



Freetown Finance Committee



April 19, 2016

Brad called meeting to order

Members Present: Kent Bob Joel, George, Paul, Brad

Brad announced his resignation as Chairman of the board effective immediately, after seven years as Chairman. Between his dedication to the committee and his other responsibilities, it has become impossible to serve in a capacity deserving of the position. He will stay on the committee until a new Chairman can be transitioned into the position or until town meeting.

Paul asked if he would be serving as Chairman at the town meeting and he said he would. After town meeting he will no longer be a finance committee member.

Brad has forwarded his resignation to the BOS, doesn't know if they will accept it tonight. Brad would like to have a vote for a new Chairman, which is usually done after elections at the beginning of the year.

Paul asked the members if there is anyone that is interested in serving as Chairman. His issue is not having a representative as Chairman at town meeting. The committee is not prepared to vote for a new Chairman at this time. Brad said he would stay on until then. Members were in agreement with this decision.

Brad asked to go over the special town meeting and annual town meeting articles. He asked if there were any questions on them. Bob said that he didn't have the opportunity to cover all of them and there were no printed versions on hand for everyone to look at. In no special order:

See if Town will vote a transfer of \$20,000.00 from Property Insurance to Workers' Comp Insurance for purpose of funding premiums for police and fire special high risk deductible accident insurance. Bob asked who it was submitted by – Town Accountant for the Town Administrator.

George asked when the town meeting is and how many weeks do we have. Town meeting is June 6, 2016, about six weeks.

Any decision or motion – Bob wants to know where the money is coming from. Money is coming from Property Insurance (Dept. 193) to Workers' Comp Insurance (Dept. 912). Bob asked why are we doing this now and was it not part of the original insurance.

George asked to make a suggestion: after reviewing the articles this past week, he is not sure of what needs to be accomplished as this is new to him. We look, we read, we do the best we can – but do we



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understand. Why not invite the Town Accountant, Jack Healy, the BOS to cover articles with FinCom so questions and concerns can be discussed.

FinCom has concerns with asking for \$3600.00 for a piece of diagnostic equipment for the mechanic.

FinCom suggests there should be a written explanation with details and numbers. Suggested they should have a meeting and make a list of questions/concerns and submit them to the department heads and have them get the information we are requesting so FinCom can make more informative/productive decisions.

Paul suggests going over articles individually and see which department heads we need to meet with.

Brad paused meeting at this time as joined with the BOS.

Communications budget – training increase for \$1300.00. Last year \$200.00, this year should have been \$500.00, not \$1300.00. This involves fees for dispatchers to attend training programs and seminars which carry registration fees from \$50.00 - \$150.00. Request is to increase from \$200.00 - \$500.00. Grant funds the EMD training and a 911 Training Grant which we have been successful with. Only 16 hours training is eligible for reimbursement and they are required to complete 16 hours per year. Looking to add \$300.00. \$13,860.00 is new amount.

Police budget – replacement officer brings budget to \$1,780,079.64. Personnel expenses FY'17 w/o officer was \$1,393,099.00. This is covering the vacant position. Kim corrected an error in the budget- \$1,779,092 is with the officer. During 2008 recession lost two personnel. Chief conducted a staffing analysis using a long-standing formula created by International Association of Police based on workload which concluded that we were short two personnel. Not asking for two, just respectfully requesting to replace one. With the budget and the workload impact Chief put together some information to pass around. Is not representing that this is etched in stone.

Lisa stated that she doesn't agree with the numbers but she agrees that we need another officer on staff. When we lost the two officers in 2008, one was forfeited for the position of a sergeant and it was approved by the BOS. FRO officer was released and he came back as a regular patrolman. The town is getting into areas of more business, more development, opioid crisis, etc.

Lisa made a motion to add another police officer as reflected in the budget. Seconded. Further discussion. Some in academy so not under-staffed, but still short causing O/T. Passed.

Brad asked for a motion from the FinCom. Bob and George have questions – George said increasing overall budget by \$80,000.00 with this new man, how much is another officer in total, not much being added and there is probably more expenses. Health, retirement does not come out of police budget.



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Raises are also not in budget as still working on contract. Lisa said need to look at affordability. Paul S asked if a Step 1, does he have college incentive. Approximate an extra 10%. Bob wants to know cost without another officer. George - Are reserves qualified? Yes, but not as trained. Chief Abbott is comfortable with two reserves but feel they will decrease as more go through the academy and the full-time position is filled.

Brad asked for a motion – made and seconded. Unanimous

Fire budget – would another firefighter save us money. Chief Gary prepared a spreadsheet for everyone. Bob asked how the schedule was set up – 4-10's or M-F/T-S 8-hour shifts set up now.

Brad said part of the conversation was that if two guys went out of the station there was no one left to cover or drive the truck. More call guys are home after 5:00 pm as they are home from their other jobs making it more beneficial to have the add-on cover days. George - When Amazon, the casino, marijuana plant opens what is going to happen?

Added person would back up during day, administrative, vacation/sick day coverage, and code enforcement, overtime

Lisa suggested that we put the money in the budget for an additional man and then discuss with the Union the Chief's ideas, the Board's ideas and then go from there so we have clarity on what we are adding – better use of person, is it a 42-hour position.

How many rescue workers – 9 full-time, 28 on-call. Lisa made motion to add firefighter and reach out to Union for impact bargaining, seconded. Passed

Brad asked for motion: Bob – what's available \$780,416 (includes added officer), less \$1,000 for Communications and firefighter. George made a motion, seconded. Unanimous.

Stabilization fund figure is currently - \$2,934,123

Free cash figure is currently - \$875,313

Treasurer – \$173,723 budget requested to change Treasurer/Collector to full-time, a full-time Assistant Treasurer, a full-time Collector, and a full-time Senior Clerk. Picking up a new collection, Water and Sewer, and setting up a centralized cash center. The staffing is required to be successful. Would release the floater – is floater qualified to take over a position, works in other departments. Currently the Treasurer/Collector is filling in until the end of July, 2016, utilizing 10 hours per week. We have an Assistant Treasurer/Collector and two Senior Clerks of which one is a floater. Lisa suggested that this remain as is and be reviewed in the fall as there are too many uncertainties at the present time.



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Lisa again suggested that time be given to review the staff and the workload and review it again in the fall. Leave the money as is, but don't change the staffing. No one is sure what the office is going to need at this time. Bob agreed to leave the money as is.

Paul S. asked if everyone good with leaving the \$205,672.28 as budgeted. Agreed – no vote necessary.

Brad asked if there were any further questions, none – no vote necessary.

Special Town Meeting Articles

\$20,000.00 from Property Insurance to Worker's Comp Insurance, Bob asked where coming from.

\$40,530.00 to purchase and equip new or late model police vehicle, housekeeping

\$5,100.00 for Richmond Road detour which required additional bus services

XX amount of dollars for additional funding to be added to department budgets, George asked if we could put an amount on it to vote, there are outstanding water bills, Kim says needs to be listed otherwise it can't be discussed at all, FinCom passing over, Lisa said amount known before going for review, or you can put a number and change it, comes from reserve, Paul S asks to pass over – Removed

\$185,000 voted at annual town meeting for CBA, have \$108,996.35 remaining, placeholder for bargaining unit, May 15 next meeting, Bob suggested increasing number as it can be reduced, amount needed is unknown, Lisa says can have a special town meeting, put in by BOS, currently no where near an agreement, placeholder – Removed

Establish a Capital Stabilization Fund, use free cash, Bob says you have to be careful because you can't touch without town meeting, put \$1,000,000 from stabilization and \$500,000 from free cash, - Passed

\$27,810.30 for Sewer Enterprise Fund for paying prior fiscal year bill, bills have been found and need to be paid by town meeting – Passed

\$1,500.00 for Water Enterprise Fund for paying prior fiscal year bill – Passed

Can we meet next Monday – 7:00 for FinCom.

Motion to adjourn Joel, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Amaral, Senior Clerk

Bob Paul
Chairman