

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
UPSTAIRS MEETING ROOM, 1 AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MA  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2019  
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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:** Jen Audley, Fred Bowman, John Hanold, Michael Naughton, and Richard Widmer. Chris Menegoni and Greg Garrison were absent.
- **Others present:** Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen. Town Administrator Steve Ellis was absent.
- The Chair announced that the meeting is being recorded by MCTV 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 March 20, 2019 as amended.

Vote:   5   In Favor              0   Opposed              0   Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of April 3, 2019.

Vote:   5   In Favor              0   Opposed              0   Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of the April 2, 2019 Civic Leaders meeting at which a quorum of the Finance Committee was present.

Vote:   5   In Favor                 Opposed                 Abstained

Mr. Naughton stated that Mr. Ellis notified him the GMRSD School Committee voted last night to proceed with a planning committee.

**Finance Committee Report and town meeting warrant/motion information**

Mr. Hanold asked Ms. Audley if she wanted to present an overview of the process. Ms. Audley collected suggestions for the front section. Ms. Olsen collected suggestions for the second part and sent a revised draft to Ms. Audley on Thursday. Ms. Audley made changes and sent her revision to Ms. Olsen who made Ms. Audley's changes and then sent the latest version to committee members.

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Ms. Olsen will not be able to make additional changes until Tuesday, so if there are more than minor changes someone else will take responsibility.

Mr. Widmer is satisfied with the new charts that Ms. Olsen provided and that they attended to the group's decisions.

Mr. Naughton questioned the change in the total budget from \$24,500,568 to \$24,500,268 and back to \$24,500,568. Ms. Olsen explained that the \$24,500,568 total budget amount was the correct amount that the Finance Committee had voted to recommend. After the budgets had been approved, Ms. Olsen adjusted the requested amount for the IT budget to the recommended amount, as is often done when the Finance Committee recommends a lower budget and the department agrees to reduce its request. However, doing this caused a change in the calculation of the Town overhead budgeted in the WPCF budget and changed the WPCF total to a lower number than what was on the warrant and that the Finance Committee had recommended. After realizing this, Ms. Olsen corrected the WPCF budget back to the approved amount. Mr. Naughton said we could easily re-vote the sewer budget. Mr. Hanold is happy with the current number. Ms. Olsen noted that changing the recommended WPCF budget would cause it to differ from the warrant and raise questions. Mr. Naughton noted that this is the Finance Committee's decision. Mr. Bowman is happy to let it ride. Mr. Naughton prefers that any changes to the budget be made by the Finance Committee. Ms. Olsen noted that the budget approved by the Finance Committee never changed. Mr. Naughton is concerned that saying it's only a few hundred dollars is a slippery slope that he doesn't think we should go down.

Mr. Hanold asked that a final budget file be sent that fits the number.

Mr. Hanold asked about the reimbursement for the SRO. Ms. Audley earlier asked about the fact that the budget file contained a lower revenue estimate for the GMRSD SRO than what the GM plans to pay. Ms. Olsen explained that the Finance Committee voted to accept a 50% reimbursement for the GMRSD as part of the estimated revenue. The district has actually agreed to pay 75%. Next year's budget file should reflect the actual reimbursement.

There were a lot of suggestions for fine-tuning but no significant changes. Examples include:

- Put all labels outside of pie charts
- Add sentence that 1.8% local receipts = meals tax
- Add % of total for local receipts.

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- Add explanation of decrease in SRO revenue
- There was discussion of how to present the status of the \$45k library buildings study article.
- Ms. Audley asked what, if anything, should be mentioned about Parks and Recreation. It was decided that no information is necessary. Mr. Widmer feels that Parks and Recreation is a high performing department and worthy of mention, but Ms. Audley noted that the things discussed don't really fit in the context of this report.
- Mr. Widmer suggested moving most of the introduction information into a cover letter. This was agreed to.
- Mr. Hanold is concerned that some background and comments on articles may be overwhelming.
- There was discussion of what if anything should be included in a comment on the airport budget. It was decided to rewrite that comment to: The airport commission made a convincing case that hiring an intern was beneficial for airport operations and continuing the position, while restoring the Airport Manager's hours to the previous level is important for FY20.
- Mr. Naughton is not convinced we should leave the statement that our high school students are lucky to have the tech school. Ms. Audley feels this provides more context for town meeting regarding the tech school. For town meeting members, the idea that the GM schools are losing students to the tech school has a lot of different feelings associated with it and Ms. Audley thinks we should anticipate that.
- Mr. Naughton will make the changes per Ms. Olsen's notes and send the revised draft. Anything that still needs to be changed will go to Ms. Olsen. She will incorporate the final changes and send that out Tuesday. On Wednesday the Chair will decide if a meeting is still needed.

Mr. Hanold thanked all members for the efforts in the redesign of the report.

Mr. Naughton would like to be alerted when revenue estimates are changed for the tax recapitulation form. His personal feeling is that it's not a bad thing to have healthy free cash, but it's important to understand how much is from extra revenue and underspent budget, and what was unusual in a given year.

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Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the FY20 Report to Town Meeting as amended.

Vote:   5   In Favor              0   Opposed              0   Abstained

**Next Meeting Date:** –April 17th to finalize and approve the Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting

**Topics not anticipated within in the 48 hour posting requirements** – Mr. Naughton said he plans to resign as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, not because he doesn't enjoy it, but it because it takes too much time and prevents him from doing other things. He's done it for about 20 years and it's time for someone else to do it. Mr. Hanold told him he would be deeply missed.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:33 PM**

**List of Documents and Exhibits:**

- Minutes of March 20, 2019
- Minutes of April 3, 2019
- Revised draft of Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting