

TOWN OF BEDFORD FINANCE COMMITTEE

August 24, 2023

Minutes

Finance Committee Members in attendance: Ben Thomas, Chair, Abigail Seibert, Vice Chair, Karen Dunn, Clerk, Elizabeth McClung, Tom Rowan, Ron O'Brien, Mark Bailey, George Lee and Philip Prince

Others in attendance: David Castellarin, (Finance Director), Stephen Carluccio, Stephen Steele, Patty Carluccio, Robin Steele, anonymous attendee.

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

Calls the Roll of Committee Members in attendance.

I. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Public Comment

Member O'Brien was recognized by Member Thomas.

In summary, Member O'Brien read from a prepared statement containing his thoughts concerning the failure of the Finance Committee Appointing Authority to reappoint former Members Steele and Liu to the two open positions caused by the expiration of their terms, apparently due to former Member Steele's and Liu's questioning of town leadership. A copy of Member O'Brien's statement is appended to these Minutes.

Following Member O'Brien's statement, Member McClung was recognized by Chair Thomas.

In summary, Member McClung stated that she did not believe that she would be reappointed upon the termination of her current term in 2025 and did not believe that there is sufficient respect for differing committee member opinions. She also stated that she felt that the failure to reappoint former Members Steele and Liu resulted from their seeking further information concerning the fiscal grounds for certain budget items including a salary increase.

Member McClung then concluded her statement by announcing her resignation effective immediately. A copy of the written stated is appended to these Minutes.

2. Review/Approve Minutes

None.

3. Liaison Assignments

Chair Thomas opens discussion on appointment of Members as Liaisons to other Town Committees and Boards.

Discussion of Schools. Member Seibert to be Liaison.

Discussion of Library. Member Lee to be Liaison.

Discussion on Capital Expenditures (CapEx). Member Dunn to be Liaison.

Discussion of Board of Health. Member Prince to be Liaison.

Discussion of Planning Board. Member O'Brien to be Liaison.

Discussion of Select Board. Chair Thomas to remain as Liaison.

4. Meeting Schedule

Chair Thomas discusses timing for guideline as being end of September /first of October. This would give guideline information to the various committees and departments to build their budgets.

Mr. Castellarin agrees with this.

Chair Thomas notes that he has placed the proposed meeting schedule in the Drop Box.

Member Seibert suggests moving up the dates for the Schools and the Select Board and moving down the dates for Health and Library.

Chair Thomas states that he can discuss it with them but it will be up to those committees if they can do that.

Member Bailey agrees that two part meetings would be best for the large committees.

Chair Thomas notes that based on prior experience, that can be difficult for these committees,

Member Seibert states that she suggests that time be scheduled at each meeting to see what the then current status of the Model...is

Chair Thomas notes that if we can do the guideline by the end of September, we would have two months to fine tune the numbers.

Chair Thomas states that he has spoken with the Schools about current plans for first sit down with FinCom.

Chair Thomas discusses possible starting date for the new Town Manager as being beginning of October.

Member Bailey asks about asking the Departments to get their budgets in earlier.

Members Seibert, O'Brien agree.

Member O'Brien asks what would be necessary to get this to happen.

Chair Thomas explains the various aspects involved with completing budgets. Lengthy and time consuming.

Member O'Brien agrees with 9/14 for Guideline. Not sure about the Departments' budgets being moved up.

Chair Thomas explains the importance of Town Meeting printing deadlines. This drives a lot of different things.

Chair Thomas states that we will try to get the Guideline out by the end of September.

Mr. Castellarin provides an explanation of the realities of what needs to be done and the timing involved.

All Members agree to getting the Guideline out by the end of September.

5. Discussion of Hybrid/In Person Meetings/Vote

Discussion by Members about whether to keep a hybrid mode or return to all in person meetings.

General feeling by all Members is that they would prefer keeping a hybrid mode as this is the case now.

Chair Thomas states that since it appears all Members are in agreement, and no changes proposed, there was no vote needed.

6. FY25 Model

Member Dunn asks about current updates.

Member Lee asks about the two versions.

Mr. Castellarin explains the process whereby numbers get changed and updated as we go.

Mr. Castellarin discusses how to track changes as they are made.

Member Lee discusses what he feels would be a better approach. Wants to try it himself.

Mr. Castellarin puts up the current Model and goes through various changes and possible changes to come. Provides Model line numbers and current numbers.

Mr. Castellarin explains what will be updated for the next meeting.

7. Meetings Attended

Chair Thomas asks for any meetings attended information.

Member Seibert discusses meeting with the new Superintendent.

Chair Thomas discusses last Select Board meeting. Focus was on hiring new Town Manager.

Chair Thomas states that he has met with the new Superintendent and chair of the School Committee. Feeling was being very collaborative.

8. Finance Committee Adjourns

Chair Thomas calls for a motion to adjourn.

Member Dunn moves to adjourn.

Second by Member O'Brien

Roll call of Members in attendance.

Vote: 8-0-0

Motion carries

Time: 9:05 PM

DOCUMENT LIST

Agenda for March 24, 2023 Meeting

FY24 Model – 03.09.23(2)

Finance Committee 2023-2024 Meeting Schedule

Current List of Committee for Assignment of Liaisons

Finance Committee Members List 2023

FY25 Model – 08-24-23 (1)

Prepared Statement by Member O'Brien

Prepared Statement by Member McClung

