

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2020

Approved
12/29/2020

Members in attendance: John Trickey (chair), Cara Castenson (secretary), Emily Marriott, Bill Martell, and Fred Vanderbeck.

Also in attendance: Margaret Stancer, Pelham School Committee member.

John Trickey called the meeting to order at 1:32.

Review and Approve Minutes from September 15, 2020

Bill Martell moved to approve the minutes from September 15th, Fred Vanderbeck seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

ATFC Annual Meeting Recap

Members discussed the virtual seminars they attended. It was noted that the Department of Local Services offers a lot of assistance for towns and finance committees in their financial planning, including sample policies and sample templates for modeling trends and projections.

Updates about Chapter 70 funding were also discussed. It's not clear what effects the pandemic's strain on the state budget will have on Chapter 70; even in the 2007 recession, the money didn't decrease. Chapter 70 is currently being redesigned by the state. For Pelham Elementary School, even though we had a significant drop in enrollment because of COVID, our Chapter 70 didn't decrease this year because of Chapter 70's hold harmless provision; that could change next year, however, if students don't return.

Written Policies and Procedures

It was agreed that it's time to revisit the Committees written policies, and that John and Emily will work on it. Cara will help as needed.

Elementary School Update

Margaret Stancer reported that the remote learning seems to be going much better this fall than it was last spring, and that a parent survey indicated fairly good satisfaction with the remote learning experience overall. For now, the case metrics suggest that learning will stay remote for the foreseeable future. Also, everyone seems very happy with the new principal. As for next year's enrolment, the principal is planning to contact families who left to try to ascertain their plans for next year. Also, John Trickey wondered whether the funds approved for accessibility updates to the school have been spent.

Winter Meetings

It was agreed that meetings during the winter will likely have to be held remotely.

December Four Town Meeting

John Trickey noted that he asked Doug Slaughter for salary increase amounts for the upcoming roundtable. If there were a one-time blip, it could come out of free cash, but next year will be the last year of reserves and would have to be made up through the tax rate after that.

Capital Planning Meeting

The capital planning meeting will be held mid-December. Rick Adamcek has \$288k budgeted for a new dump truck; the town is also has upcoming a new fire truck (combination pumper/tanker) and the elementary school roof.

Roundtable Meeting

The finance committee will meet about in December to prepare for the Roundtable meeting with the town's departments.

Budget Hearings

Budget hearings with the town's departments will be remote this year.

Emily Marriott made a motion to adjourn, Bill Martell seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:29.