



Town of Acton

Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: June 26th, 2018

Town Hall Room 204 7:30 pm

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Members in Attendance: Steve Noone, Jason Cole, Mike Majors, Roland Bourdon, Jeff Bergart, Christi Andersen, Thomas Farley, Sahana Purohit (associate),

Absent: Christine Russell, Dave Wellinghoff

Other: Brian McMullen

Called to order at: 7:30

Public Participation:

Chris Starr – Acton resident, owner of Bueno y Sano lot at Kelley's corner:
He expressed concerns about the proposed traffic changes at 111 and Route 27:

- How will the timing impact small businesses
- Expense and effect on taxes
- Because Route 27 is viewed as regional connector in DOT planning, are they prioritizing broader traffic view over local needs
- Can't get information about how much this will actually cost, how much things will actually change relative to parking and business impact
- Land being taken will be tied up for 3-5 years

He is creating a coalition of groups who want to keep the village feel, preserve trees, and protect local businesses in the Kelley's Corner area.

He requested that the Finance Committee examine the investment costs.

He proposed that there are alternatives that would be cheaper and more immediate given that the current TIP project would take 6 years.

Chris Bailey – co-owner Bueno y Sano property

He pointed out that the traffic change priorities are focused on speeding up traffic now, but this was not the original Acton 2020 priority of building community and supporting local businesses.

He expressed frustration that it is not clear who is in charge of the project. He and Chris Starr felt dismissed at BoS meeting and said that it was not clear that they were heard.

Long Range Planning:

The next ALG meeting will be held on Thursday morning

The ALG is a consensus driven group. It is made up of the following representatives: 2 from the Town, 2 from the Board of Selectmen, 2 from the School Committee, and 2 from the Finance Committee. The public is welcome to attend the meetings.

For planning purposes, consider:

- FY 21
 - o bonding for the North Acton fire station
 - o expect teacher salaries drop to 3% increase in FY22
- FY 23
 - o will need a tax levy to start up the twin school debt

We should add to the PoV that the committee doesn't want to see capital and operating override in the same year. They are very difficult to pass at town meeting.

Jason Cole pointed out that the ALG doesn't focus on reserve use until the very end, need to get involved in planning discussions earlier in the process.

Jeff Bergart recommended that the ALG plan shouldn't be counted on for accuracy. There should be a plan in place to make sure formulas and all derivations are kept correct/certified.

Projects, Studies for coming year:

Tax Breaks Report – owned by Mike

Make sure the companies receiving tax benefits are complying, on track, delivering. Mike wondered how often these reports should happen.

Status of Litigation Risk – owned by Jason

Steve recommended that we review this yearly. The deliverable is a presentation by town manager/counsel to present the year in review and projected upcoming cases.

Housing Survey – owned by Jason

KPI – Fiscal health – Jeff said these could be rolled into PoV metrics numbers
Internal operating KPIs –

This involveds looking for qualitative answers to budget questions on Budget Saturday. Ideally, individual departments will have these measurements. Jeff and Brian will advise town manager to work with key departments to try this out.

Popular Annual Fiscal Report – Jeff recommends that we build one for the PoV. Concord has a good example.

Management Letter –

The recommendations in the management letters should be reviewed for financial planning purposes. It is too late to meet with them this year because of where they are in the budget process. May/June is a good time to follow up on management letter. The most recent one was just received a few weeks ago. The audit ends December 31st, so we should encourage getting the letter sooner so its recommendations can be worked on before the next budget begins. (Town books close June 30.) We will request the letters from the different town and school auditors.

Trust Fund Scrubbing –

Jeff recommended that we make a yearly examination of trust fund encumbrances. We should see how broad the restrictions are and what we could use them for. This is just an examination of money, not land.

Accounting of Town Vehicles – owned by Roland

The committee should review town vehicles every few years focusing on car type, year, mileage, and usage. Information can be gotten from town fixed assets. The Town Manager can be contacted to find out what they are used for.

Synergies between town and school – Jason owns this
The deliverable is TBD.

Record of Institutional knowledge – Christi – review quarterly

Annual Planning Calendar –

Schedule when to have people come in to talk to us. Mike recommended that the calendar be finalized before the beginning of the committee year with a schedule of who presents what when. This way we aren't trying to catch up on too many things prior to town meeting.

Training – Chair will present opportunities for training to the committee yearly

Tax Rate Discrete Breakdown – Steve owns this
Deliverable will breakdown the tax rate into broad categories.

Purpose of Reserves & Retirement of Risk - goal is to create a dashboard showing deficiencies and what we changed/did about it (review on film)

Town owned properties list – owned by Christi Andersen
Brian is the town contact. Steve has information to share.

ALG scrub to ensure what is going into the town warrant – to be owned by chair

Committee Business

Minutes:

June 12 meeting minutes – Roland and Christi abstained

Committee Reports:

Minuteman – Mike Majors

The building committee approved and signed the guaranteed maximum price document that limits the price and schedule for the project. The builder has guaranteed that students will be able to occupy the building July 25, 2019. This is 1 year ahead of schedule.

School Building Committee – Jason Cole

Next meeting July 2nd. Proposals from the designers are due tomorrow. This will be discussed at next School Building Committee meeting. The Acton Boxborough Regional School District has a minority vote in choosing designer. The majority of votes are held by the MSBA.

BoS –

Tom shared a schedule of meetings; he is sharing attendance with Jeff

Health Insurance Trust – Steve Noone

Mary Brolin was elected chair. There has been 20% enrollment in HSAs for the town and school. This should benefit rates. The trust voted for the stop loss insurance carrier, HIT self-insurer.

Schedule:

The ongoing committee schedule is the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month

Meeting adjourned at 8:56

Respectfully submitted,
Christi Andersen
Finance Committee Clerk