases. The schedule will be used to retain current employees and attract candidates for open positions.

ARTICLE 31

Additional details will be provided at Annual Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 32

Operating Budgets

Agree that this write-up is fine as is with minor corrective edits.

ARTICLE 33

Agree that this write-up is fine with minor corrective edits.

ARTICLE 34

Post-Employment Liability Trust Fund

Members discuss this write-up. Chair Thomas may draft a new paragraph and have it available next week for discussion.

ARTICLE 35

Members discuss changes needed due to change in title of Fund. Also to include language that the Finance Committee strongly agrees with this provision.

ARTICLE 36

300th Anniversary

Members agree with proposed write-up language.

ARTICLE 37

Stabilization Fund

Members discuss needed edits to write-up including projection for approximate fund balance by end of FY2021.

ARTICLE 38

Free Cash

Members discuss including amount anticipated.

Chair Thomas states that if any Member has any specific changes to be proposed for any Article write-up, they can be submitted and discussed next week if necessary.

Finance Director Garofalo states that he will email the current draft with changes from tonight's meeting and the changes for his portion for Members to review prior to next week's meeting.

Member Carlucci left the meeting and 8:40pm.

3. SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR OFFICERS

Member Mortenson discusses his plans to seek another full term on the Finance Committee. He notes that he would also suggest and be in favor of Mr. Thomas remaining as Committee Chair.

NEW/SPECIAL BUSINESS

1. Minutes

Chair Thomas asks for any suggested edits for the Minutes for January 16, 2020. None suggested.

Motion to approve Minutes of the meeting of January 16, 2020 by Member Steele.

Second by Member Mortenson.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion carries.

2. Meetings attended

Member Mortenson attended a presentation by Town Manger Stanton and Fire Chief Grunes with respect to the Fire Station project. Mostly in preparation for the Annual Town Meeting.

Chair Thomas discusses Select Board and the Audit Letter. There was no Management letter. The Audit came out very clean. We are in great shape.

Also moving ahead with a consultant for the Museum.

Also discussed a listing of Articles with comments being made by Planning Board and Finance Committee.

Member Busa states that he believes he will be out of state when the Annual Town Meeting occurs.

Member Mortenson states that he also will not be able to attend the Annual Town Meeting.

Motion to adjourn by Member Mortenson.

Second by Member Busa.

Vote: 7-0-0

Motion carries.

Time: 9:05PM

John B. Connarton
Recording Secretary

DOCUMENTS LIST

Agenda for February 27, 2020 Meeting

2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

