

FINANCE COMMITTEE DRAFT MINUTES – Sept 28, 2021 06:30pm

Selectboard Members Present: Leigh Davis, Steve Bannon, Ed Abrahams, Bill Cooke

Finance Committee Members Present: Anne O'Dwyer, Meredith O'Connor, Michelle Loubert, Phil Orenstein

Others Present: Sue Carmel (Finance Director), Mark Pruhenski (Town Manager), Steve Bannon (Selectboard Chair), Ross Vivori (Principal Assessor), Garfield Reed (Selectboard Member)

1. Meeting Called to Order at 6:32pm by Chairperson O'Dwyer.
2. Roll Call Vote
3. Update on Minutes:
 - a. Ms. O'Dwyer announced to the committee that Tate Coleman, who is helping out in Ms. Carmel's office, is helping with the backlog of Selectboard and Finance Committee minutes.
4. Committee Reports:
 - a. None
5. Updates from Finance Director:
 - a. YTD August Report. See packet for details. Expenditures are roughly on track for the first two months of the Fiscal Year.
 - b. Mr. Orenstein asked for clarification regarding encumbrances. Ms. Carmel explained that anything over \$2,000 requires a Purchase Order. Blanket Purchase Orders cover a department for a full year.
 - c. Ms. O'Dwyer requested confirmation that the 2021 Fiscal Year has not been closed out. Ms. Carmel confirmed this.
 - d. Ms. Carmel noted that the audit report is being wrapped up. No significant deficiencies. Exit interview will occur soon. Ms. O'Dwyer asked if we should have a joint Finance Committee/Selectboard meeting. Ms. Carmel noted that they will not present due to COVID. Ms. Loubert asked why this is, why can they not present on Zoom? Mr. Bannon agreed. Mr. Bannon noted that he will follow up on this. Mr. Orenstein asked why the audit is taking so long, North Adams has the same auditor and has their report on their website already. Ms. Carmel noted that due to the alleged theft in the Treasurer/Collector office the forensic audit is causing delays for later audits. Mr. Orenstein asked if there are any other lingering issues causing this delay. Ms. Carmel affirmed. Ms. Loubert noted that this should be on the next agenda for a Zoom presentation.
6. Finance Committee Business:
 - a. Ms. O'Dwyer noted that the American Public Rescue Act (ARPA) meeting has been moved to the following Monday.
 - b. Ms. O'Dwyer shared that she is unable to continue as Chair of the Finance Committee due to many work and personal obligations. Ms. Loubert noted that she is unfortunately in the same position as Ms. O'Dwyer so must relinquish her position as Vice Chair. The organization was recommended as follows: Mr. Blauvelt as Chair, Ms. O'Dwyer as Vice Chair. Ms. Loubert commented that she would be unable to vote on this without Mr.

Blauvelt present. Ms. O'Dwyer will schedule a meeting for next week to vote on this specific agenda item.

- c. Senior Tax Deferral: Ms. O'Dwyer noted that her research is in the packet, drawing on the Towns from the salary packet research. See table in packet. Further discussion ensued between the Committee, Mr. Vivori, and Ms. Carmel. Ms. Loubert is still not comfortable regarding priority for collection when an individual dies or moves away. Mr. Vivori stated that he will get back to the committee about this point. Mr. Reed noted that he believes \$20,000 is too low. He also stated that we have a moral and fiscal obligation to take care of the seniors in our Town. Mr. Orenstein noted that there are an array of other programs for seniors run by the state. For example, the "Clause 17" program is not used by seniors. He said that these programs are extremely complicated and require assistance for seniors. Additional discussion ensued. Mr. Vivori will bring the additional information to the next meeting.
7. Finance Committee Member Comments:
 - a. Ms. Loubert asked that the person who submits agendas email the rest of the Committee for agenda item suggestions prior to sending out. Mr. Bannon noted that it is ultimately the Chair's decision.
 - b. Ms. O'Dwyer asked to schedule the next (brief) reorganization meeting for October 6 at 6:30pm. The meeting date will be confirmed by Friday morning.
8. Citizen Speak:
 - a. Vivian Orłowski: Question regarding ARPA funding. Mr. Bannon noted that there is no huge rush to spend the funds. Ms. Carmel agreed. The first input meeting will be next Monday.
9. Media Time:
 - a. None
10. Meeting adjourned at 8:07pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tate Coleman, Board Clerk on 12/27/2021.