

FINCOM
Meeting Minutes – November 4, 2015

Members Present: Alice, Don, Bruce, John, Steve, Laura,
Not Present: Heidi, Rudy
Others: Tim
Location: Hapgood Room, Old Library

Alice called the meeting to order at 7:10PM.

Minutes: The Minutes of the October 21 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.

PILOTS Discussion: John distributed his calculations of potential PILOT amounts for all tax exempt organizations with property improvements (excluding the land-only parcels). It shows potential annual collections of \$15,918 from churches and \$28,509 from the other tax-exempt organizations in Harvard. The Committee asked Tim to find how many police and fire calls have been made to each of the organizations on our list so we have “facts” to support their use of town services. He will also document the number of fire inspections the Chief has conducted over this period as well, and have this data for our next meeting. If this data supports a request for some or all of these organizations to contribute to funding for these services, we will draft a proposed letter and provide to the Selectmen with our request to send the letter and have Tim negotiate PILOTS.

Meals Tax Discussion: Alice developed a Powerpoint presentation of our meals tax collection recommendation and walked the Committee through it. Don agreed to present it to the BOS at their November 17 meeting since Alice will be out of town.

Old Library Operating Costs: Tim shared 2014 and 2015 monthly expenses for electric, water and gas for the Old Library and they show total utility costs average around \$9,000 to \$10,000/year. We asked for this data to identify minimum lease prices for the building that would cover operating expenses. The Chairpersons of CPIC, BOS, FinCom and Schools met informally on November 3 to discuss a framework for how to consider future use of our municipal buildings--the Old Library and Bromfield House are the focus of this discussion.

Town Administrator Report: Major topics Tim covered included:

--The state 2015 budget finally closed on October 30 and it included \$31 million for snow and ice removal. We are waiting for how much of this Harvard will receive.

--Tim distributed a Reserve Fund Transfer request for \$3,000 for septic system design for the DPW. It was moved and seconded this request be encumbered to the public buildings account and the \$3,000 transfer request was approved unanimously.

--Tim distributed a Reserve Fund Transfer request for \$100,000 to cover anticipated insurance-covered repair and replacement of electronics and automated programming damage caused by a direct lightning strike at the plant on September 29. The repair and replacement will be covered by our insurance but by State law, we cannot access those insurance proceeds without an appropriation vote at Town Meeting. The \$100,000 transfer request was approved unanimously.

--Tim distributed a comprehensive four page spreadsheet of all town expendable trusts which includes the balance in each trust as of June 30, 2015, the last date when money was withdrawn from the trust, the purpose of the trust, and what department in Town oversees the trust. Tim's goal by December 1 is to: (1) determine how much money is available and what it can be used for; (2) which trusts and what amount could potentially be used to offset town expense budgets; and (3) develop a warrant article equal to the total of funds withdrawn from these trusts as a one time incremental contribution to our OPEB. Since many of these trusts' funds have been sitting

idle for a long time, Tim and the BOS are considering policies for development and use of funds including sunset clause requirements for future gifts and trusts.

Other Business: Cable Access needs a contractor position with upgraded technology skills their new system requires. On an interim basis prior to a Town Meeting vote to approve the position as an employee, they will scope the work as a 19 hour/week position, and since total payment will be under \$10,000, Lorraine has confirmed bids are not required. They have identified 5 candidates so far with the skills they require.

Liaison Reports: Bruce shared that the COA Board voted that they did not agree that the Hildredth House become part of the historical district. Tim said he would email a copy of the Devens Economic Analysis Team (DEAT) report to FinCom members. Steve shared that the Schools are questioning whether they are getting a sufficient portion of Lorraine's time and may consider asking to hire their own school-dedicated finance manager.

Next Meeting: Our next Committee meeting is Wednesday, November 18 at 7PM in the Hapgood Room of the Old Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,
John W. Seeley, Secretary