

HAMILTON FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting

Via Zoom 837 3289 3126

Password 747755

August 19, 2020

Members present: Roll call vote to order: Valerie McCormack, John Pruellage (Chair), Christina Schenk-Hargrove (Vice Chair), Nick Tensen, and David Wanger.

Others present: Marisa Batista, Joe Domelowicz, Matt Ryan, Raymond Brunet, Kaleigh Pare, and Tom McEnaney.

This Hamilton Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm via Zoom.

Call to order/Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment Period

Discussion with Town Manager and/or Finance Director regarding a transfer into the Fire Department Fund.

Hamilton was awarded \$237,765 to purchase portable radios for the Fire Department. The Town's match was 5% (\$11,888.18). Hamilton applied for the grant with Rowley and Boxford as regional grants were preferred. The total grant for all three Towns was \$713,291.45. Radios cost \$6,500 each. There were 35 radios in total. The cost covered charging bags, spare batteries, and related equipment. The Federal government purchased the radios and could audit the use. Ray Brunet would determine how long the Town would need to keep the radios. The 10 watt radios would eliminate transmission issues currently experienced with the 5 watt radios being used. The current equipment was no longer serviceable.

Rowley would receive the funding and send an invoice to Hamilton for their share. A W-9 and invoice was required for the purchase. A FinCom reserve fund transfer was needed.

David Wanger moved to approve the transfer from the FinCom Reserve Fund to the Fire Department in the amount of \$11,888.18.

Seconded.

Roll Call Vote: David Wanger – aye, Nick Tensen – aye, Valerie McCormack – aye, Christina Schenk-Hargrove – aye, and John Pruellage – aye. Unanimous in favor.

Discussion with Town Counsel, attorney Tom McEnaney, regarding review of The Town legal contract and legal matters.

The previous agreement had been set at \$7,500 for the retainer and \$200 per hour for municipal billing. The original agreement was to be reviewed after six months. The retainer had been reduced to \$6,500 since January. The hourly rate would be reviewed again in December 2020 or January 2021. The Selectmen would discuss the appointment of Town Counsel at their next meeting. Legal costs were similar to surrounding towns. No current claims had been filed against the Town. Legal fees associated with the virus would be charged against the Cares Act Fund. Unemployment would be handled within the Town.

Motion made that the FinCom recommend renewing Town Counsel's contract as proposed. The proposal would be reviewed with the Town Manager in January 2021.

David Wanger seconded.

Roll Call Vote: David Wanger –aye, Nick Tensen – aye, Christina Schenk-Hargrove –aye, Valerie McCormack –aye, and John Pruellage – aye. Unanimous in favor.

Discussion with Kaleigh Pare regarding Patton Homestead.

Members discussed the potential of leasing the second and third floors of the Homestead to a business that leased offices to individual members. Membership would include use of an office space, conference rooms, wifi, a mailing address, supplies, and event space. KP Law was finalizing the public private partnership agreement. Expenses would be split equally between the Patton Homestead and the applicant.

The partnership would allow for a revenue split between the applicant and the Town after expenses. Heat, electric, water, and custodial services were noted expenses. Renovations (except bathroom work) would be provided by the partner. Insurance would be considered in the license agreement.

The Homestead was not listed on a historic register. The agreement would include use of the second and third floors as well as partial use of the accessible conference room. Second and third floors did not need accessibility as the areas were for member use rather than public use. Renovations would be paid for out of \$5,000 capital budget. Electrical and plumbing costs would be determined. The agreement would be signed in September 2020 and would outline what work needed to be completed. Revenue was projected to be between \$20,000 and \$40,000 in the first year. The area would be opened to members after the first of the year 2021.

Members discussed if the Homestead was over budget (\$196,000) in capital expenditures. Members hoped to see how the applicant hoped to achieve \$40,000 in revenue the first year and who would be responsible for minor maintenance issues. Potential business member packages were noted as costing \$100 a month for an office use one day a week or unlimited access for \$350 a month. Discussion would resume on September 2, 2020.

Discussion with Town Manager and/or Finance Director regarding finance related updates.

The Special Town Meeting schedule was provided. The closing of FY20 cash and receivables reconciliation was discussed. The impact of a new treasurer on the reconciliation was discussed. After FY20 was closed, State reporting would be done, and balance sheets would be submitted for Free Cash. Auditors would arrive within two weeks after September 15, 2020. Personnel changes were discussed. The Quarterly Report would be provided at the end of the week.

Members and staff discussed the Schools' plan for reopening and future discussions regarding additional costs or savings that would be associated with hybrid education. It was noted that the Schools would not be requesting additional funding from the General Fund. The transcript from Annual Town Meeting would be reviewed. Grants might be available from the Department of Education.

The CapCom's plan would be reviewed in October. \$90,000 would be requested from Free Cash for sidewalk improvements at Annual Town Meeting. The Cap Com would be invited to attend a FinCom meeting in September. The Town Hall Building project would cost \$8.9M. One article would approve CPC spending and another would approve the ballot vote for the debt exclusion. Town Meeting would be held on November 14, 2020. The debt service would be paid for by proceeds from that fund and would have no impact on the taxpayer. The CPC would end the year with a balance of \$600,000. The principal estimate on a \$3M bond would be investigated.

Discussion regarding timing and potential topics for Fall STM

The Warrant would be closed on September 14, 2020. Items included a debt exclusion, CPC request, and Free Cash requests. Special Town Meeting would consider the Town Hall Building project. The trash issue would be put on the agenda if the Selectmen were asked to consider it. The Waste Reduction Committee had proposed to keep every week collection. A strong educational campaign to compost more would be pursued.

Members discussed the logistics of the event. A joint procurement with Wenham for voting equipment could be paid for by the CARES Act. Members would discuss the Health Department plans on September 2, 2020. The Town Manager would be reviewed by the Selectmen in September or October 2020.

Discussion with Matthew Ryan regarding a potential role with FinCom

Matthew Ryan reviewed his background. Members described the importance of the associate position.

Motion made by David Wanger to add Matt Ryan as an associate member.
Nick Tensen seconded.

Roll Call Vote: David Wanger –aye, Nick Tensen – aye, Christina Schenk-Hargrove –aye, Valerie McCormack –aye, and John Pruellage – aye. Unanimous in favor.

Discussion regarding FinCom goals for FY21. Committee Member and Liaison updates.

A meeting with the CapCom would be scheduled. The Housing Production Plan would be on a future agenda. Members discussed the potential cell tower behind Town Hall. The Selectmen would review the goals of the Town Manager and increase technology and Town communication. Rick Mitchell would be asked to attend the next meeting to discuss the promotion of downtown business and update the FinCom regarding the Hamilton Development Committee status. The Planning Board would not be bringing a new high density by-law forward for Special Town Meeting.

The Town Hall Building Project Committee was receiving bids, finalizing designs, and seeking temporary administration locations. Plans would be distributed at Special Town Meeting. Once Town Meeting approved the plans, a vote would be held within five days. Handicapped access to Town Hall was still being considered. The CPC would be requesting \$3M for the project. Members of the FinCom would reach out to the School Committee to foster a relationship and discuss Quarterly Reports.

Determine/Discuss agenda for next meeting

The Health Department reorganization, Quarterly Report, and discussions with the assessor regarding revenue would be on the next agenda. The Hamilton Development Corporation would meet on September 16, 2020. The Patton agreement would be discussed. The CapCom would be invited to attend to discuss a five year plan. Annual Town Meeting might be held in May.

Adjournment.

Motion made by David Wanger to adjourn.at 8:10 pm.

Christina Schenk-Hargrove seconded.

Roll call vote: Valerie McCormack – aye, Christina Schenk-Hargrove –aye, Nick Tensen – aye, David Wanger – aye, and John Pruellage - aye. Unanimous in favor.

Prepared by:

Marcie Ricker



Attest

Date 10/28/20