

Finance Committee
June 24, 2025
7:30pm
Acton Town Hall, Room 204

Present: Scott Sullivan (Chair), Jason Cole, Steve Noone, Allison Jones, Greg Jarboe, Roland Bourdon, Corinne Hogseth, Jeff Leffler (Associate Member)

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETING(S)

Passed 6-0-1 (abstention from Mr. Noone who was not at the meeting)

LIAISON APPOINTMENTS:

ZBA - Ms. Jones

Acton Housing Authority - no Liaison needed

Agriculture Commission - no Liaison needed

Board of Assessors - Mr. Cole commented revaluation will be conducted every year versus every 10 years, so Mr. Cole will take it on temporarily

Board of Health - no Liaison needed

Health Insurance Trust - Mr. Sullivan

Recreation Commission - Mr. Leffler

Water Resources Advisory Committee - Mr. Lenz

INTERN UPDATE:

Each Intern is working on their own schedule. They are in research and data collection phase. Hold project titles until time gets closer.

The planned presentations dates at this point are August 12 and 26 for presentations.

LEGAL VIEW ON SUPPORT OF BALLOT QUESTIONS:

Mr. Cole commented on the point made FinCom is allowed to speak with the Media. Mr. Cole suggests to take legal memo from Town Counsel to have checked by the AG or the Office of Campaign and Political Finance.

There was discussion about Acton TV and the entity it falls under. Mr. No one believes they are a 501(c)3 corporation.

Mr. Bourdon believes it to be disingenuous because Mr. Charter was running for election, so how does that make it different.

Ms. Hogseth nothing to do with Campaign Finance, no money was spent. Acton TV funds come from the taxpayers. Also, The legal view memo
FinCom are not public employees, we are volunteers.

Ms. Jones commented some examples were not applicable to FinCom.

Mr. Jarboe made a Motion for Mr. Cole to ask for clarification between the memo written and what FinCom believes the law to be. Mr. Noone seconded.

Ms. Hogseth asked if they wanted the Motion to have more clarification, but Mr. Jarboe felt it didn't need further clarification.

Passed unanimously, 7-0-0

Mr. Fred Leffler introduced himself as a FinCom Associate Member.

DPW (MULTIPLE ITEMS)

Mr. Sullivan summarized the where the town stands after the May 5th Annual Town Meeting discussion and comments received.

Topics:

- Keep communication open between FinCom and Select Board
- Staff needs healthy workspace
- Wrong time/Too much money
- 20% reduction
- Is Feasibility money lost
- Scenario Analysis

Comments from FinCom on the above bullets:

Ms. Hogseth - Was looking for the Town, mostly the School to bend the cost curve

Mr. Bourdon - Not opposed to building a new building, but opposed to having office space in that building. Store equipment currently not being used in other building spaces. Wash bay - staged to a later time.

Mr. Jarboe - 3 concerns: 1) initial plan phased over a couple of years, but that was changed, progress was made there. 2) Scope of building was discussed but never settled on comparable towns and details behind that topic. 3) Way too soon after the override. Also, regarding timing issue - April 2, 2025 began to see President Trump's tariffs.

Ms. Jones - feels we're talking out of two sides of our mouth because we're asking for cuts and at the same time we're saying we'll never support it.

Mr. Noone - timing was terrible. Fundamental flaw: need usage numbers for fleet. Healthy workspace was identified in 2013, back then was to build a new/small office building. 20% reduction is in the eye of the beholder: yes from \$48m but not \$40m. Never well-founded on needs basis.

Mr. Cole - Felt FinCom and Select Board did communicate, voters just voted it down. Most everyone agrees we need to do something for the health and safety of the employees. Feasibility money should not be lost. Has same thoughts as Mr. Noone regarding the \$48m to \$40m. Regarding hiring an outside firm, currently feels leery about this idea.

Mr. Leffler - As a new perspective, surprised about the chasm between FinCom and Select Board. Seemed like consensus was built. Don't need a gold or platinum-level building. Understand the needs of the town, then design a building that meets those needs. Not the wrong time, but let's match the project of the needs and the taxpayers. More work with stakeholders has to be done.

Mr. Sullivan - Analysis of equipment/vehicle space needs which includes storage needs

Mr. Sullivan summarized different Scenarios:

- Original plan
- Revised plan
- 2013 plan
- Vacant buildings - move staff to vacant buildings
- Vacant buildings - move offseason equipment to vacant buildings
- Conant School

Discussion ensued on the above different scenarios.

Mr. Jarboe suggested to add another category: Minimal cost viable project. Plans from other communities were designed by Weston & Sampson for less money; why?

Mr. Cole - Of course every project needs a feasibility study. Common sense, but important to note.

Mr. Sullivan - Mr. Jarboe created a 7-page deck that all can review individually.

Mr. Leffler - what are next steps? May be missing degrees of freedom. For example, in vehicle storage: a heated unit, a wooden structure might be a lower cost but does it meet basic needs, etc..... Another example, offices needed for every employee, etc...

Mr. Sullivan - These concepts would spur dialogue among FinCom and then discuss next steps:
1) FinCom continues dialogue with Select Board
2) Financial projection of both town and school are reasonably understood
3) FinCom and Select Board agree on proposed solution

Mr. Jarboe - July 24th consultants are coming to the DPW meeting.

Mr. Noone - still requesting an out-years analysis and numbers.

LIAISON REPORTS:

Health Insurance Trust:

Mr. Sullivan reported out:

HIT voted for Officers. Trust is in good financial place. Bank was changed.

Select Board:

Mr. Sullivan reported out:

- Notification of sewer rate increase 6.5%, mostly due to Debt service
- Transfer Station - there will be some fee increases
- Town Manager made change from 40 to 36 hours - this is a recruitment and retention effort.
- Did comment at Select Board meeting about Census Data. Senior population is expanding, but largest population showing is 35-55 which accounts for 51%. Census doesn't include children.
- Select Board approved their Short- and Long-term goals

Ms. Hogseth had similar notes as Mr. Sullivan, as the Co-Liaison.

Mr. Bourdon commented about the Sustainability office and why it is increasing. Town needs to figure out a way to become leaner.

Mr. Cole reduction in hours - asked if the counter hours will still be available. Ms. Fleckner answered that because of our Staggered Hours Program, our Land Use Department, for example, opens at 7:00am. So, we are not losing counter hours.

Mr. Jarboe's wife's cousin is now a Dispatcher, so he is going to take a conservative approach and recuse himself from Police matters.

Ms. Hogseth - agrees with Mr. Bourdon, not a time to add a new position. Regarding HVAC, will we see a cost analysis?

Mr. Jarboe - disagrees with other FinCom members, he does support the needs for a Communications person.

Economic Development

Mr. Jarboe Informed the EDC he will no longer be their Liaison.

OPEN ITEMS:

Pharmacy Claims

Equipment of DPW

Next Meetings:

July 8, 2025

July 22, 2025

August 12, 2025 (Intern Presentation 1 of 2)

August 26, 2025 (Intern Presentation 2 of 2)

Mr. Leffler made motion to adjourn, Mr. Bourdon seconded

Passed Unanimously

8:58pm