

TOWN OF ROWLEY
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting October 6, 2015
Rowley Town Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Larry White, Chairman, Sharon Emery, Vice Chairman, Peter Censullo, Paul Jalbert, Dennis Roy and Jami Snow

MEMBERS ABSENT: Janet Bridges

OTHERS PRESENT: Deborah Eagan, Town Administrator; Joe Perry, Selectman; Richard Cummings, Paul Lees and Nerissa Wallen, Triton School Committee

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman White called the meeting to order at 7:18 pm.

2. STATUS OF FINANCE COMMITTEE SECRETARY

Mr. White introduced Theresa Coffey, the new Finance Committee Secretary. Mr. White commented that Mrs. Coffey will occasionally take the minutes remotely.

3. REORGANIZATION OF BOARD

Ms. Snow nominated Larry White as Chairman, Mr. Censullo seconded, the motion was approved 6-0.

Ms. Emery nominated Dennis Roy as Vice Chairman. Mr. Roy declined the nomination because he was still new to the FinCom.

Ms. Snow nominated Ms. Emery, Mr. Jalbert seconded, the motion was approved 6-0.

Mr. Roy nominated Ms. Snow as Clerk, Mr. White seconded, the motion was approved 6-0.

4. RESERVE FUND TRANSFER REQUEST

Joe Perry, Vice Chairman of the Board of Selectmen (BOS), presented a Reserve Fund Transfer Request in the amount of \$15,000 to cover the recruitment cost of a new Police Chief. Chief Barker will retire in December 2015. Mr. White explained that this cost was not included in the Budget because they did not know Chief Barker was planning to retire. Discussion ensued about the interim plan for coverage and the recruitment process as well as projected costs of BadgeQuest Consultants and the recommended background check for a new Chief.

Ms. Emery moved to approve the Transfer of \$15,000, Mr. Roy seconded, the motion was approved 6-0.

5. STATUS OF TRITON STADIUM PROJECT

Joe Perry, Vice Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, provided an update to the Committee on the Triton Stadium Project. Mr. Perry attended the October 1 Triton District Communications Committee meeting. All members of the Regional School Committee were present at the meeting and there was good representation from all three towns of Newbury, Rowley and Salisbury.

The figures have changed on the stadium and the total has gone up to \$4.5 million. Request for Proposals will be put out in January. Whomever bids will be required to bid on the main proposal as well as alternate proposals. Any bid accepted will stay at \$4 million or less.

Mr. Perry discussed the Tentative Agreement proposed by Mr. Harrington at the October 1 meeting (attached). The minimum Excess & Deficiency (E&D) proposed was \$350,000 but many on the School Committee were concerned that was too low so they agreed on \$500,000. Mr. Perry discussed the aspects of Item IV regarding rental revenues and Item V regarding the use of E&D. Rowley could have reductions from the revenues coming in and reductions based on the E&D in the School Committee account.

Mr. Roy was pleased that the Agreement will be reviewed after one full year and adjust it, then it will go five years. Mr. Perry agreed, saying that the figures are all projections and the first year review will give them actual numbers and a chance to make changes to the Agreement.

Mr. Roy noted that Rowley's assessment on the \$3.2 million bond is roughly \$75,678, based on enrollment and will fluctuate each year depending on enrollment. It wouldn't affect Rowley too much as Ms. Eagan said it was added on as a Debt Exclusion.

Mr. Roy circulated a copy of breakdown of \$4.5 million so FinCom members can have an idea of the extent of the project (attached). Contingency is 10%, or \$450,000, which is a must for the size of the project.

6. REVIEW MINUTES OF MARCH 10, 2015

The Minutes of March 10, 2015 were reviewed. Ms. Emery requested a correction under Item No. 4. She had left the room for this discussion and abstained from the vote. Minutes will be corrected to reflect the vote of 5-0 to accept, with Sharon Emery recused from vote.

Ms. Snow moved to accept the minutes with the change, Mr. Roy seconded, the motion was approved 6-0.

7. NEXT MEETING DATES

The Committee agreed on the next meeting dates: November 10, 2015 at 7:15 pm and December 8, 2015 at 7:15 pm.

8. TRITON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Mr. White welcomed the three Triton Regional School Committee (TRSC) members -- R. Cummings, P. Lees and N. Wallen -- to talk about school budget concerns, foster dialogue and to increase awareness, on the part of the FinCom, of what is happening with School Committee.

Mr. Cummings started the discussion by pointing out that the while the three in attendance are from Rowley, on the TRSC, they represent all three towns, not only Rowley. He asked the FinCom to voice their concerns and he will take them back to full committee.

Mr. Roy opened by saying that this past year was a tough year for budget negotiations and he acknowledged that hard cuts were taken. The resolution is workable but they are concerned about what happens next year. He asked if they have a forecast of Triton needs beyond the stadium.

Mr. Cummings replied that the budget is hard to forecast and leads to a much bigger issue – the State. The TRSC requests a budget but they don't know if it will balance or end up with deficit, they try to forecast worst case scenarios.

He noted areas that make it hard to forecast: special education costs, winter snow costs, and what the State will reimburse to the schools. He also discussed unfunded State mandates and the strain on the school budgets these mandates cause. Ms. Wallen added that as a new TRSC member, she was shocked that the school year was starting and the TRSC didn't know how much money they would receive from the State. She said everyone is motivated to keep our taxes down but we must keep our focus on educating our kids for success.

Mr. Lees added that the role of the TRSC is to maximize education for the children in the district. They are also cognizant of the need to watch the money. He spoke of some areas where they have been able to reduce costs such as health insurance plan changes and reducing teacher headcount through attrition due to declining student enrollment.

Mr. Censullo questioned why the professional development funding stays level in the budget while classes are being cut. The TRSC members replied that professional development is part of teacher contracts and thus, changes would be under union negotiation. They also pointed out that professional development is needed to stay current with new testing standards and that curriculum development and making improvements are key to a superior school system.

The new stadium was discussed. Mr. Lees said they acknowledge the price has gone up and this is due to the cost of the amenities building. He said that the amenities building will be figured out later down the road. It will be done after stadium and bleachers and he predicts the amenities building will get smaller.

Discussion ensued about the Pine Grove School maintenance and repairs needed for the boiler and kitchen. Mr. Cummings said the building has been neglected and that there seems to be disagreement on who is responsible for it. Ms. Eagan responded that there is no disagreement. The school is very important to the Town and they have addressed and paid for the heating issue.

Mr. White thanked the three TRSC members for attending the meeting and for a productive exchange. He welcomes them back at any time and hopes to work together to help with budget development.

9. WATER DEPARTMENT BUDGET AND FINANCES

The Committee discussed recent events that have taken place with the Water Board and Water Department. Ms. Eagan will forward the September Accounting Report and the Treasurers Report for Water Receipts to the FinCom members. Mr. Jalbert asked if they should invite Marybeth Wiser, Water Superintendent, to the next FinCom meeting. The Committee thought it best to review the financials coming from Ms. Eagan and then invite Marybeth.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Jalbert moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Snow seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9: 15 p.m.

Next Meeting: November 10, 2015 at 7:15 pm, Rowley Selectmen's Office

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa Coffey
Finance Committee Secretary

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

- Agenda October 6, 2015
- Triton Track and Field Redevelopment Updated Cost Estimate (9/9/15)
- Minutes of Meeting Held March 10, 2015
- Request for Transfer from Reserve Fund dated October 6, 2015
- Tentative Memorandum of Understanding Between Triton Regional School Committee and Towns of Newbury, Rowley & Salisbury re: Renovation of High School Stadium