

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM  
1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2018  
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The Chair opens the meeting

- Meeting was opened at 6:00 PM in the Upstairs Meeting Room
- **Finance Committee members present:** John Hanold, Fred Bowman, Michael Naughton, Jen Audley, Richard Widmer, and Greg Garrison. Chris Menegoni was absent.
- **Others present:** Emergency Management Director John Zellman and Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen.
- The Finance Committee Chair announced that the meeting is being recorded by MCCI and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting. No one else was recording the meeting.

### Minutes

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of July 11, 2018.

Vote:   6   In Favor        0   Opposed        0   Abstained

### Review Current Stipends

#### Emergency Management Director (EMD)

Emergency Management was originally Civil Defense. Over time, and particularly since 9/11, the work significantly changed. Civil Defense activities are now under Homeland Security, and Emergency Management has evolved to focus on extreme weather events and dealing with the aftermath of clean-up and providing shelter and basic services for the displaced.

Many EMDs are Fire Chiefs (or high level staff) due to their background in dealing with emergency situations and hazardous materials response. When a situation switches from fire-related to EMD, the EMD/Fire Chief can delegate the fire responsibilities to his fire command staff and function as the emergency incident commander. When the EMD is not a fire department official, there tends to be a disconnect between the two departments, and it can be harder for the EMD to facilitate an incident.

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There was discussion about how the Fire Chief and EMD positions overlap, and when they are separated. Some of the training is pertinent to both positions, but in the case of an Emergency Management situation, Chief Zellman acts outside of his Fire Chief responsibilities. It was noted that these two positions seem much more intertwined than other stipend positions with the person's day job, but people were still comfortable as seeing the EMD as a separate position.

Some of the things recently done as EMD include:

- Attendance at quarterly EMD meetings in Agawam with a training component.
- National Incident Management System (NIMS) training and certification.
- Annual Emergency Preparedness Grants have been received and used most recently for an accountability system and ID tags for personnel.
- Chief Zellman is currently involved in a \$75,000 feasibility study of a micro grid project that would provide electricity to the Turners Falls Fire District, Montague Police Department, and possibly the Montague DPW in the case of a power outage. If the project moves forward, it could be a \$2-3 million dollar project benefiting the town. Solar panels, possibly on the DPW facility roof, would provide everyday clean energy, but the battery component would provide power in case of outages.
- Chief Zellman is also planning for how to set up a regional shelter.

Chief Zellman left the meeting.

Mr. Naughton suggested speaking with the Turners Falls Fire District (TFFD) to discuss treating the EMD as a shared position with TFFD Fire Chief as part of determining what EMD should be. Mr. Widmer prefers not to add more complexity to the discussion. Mr. Garrison is pretty sure that every time Chief Zellman goes to an EMD meeting he takes his district vehicle on district time, but is interested in what the TFFD thinks. Ms. Audley is not inclined to open this can of worms at this time and suspects EMDs may become regional, making it a moot issue.

**Do we want to pay chairmen more than other members?**

Mr. Bowman noted that stipends originally were paid because there was no town staff to assist in the duties of the board. Today, committee Chairs generally have a greater time commitment

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in that they often are involved with setting agendas and have more interaction with town staff. Mr. Garrison feels that a higher stipend for the Chair makes sense if the Chair has greater time commitment, especially with Selectboard. Mr. Hanold respectfully disagreed and assumes that all members will give equal attention to matters at hand. Mr. Bowman thinks that having full time Town Administrator eliminates need for higher stipend for chair. Ms. Audley thinks that on some boards the Chair clearly does more work, but that varies from board to board. Ms. Audley asked to go on record as not seeing all board members having same responsibilities; being point person with staff and dealing with other Chair issues is a lot more effort. Ms. Audley noted that she found that her duties as regular member on Cultural Council has resulted in a noticeable drop in responsibilities compared to having been Chair of the Cultural Council. Mr. Bowman noted that Chair responsibilities can change over time. Previously the Capital Improvements Committee Chair was responsible for posting meetings and taking minutes, but that work is now done by staff and the Chair just sets and runs the agenda, coordinates with staff, and writes the annual report. Ms. Audley noted that boards with stipends are supported by good staff that provides the heavy lifting. Ms. Audley and Mr. Widmer don't think a small increase in the stipend for committee Chairs will change anything. Mr. Naughton noted that minutes from the Board of Assessors' meetings suggest that most meetings last less than one hour. Mr. Naughton found that of local towns that had different stipends for Chairs, members on average received about 7/8 of the Chair's stipend.

Finance Committee Moved:

That the stipends for Chairs of the Selectboard, Board of Assessors, and Board of Health be 10% higher than the stipends for other members.

Vote:   5   In Favor        0   Opposed        1   Abstained

**Do we want to maintain a hierarchy for the Selectboard, Board of Assessors, and Board of Health?**

All of these boards originally did the work that is now done by town staff. It was unclear how much of each board's responsibilities are now handled by staff, and how often boards now do inspections or other hands-on work outside of meetings. Mr. Hanold thinks there should be a hierarchy with the Selectboard at the top. Noting that the Board of Assessors has an important function but depends on staff to provide the basis for decision, and the Board of Health has more hands-on responsibility, Mr. Hanold would put the Board of Health in the middle of the hierarchy, and the Board of Assessors at the bottom. Mr. Bowman noted that the Selectboard also acts as the Sewer Commissioners and the Personnel Board. Ms. Audley said the Board of

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Assessors' work tends to be more routine, while the Board of Health members need to be available and able to do things outside of meetings. Ms. Audley noted the Christopher Boutwell told her staff is not available 24/7 and that health matters happen after hours, such as getting a call in the middle of the night if a house burns down. Mr. Naughton noted that minutes from the Board of Assessors' meeting suggest that most meeting last 30 minutes or less.

Mr. Widmer to report back with a matrix of hierarchy based on responsibilities, time spent after hours, etc. The Finance Committee commits to make a decision at the next meeting.

**Reports from discussion with town staff:**

The Board of Health typically meets once a month, and minutes of recent meetings posted on the Town's website appear to consist primarily of reports from staff. Michael Nelson provided the following information about the Board of Health:

Supporting and guiding the health staff is the largest role of the BOH.

- We are extremely lucky to have an excellent health director who is able to facilitate the office on a daily basis with little daily oversight.
- The Board actively assists staff with food inspections, housing inspections, and witnessing Title 5 inspections.
- There are a variety of subcommittees board members are on, such as emergency planning and solid waste.
- The Board also supports the attorney general's receivership program for abandoned/blighted properties and often joins our staff on inspections and at court.
- We often have trainings or presentations to attend regarding changing policies/regulations - such as tattoos, marijuana, vaping/e-cigs, AirBNB, etc.

Bowman talked to Director of Health Gina McNeely about the Animal Inspector and Barn Inspector. The Animal Inspector did 619 animal inspections, while the Barn Inspector inspected 46 barns. The Animal Inspector also deals with quarantining animals. Neither is paid additionally for travel expenses. Mr. Bowman did not ask Ms. McNeely her thoughts on paying a stipend on a per-inspection basis, but will follow up.

Mr. Hanold was unable to talk to the Town Clerk, but spoke to the Assistant Town Clerk regarding the work of the Clerk to the Board of Registrars. After some discussion, there was some confusion about the various duties of the Registrars and the Clerk to the Board of Registrars. Mr. Bowman will talk to the Town Clerk for clarification. Mr. Hanold thinks it may make sense to base these stipends on the number of elections. In the case of the Board of Registrars, we have an average of 3 elections each year and the current stipend of \$500 for

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provides each Registrar about \$167 per election. Mr. Hanold suggests making it \$150 per election.

**How often should we address stipend levels** – The consensus is that stipend payments should be evaluated and updated (if necessary) every three years.

**Which stipends are intended as a nominal honorarium and which are intended to compensate for time and effort?**

Honorarium: Moderator, Selectboard, Board of Assessors, Board of Health, IT Administrator, Forest Warden, Clerk to the Board of Registrars, Tree Warden, and Emergency Management Director.

Compensation for time and effort: Board of Registrars, Animal Inspector, Barn Inspector, Alternate Building Inspector, Plumbing Inspector, Gas Inspector, Electrical Inspector

**Inventories** – Ms. Olsen reported that the additional information has been requested from departments.

**Preliminary Use of Free Cash**

Free Cash was certified at \$742,667

Potential uses include: an amount for FY2020 operating budget (\$150,000 for FY2019), amount for FY2020 capital items (policies recommend an additional \$277,323 in capital expenses – FY2019 budget used \$187,000 for capital items), amount for FY2020 non-capital articles (FY2019 budget used \$7,000 for non-capital items), amount for Special Town Meeting appropriations, appropriation to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund.

Use of Free Cash for FY2020 operating budgets: Mr. Hanold suggested dropping this to \$100,000. Everyone agreed.

Use of Free Cash for FY2020 capital Items: The Financial Policies amount was rounded up to \$280,000.

Use of Free Cash for FY2020 non-capital articles: Preference is to use taxation to fund these items.

Free Cash reserved for potential Special Town Meeting needs: \$150,000

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Balance available for appropriation into the Town Capital Stabilization Fund: About \$200,000, would be available after above reservations, but it was decided to keep the Free Cash available for use until after the budget process.

Mr. Naughton asked that we present an article at the fall Special Town Meeting to transfer \$37,811 of Free Cash to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund to compensate for an annual transfer intended but not made as part of the Fiscal Year 2019 budget. During the budget process, the decision was made to allocate the Kearsarge lease revenue equally between operating budgets and stabilization funds. It was further decided that the Town's share of the operating allocation would also be transferred to the Town Capital Stabilization Fund. This second transfer amount was inadvertently excluded from the final budget.

**Next Meeting Date: August 22**

**Topics not anticipated within in the 48 hour posting requirements - None**

**Meeting adjourned at 8:28 PM**

**List of Documents and Exhibits:**

- Minutes of July 11, 2018