

**HAMILTON FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Meeting**

Via Zoom 840 1798 7905

Passcode 153901

March 24, 2021

6:30 p.m.

**Members Present:** John Pruellage, Valerie McCormack, Nicholas Tensen, Christina Schenk Hargrove, and David Wanger.

**Others Present:** Joseph Domelowicz, Town Manager; Dyan Katz, Finance Director

This meeting was called to order by John Pruellage at 6:34 p.m. with a quorum established via Zoom.

Roll Call: David Wanger – aye, Nicholas Tensen – aye, Christina Schenk Hargrove – aye, Valerie McCormack – aye, and John Pruellage – aye.

**1. Discussion with Town Manager and interim Finance Director regarding finance related updates**

John Pruellage introduced Dyan Katz, the Assistant Director of Finance to the Finance Committee (FinCom). Previous to this evening's meeting, Ms. Katz sent the quarterly report to FinCom members.

Mr. Pruellage requested a copy of the budget power point presentation that was edited after Marissa Batista left her position as Finance Director. Joseph Domelowicz agreed to send it to Mr. Pruellage as well as the budget warrant draft by the end of next week which would include a list that explained the changes that had been made. Mr. Domelowicz requested that he receive the final warrant language and the FinCom book of recommendations by April 16, 2021.

Mr. Domelowicz reported that the advertisement for the new Finance Director closed last Friday. Bernie Lynch and his group would do the first cut of applicants next week and then the Screening Committee would interview the finalists.

Mr. Domelowicz updated FinCom on the Water Study and said they were investigating the possibility of a grant that could fund the study. They are also working with Senator Tarr's Drought Task Force as well as Ipswich, Wenham and Topsfield Committees to find alternate water resources. Mr. Domelowicz said that the Water Study would not be put on the warrant for the upcoming Town Meeting.

**2. Discussion regarding Town Hall renovation project, with opportunity for proponents and opponents to speak to the merits of the warrant article**

The resident survey information regarding the Town Hall renovation project is currently being compiled. Town resident, Rudy Pisano sent Mr. Pruellage an email which listed his concerns with regard to the renovation. FinCom agreed to share that email with the Town Hall Building Committee before their next meeting on April 1, 2021. In the email, one of the questions that Mr. Pisano had was, what would the school do if there was a surplus resulting from a stimulus and Mr. Pruellage agreed to explain to Mr. Pisano that if there were extra funds from the stimulus bill they would go into an E & D Fund to be used at a later date.

### **3. Discussion regarding potential ATM warrants**

Mr. Pruellage prepared a list of potential warrant articles for FinCom members to review. Below is the schedule of assignments to be voted on and potentially amended at the next FinCom meeting on April 7, 2021, with the final being due April 16, 2021:

- 2-1 Prior Year Bills – Mr. Pruellage
- 2-2 Compensation/Classification Table- Ms. Schenk Hargrove
- 2-3 Capital Expenditures – Ms. Schenk Hargrove
- 2-4 General Town Departmental Appropriations – Mr. Pruellage
- 2-5 Water Enterprise Budget – Mr. Wanger
- 2-6 Annual Financial Actions – Ms. Schenk Hargrove
- 2-7 Community Preservation Budget – Mr. Tensen
- 2-8 Town Hall Building Project – Mr. Tensen
- 2-9 Annual Budget for Receiving Funds – Mr. Pruellage
- 2-10 Hamilton Development Corporation – Mr. Wanger
- 2-11 OPEB Trust Fed – Mr. Wanger
- 2-12 Patton Homestead Operating Budget – Ms. McCormick
- 2-13 Stabilization Fund Transfer- Ms. Schenk Hargrove
- 2-14 Water Study - Removed
- 3-1 Chebacco Road Project – Ms. McCormick
- 3-2 PILOT for Solar Array Atop Library Roof – Mr. Wanger
- 3-3 Conservation Restriction on Patton Homestead – Ms. McCormick

### **4. Review and approval of available minutes**

A change was made to the February 24, 2021 minutes on the second paragraph where, “Mr. Tensen reported that Wenham had hired someone...” was changed to read, “The Town Hall Building Committee hired Kristen Alexander...”

Motion made by John Pruellage to approve the FinCom joint minutes for Hamilton and Wenham of February 10, 2021, and Hamilton FinCom minutes of February 24, 2021 and March 3, 2021.

Seconded by Christina Schenk Hargrove.

Roll Call Vote: Valerie McCormick – aye, David Wanger – aye, Christina Schenk Hargrove – aye, Nick Tensen – aye, and John Pruellage – aye.

FinCom agreed to table the approval of the February 9, 2021 minutes until the next meeting.

Ms. McCormick left the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

#### **5. Discussion regarding FinCom commentary and 5-year town forecast**

Mr. Pruellage presented the 5-year town forecast scenarios table that he created for discussion with FinCom and explained that he had added another year, FY25 and also noted that the FY22 numbers would be tweaked with final numbers next week. The table would be a working document that would change fiscal year forecasts based on certain assumptions.

Mr. Pruellage said that by April 16, 2021, with the printed commentary they would be able to decide if some of the assumptions were valid or not. The best-case scenario was being driven by a 5 percent increase in property value, school expenses at 3 percent and the town at 2 ¼ percent. Future projections would be driven by the growth factor with the assumptions being based on an average percentage.

FinCom members agreed that the model was a useful tool to help residents understand what expense ratios would need to be to avoid an override going forward and to set goals for the town and the schools for what expense rates should be. FinCom members discussed the possibility of adding future debt to the model and considered whether or not it would be useful information. Members agreed that adding a narrative with a glossary of terms would be helpful when sharing the information with residents when they decided to release the table.

#### **6. Committee Member and Liaison Updates**

Mr. Pruellage and Mr. Wanger attended the first Umbrella Committee meeting earlier in the day which consisted of Committee Chairs and the Town Manager. The Umbrella Committee agreed to meet a few times during the year to enable communication and discuss town financial stability as well as master planning collectively with the realization that their issues are interrelated. The next meeting was planned for July.

The Patton Homestead License agreement was distributed previously to FinCom by Ms. Schenk Hargrove with the language change that addressed the termination of the agreement should there be a potential sale.

Mr. Tensen distributed the Town Hall project summary to FinCom prior to the meeting. Mr. Pruellage added that the debt exclusion vote would take place after the ATM.

Ms. Schenk Hargrove reported on the Board of Selectman liaison meeting that the 133 Essex Street project had asked for a preliminary meeting with the Planning Board. The town notified residents that if anyone had any interest in that project they should attend the meeting. The Planning Board would not be taking any action as there had not been a filing.

Ms. Schenk Hargrove reported that Mr. Domelowicz shared that the School Committee agreed to formally support the Town Hall Building Project with residents.

Ms. Schenk Hargrove shared that Mr. Domelowicz said that the audit report was done and that there were not any big problems. Mr. Pruellage reported that he had asked the auditors a few questions at the last Board of Selectmen meeting and that there was not anything controversial, just mostly the usual recommendations. The auditors would plan to attend a future FinCom meeting, most likely in late April.

**7. Adjournment**

Motion made by Nick Tensen to adjourn at 9:12 p.m.

Seconded by David Wanger.

Roll Call Vote: David Wanger – aye, Nick Tensen – aye, Christina Schenk Hargrove – aye, and John Pruellage – aye.

Prepared by:

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Ann Schlecht

3/27/2021

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Attest