

2021 APR -8



Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

January 25, 2021

Members Present: Daniel Norian, Judith Leggett, Derek Staffier, Shannon Coffey, James Norian, Rick Jordan

Members Not Present:

Also Present: Selectmen Eric Beckerman, Suzette Waters, John Costa

Chairman Daniel Norian announced that pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, Subchapter 20 and the Governor's March 23, 2020 Order imposing limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this hearing of the Finance Committee will be conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public was permitted, but every effort was made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided for in the Order. Chairman Daniel Norian reminded the viewing audience that persons who would like to view this meeting while in progress may do so by joining the Zoom link for the videoconference in session.

Daniel Norian, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. with all members present. Each Board member acknowledged their presence at the meeting by responding in the affirmative during the roll call.

Daniel Norian, Chair welcomed new member Richard Jordan to the Finance Committee. Mr. Jordan discussed that he is a relatively new resident of Avon. He was formally a resident of the city of Medford for twenty years. He is looking forward to being a part of the Finance Committee.

A motion was made by Judith Leggett to forgo the meeting minutes for October 27, 2020, seconded by Derek Staffier. A roll call vote was taken. Judith Leggett voted aye, Shannon Coffey voted aye, Derek Staffier voted aye, James Norian voted aye, Daniel Norian voted aye. The motion carries.

A motion was made by Judith Leggett to forgo the meeting minutes of November 20, 2020, seconded by Derek Staffier. A roll call vote was taken. Judith Leggett voted aye, Richard Jordan voted aye, aye, Shannon Coffey voted aye, Derek Staffier voted aye, James Norian voted aye, and Daniel Norian voted aye. The motion carries.

Warrants:

A motion was made by Shannon Coffey to approve Daniel Norian to sign the warrant on behalf of the Finance Committee members, seconded by Judith Leggett. A roll call vote was taken. Shannon Coffey voted aye, Judith Leggett voted aye, Derek Staffier voted aye, Richard Jordan voted aye, James Norian voted aye, and Daniel Norian voted aye. The motion carries. The Finance Committee members will email Chair Daniel Norian stating that they allow him to sign on behalf of them.

A motion was made by Shannon Coffey to pay the warrant for \$600.00 to the Post Office, seconded by Judith Leggett. A roll call vote was taken. Shannon Coffey voted aye, Judith Leggett voted aye, Derek Staffier voted aye, Richard Jordan voted aye, James Norian voted aye, and Daniel Norian voted aye. The motion carries.

A motion was made by Derek Staffier to approve the payment of \$160.00 for the MMA annual dues and membership, seconded by Judith Leggett. A roll call vote was taken. Judith Leggett voted aye, Derek Staffier voted aye, Richard Jordan voted aye, Shannon Coffey voted aye, James Norian voted aye, Daniel Norian voted aye. The motion carries.

Richard Jordan asked who uses the MMA membership. Mr. Beckerman discussed that it is an annual MMA Association of Town Finance Committees. Any member of the Finance Committee has access to the use it.

Special Town Meeting Discussions

Richard Jordan discussed that the BOS and department heads are all following a general strategy of level funding the budget or at least that was his impression. Mr. Beckerman stated that is correct, with minor adjustments to it. Judith Leggett stated that all departments last year made a significant cut in their budget because of COVID. Mr. Beckerman stated that the fire department did have some increases in their expense line due to the new building; they do not have solid number yet on some of the energy costs.

Richard Jordan is concerned about underfunding some of the departments. Selectman Beckerman discussed the overall expense budget and how it works.

Derek Staffier would like to have access to the budgets for the next BOS/Finance Committee Workshop which is scheduled for this coming Saturday; school committee and the Police department will discuss their budget. Judith Leggett stated that the town administrator has been doing a good job so far with the budget.

Judith Leggett discussed that it looks like the Finance Committee has not submitted their budget on Cleargov. Selectman Beckerman will look into this. Daniel Norian stated that the BOS has been great with meeting with the Finance Committee in regards to the budget. There were no questions from the public.

Daniel Norian discussed that there is a special town meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. at the Avon Middle High School. The Finance Committee will review the articles.

Mr. Beckerman discussed that free cash gets certified in September and gives them extra funds to be able to do some capital projects, etc. This year they are being very conservative due to COVID. Selectman Beckerman discussed having timeframes for ongoing and upcoming projects. There are six articles, old bills, and stabilization transfers on the warrant. Mr. Beckerman stated that the town administrator has been doing a great job of explaining the reasoning behind the articles.

Daniel Norian, Chair reviewed the following articles with the Finance Committee:

ARTICLE 1: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of Seven Hundred Fifty-Six Dollars and Eighty-Two cents (\$756.82) for a retro salary increase to an officer that was miscalculated in the prior year, or take any other action in relation thereto.

Proposed by: BOARD OF SELECTMEN and TREASURER-COLLECTOR

Note: A new stipend as part of the new recently approved collective bargaining agreement was not added in the previous year when officer was tasked with the position.

Judith Leggett asked for clarification on whether it is for a retro salary increase or miss calculation of a stipend. Selectman Beckerman explained that stipends are part of the salary. In this case, there was a stipend missed from last year.

A motion was made by Judith Leggett to recommend article one as written, seconded by Derek Staffier. No discussion on the motion. Judith Leggett voted aye, Derek Staffier voted aye, Shannon Coffey voted aye, Richard Jordan voted aye, James Norian vote aye. The motion carries.

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of Twelve Thousand Dollars (\$12,000.00) to pay prior year bills, or take any other action in relation thereto.

Proposed by: TOWN ACCOUNTANT

The Finance Committee would like clarification regarding what Article 2 is for. Judith Leggett would like to wait for pending additional information.

A motion was made by Judith Leggett for the Finance Committee to withhold their recommendation for Article two until further discussion at town meeting, seconded by ???

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the Public Safety Building Stabilization Account the sum of One Million Twelve Thousand Six Hundred Eighty-Three Dollars (\$1,012,683) to the Public Safety Construction Account, or take any other action in relation thereto.

Proposed by: DESIGNER SELECTION COMMITTEE and BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Note: \$312,683 of funds would reimburse construction account for funds spent on off-site construction costs used to reconstruct Fagan Drive. The transfer will restore the original budget to construct the public safety buildings as voted by the town.

The remaining \$700,000 is in lieu of going out to bond for the remaining balance of the bond authorization. By using these funds, it would save the town approximately \$20,000 in borrowing cost as well as thousands in interest cost on the bond.

A motion was made by Derek Staffier to recommend Article 3 as written, seconded by James Norian. A roll call vote was taken. Judith Leggett voted aye, Derek Staffier voted aye, Shannon Coffey voted aye, Richard Jordan voted aye, and James Norian voted aye. The motion carries.

Selectman Beckerman explained Article 3 with the Finance Committee. Derek asked if there should be more than one article. Mr. Beckerman explained that is better to do it in one transfer. Daniel Norian and Shannon Coffey asked questions regarding the revolving account. Mr. Beckerman discussed that the existing money is being moved around to projects that were already in the works. Mr. Costa is concerned with the transfer of money from the bond. He is concerned with running out of money for the Fire Station project since Fagan Drive was not included in the initial budget amount of the bond. Mr. Beckerman answered no and explained that the stabilization account was up and above the original authorization. Daniel Norian is concerned that next year more money will be needed to finish the Fire Station.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the Butler School Parking Lot Stabilization Account the sum of Three Hundred Sixty-Three Thousand Two Hundred Forty-Seven Dollars and Fifty Six Cents (\$363,247.56) to be placed in the article (Article 25, 5.1.18 ATM) for the rehabilitation, repair or reconstruction of the Ralph D. Butler School parking lot, or take any other action in relation thereto.

Proposed by: AVON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Note: These are the remaining funds in the stabilization account that are needed to fund the construction of the parking lot. A motion may be made on floor for the final amount available due to accumulated interest.

Mr. Beckerman discussed this article with the Finance Committee to better understand why it is needed.

Mr. John Costa asked if the old church was part of the Butler School parking lot. Mr. Dan Norian discussed that question pertains more towards article 5. Shannon asked if the Finance Committee can ask questions at the workshop this coming Saturday to talk about the articles at special town meeting.

A motion was made by Shannon Coffey to recommend Article 4 as written, seconded by Derek Staffier. A roll call vote was taken. Judith Leggett voted aye, Derek Staffier voted aye, Shannon Coffey voted aye, Richard Jordan voted aye, James Norian voted aye. The motion carries.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000) to the article (Article 25, 5.1.18 ATM) for the rehabilitation, repair or reconstruction of the Ralph D. Butler School parking lot, or take any other action in relation thereto.

Proposed by: AVON SCHOOL COMMITTEE and BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Note: The cost of the project exceeds funding available due to increased cost in the demolition of the church that resulted in large asbestos remediation costs.

Mr. Beckerman discussed that when the Butler School project was first discussed, the Town of Avon did not own the church property. The church was purchased after. There are now additional costs for the project due to the asbestos that needs to be removed from the church.

Mr. Costa asked the Finance Committee if there is a site plan for the Butler School project. Plans can be viewed on the Town of Avon Planning Board website. The Finance Committee will receive clarification regarding Article 5 at the special town meeting. At that time a vote will be taken.

The Finance Committee tabled Article 5. There was no motion.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) for the replacement and repairs to various HVAC units and roof repairs of the Avon Town Offices, or take any other action in relation thereto.

Proposed by: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Note: The town has various non-operating units as well as various leaks in the roofs. The leaks are underneath the rooftop units.

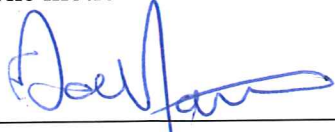
Mr. Dan Norian, Chair discussed that the roof repair and HVAC units are needed. Shannon Coffey asked if this would be funded as part of the Capital Plan. Mr. Beckerman discussed that the Capital Plan was just finalized and this will be part of the Capital Plan. He discussed the history of the Avon Town Hall buildings with the Finance Committee. Mr. Beckerman, Selectman discussed that at some point the Avon Town Hall will have to be rebuilt or completely remodeled. Judith Leggett asked if any estimates were received yet regarding the roof repairs and how the bidding process works. Mr. Beckerman discussed that it has to go out for procurement and bids will be received. Shannon Coffey would like to find out if any bids have been received yet prior to recommending Article 6.

The Finance Committee tabled Article 6.

The Finance Committee discussed the school department budget. Mr. Beckerman addressed some questions regarding the budget. This will be further discussed at the next BOS/Finance Committee workshop. Mr. Beckerman, Selectman discussed the significant increase in the IT budget the last three years.

The Finance Committee will meet the Monday after the next Board of Selectmen meeting. Mr. Jordan discussed what the Finance Committee meeting schedule is. Mr. Beckerman suggested that the Finance Committee meet the following Monday after the Board of Selectman's meetings.

A motion was made by Derek Staffier to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 8:20 p.m., seconded by Judith Leggett. A roll call vote was taken. Derek Staffier voted aye, Shannon Coffey voted aye, Judith Leggett voted aye, Richard Jordan voted aye, James Norian voted aye, and Dan Norian voted aye. The motion carries.



Dan Norian, Chair