

FINCOM  
Meeting Minutes – October 21, 2015

Members Present: Alice, Bruce, John, Steve, Laura, Heidi

Not Present: Don, Rudy

Others: Tim

Location: Hapgood Room, Old Library

Alice called the meeting to order at 7:08PM.

**Minutes:** The Minutes of the October 7 meeting were unanimously approved with one addition suggested by Laura.

**Meals Tax Discussion:** Alice informed the Board of Selectmen of our request to include a local option meals tax at Town Meeting. Tim informed us that it will be on their November 3 or 17 meeting agenda.

**PILOTS Discussion:** Alice calculated that the police, fire and DPW budgets represent 10.6% of the FY16 budget. These are the services the local tax exempt organizations benefit from that we could “justify” asking them to contribute to funding. This translates to an adjusted \$1.78/thousand valuation rate. John agreed to analyze the data for all tax exempt organizations with property improvements (excluding the land-only parcels) to review at our next meeting to see how much potential PILOTS represent and if this would be worth the time required for Tim to individually negotiate with each organization.

**Town Administrator Report:** Major topics Tim covered included:

--The town is planning to update the town’s website this year—the Sterling website is an example of what the new format would be as they updated last year.

--Rich Nota informed the BOS that the Depot Road septic system will need to be replaced and he will be requesting a reserve Fund Transfer to cover an engineering assessment to determine the replacement cost. We can encumber the transfer if the total amount is not spent.

--The town has been informed by Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School that our cost will be reduced from \$122,005 to \$121,504 this year.

--Tax collections data from the state shows that tax revenue is running ahead of projections but non-tax revenue is \$145 Million below target. Tax collections from casinos has declined steadily since opening month and is now running below the on-going expected target.

**Liaison Reports:** Laura shared that the Cable Committee believes they do not need a FinCom liaison. Tim did not agree, noting they are set up like the “collect and appropriate” account for the Ambulance where FinCom reviews their revenue and spending projections yearly. Steve distributed a copy of Schools’ one month budget that shows a deficit \$3,733. We concluded this did not represent enough time to make any conclusions. Steve then passed out enrollment data that shows that total enrollment is holding flat, not declining as projected. It is interesting to note the enrollment in grades 1-6 range from 50-70 students while grades 7-12 range from 80-100 students. This likely reflects families accessing the Bromfield School’s quality education/excellent ratings.

**Other Business:** Laura asked if we should to schedule an All-Boards meeting on Tim’s master 2016 calendar. We discussed briefly and concluded we may add one if needed in January. Bruce asked Tim to provide how much it costs to operate the Old Library so we can advise the BOS of appropriate lease rates for potential future tenants. Tim said the building has its own electric and gas meter so the May through October period should provide a good base operating cost period as the building has be fully used as temporary Town Hall.

**Next Meeting:** Our next Committee meeting is Wednesday, November 4 at 7PM in the Hapgood Room of the Old Library.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
John W. Seeley, Secretary