

The Finance Committee Minutes

September 28th 2017

The meeting was called to order at 6:25 with Mr. Carson, Mr. Pshenishny, Mr. Miller, Mrs. Fracasso, and Mrs. Spaulding in attendance. Guests included Ms. Tara White, and Mrs. Michele Shalaby.

Mr. Steve Klein called in and a motion was take to have his part of the committee on a speaker phone, Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed unanimously.

The minutes for June 15th 2017 were circulated and accepted as read, Mr. Carson 1st, Mr. Pshenishny 2nd passed unanimously.

Mr. Carson informed the group that there was to be an Open Meeting informational meeting in the Town Hall in Great Barrington on October 17th from 5:30PM to 7:30PM. He suggested that some of the group ought to attend. Mrs. Spaulding and Mrs. Walker will attend, and perhaps others. Reservations need to be made by calling 617-963-2925. Mr. Miller informed the group that he had been appointed to the Emergency Services Committee as a representative, and their meeting will be held on that night.

Mr. Klein informed the group that he had worked on the capital expenses for a town in which he lived prior to moving to New Marlborough and felt that he had some experience to offer when the capital items were being considered. The committee then began discussion centered on the budget forms different department heads submitted for the yearly budget. Most of the committee stated that they would like to have that form show the amount assigned for the two previous years and the amount expended with the amounts carried over. They also decided it would help to have a current expenditure report when discussing the budget. Mrs. Spaulding suggested that this information (except the current expenditures) could be put on the back of the present forms with a place for comments. Department heads could explain increases or decreases and specific plans related to coming years expenses.

Mrs. Walker had an Excel program that she was able to share and suggested that the budgets be put on Excel and list the previous year's spending along with the present year's approved budget and expenditures to date allowing ease of reading for each budget item and past year's information. Mrs. Walker suggested it could also be easier to transfer the figures using Excel

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rather than relying on hand written forms that needed to be transfer individually. She offered to help different departments with this activity. Prior to devising a new form Mr. Carson stated that it is important to make the forms as easily accessible to Ms. Enoch the town administrator. Mrs. Walker offered to meet with her and discuss the committee's suggestions before the next meeting to do this!

Mrs. Walker then voiced a concern she had regarding the actual role of the Finance Committee in New Marlborough and quoted a section out of the Commonwealth's hand book defining the responsibilities of Finance Committees. (*A Citizens Guide to Town Meetings*).

"The finance committee prepares the budget in the months before the annual Town Meeting starts. It also prepares financial articles (which are agenda items). Its recommendations are advisory. In some towns, the committee is known as the warrant committee or the advisory committee.

Depending on the town's bylaws, members of the finance committee are appointed by the selectmen or moderator, or elected by voters of the Town Meeting. In many towns, the finance committee's report is distributed to all the residences"

Mrs. Walker then quoted the town bylaws Section 8.2

"...That the Finance Committee meet annually at a public place, prior to the Annual Meeting of the Town, for the purpose of inquiring into the financial needs and requirements of the Town for its ensuing fiscal year. And the Selectmen shall furnish said committee with certified copies of all the articles to be inserted in the warrant involving the raising and appropriation of monies, which the committee shall investigate the subject matters thereof, in the respect of the needs and amounts thereof, and report the recommendations to the Selectmen who shall cause the same to be published in the Town Report. Public notice of the time and place of such meeting shall be given."

Mrs. Walker asked the selectmen present at the meeting what they thought about the differences in the two descriptions regarding Finance Committee responsibilities. Mrs. Shalaby stated she thought that the Finance Committee had in the past been an advisory body and provided a much needed service when it came to reviewing the budgets. She thought the way the town's budget had been made in the past was essentially similar to the two quotes. Mrs. Walker had read. Ms. White responded she had not been listening because she was working on some accounting items at her desk.

sk. Ms. White stated that the 2017 books were not closed as yet. And there was some discussion about whether the SBRSD's budget would be changed if the Egremont School was reopened, particularly since the school bus contract was for five years. Mr. Carson stated that

the calendar year expectations needed to be set up, for instance last year there was a joint meeting with the select board on November 28th, and it would be helpful to have this earlier this year. There was some discussion about the next meeting which eventually was decided to be on Tuesday October 10th with the following agenda:-

1. Review the budget request forms.
2. Address calendar year for the budget season.
3. Ask Ms. Enoch to contribute to the above.
4. Ask Ms. Enoch to explain Revolving accounts.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 Mrs. Walker 1st, Mrs. Fracasso 2nd passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Prudence Spaulding Secretary.