

RECEIVED
STOUGHTON, MASS.
2023 AUG 21 P 3:12

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND TAXATION

THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2023 7:00 PM

Fitzpatrick Room, 1st Floor, Town Hall

10 Pearl Street, Stoughton, MA 02072

Agenda items may be taken out of order at Chairman's Discretion

1. Mr. Vaughan Enokian, Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:12 PM .
2. Mr. Enokian asked all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Anzivino made the motion to open the meeting, seconded by Mr. Lurie. The motion passed.

Present: Vaughan Enokian Chair, John Anzivino Vice Chair, Dianne Dolan, Secretary, Eric Anderson, Chet Collins, Laura Gunn, Elliot Hansen, Adam Iacabucci, David Lurie, Dr. Jess Miner, Mark Struck

Absent: John Walsh, Joel Wolk, Kerry Marrocco

3. Ms. Stephanie Carrara, town clerk performed the swearing-in of the following members: Mr. Anderson, Mr. Anzivino, Ms. Dolan, Ms. Gunn, Mr. Hansen, and Mr. Iacabucci,

4. Re-organization of the Finance Committee

Mr. Anzivino nominated Mr. Enokian for the Chair. Mr. Hansen seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations. The committee voted 11 yes 0 no to appointing Mr. Enokian as Chair.

Ms. Dolan nominated Mr. Anzivino for vice chair, the nomination seconded by Mr. Hansen. There were no additional nominations. The committee votes 11 yes to 0 no to appoint Mr. Anzivino as vice chair.

Mr. Collins nominated Ms. Dolan for secretary, seconded by Mr. Lurie. There were no additional nominations. The committee voted 11 yes to 0 no to approve the nomination of Ms. Dolan to be secretary.

5. Request for Inter-Departmental Transfer for Town Counsel in the amount of \$72,756.00

Mr. Anzivino commented that the finance committee has requested back-up documentation and received this very afternoon at 3:30PM 63 pages. Mr. Anzivino pointed out receiving information on the same date as the meeting is difficult because members do not have time to review the documentation.

Ms. Dolan agreed and asked Mr. Rowe, town accountant, why bills invoiced in March were now being received and scheduled for payment.

Mr. Rowe explained that unpaid bills are generally approved at town meeting, but there are invoices that arrive late.

Mr. Enokian asked if the invoices are for monthly expenses, why are they not included in the town budget.

Ms. Gunn asked why the funds were taken from the police salaries.

Mr. Rowe responded that there were some vacancies in the department.

Mr. Struck asked the origin of the request.

Mr. Rowe responded that the request came from the town manager's office.

Open Session of the Committee on Finance and Taxation

Thursday, June 22, 2023 7:00 PM

Mr. Struck asked if the committee should proceed with consideration of the request if there was no one present to explain the request, or until the members could review the documentation.

Mr. Rowe asked the committee not to delay the vote, as the counsel seeks to be paid.

Mr. Anzivino pointed out that the original transfer had been \$46,964 and stood at \$72,756. He stated that is quite an increase.

Mr. Rowe commented that going forward his office would ask that no legal fees be paid without prior purchase order.

Dr. Miner asked for explanation of line item for KP Law at \$14,930.63.

Mr. Rowe explained that the fee was in response to work done on a lawsuit filed against the town.

Mr. Struck made the motion to table further discussion on the transfer of funds request of \$72,756 from police salaries to Town Counsel until the next meeting, Wednesday, July 5, 2023 at 7:00 PM. Ms. Dolan seconded the motion. On the motion, the committee voted 10 yes 0 no. Mr. Lurie recused himself from this request.

5. Any matters relating to FY24 and FY23 Budget and Town Meeting Warrant Articles (votes may be taken)

Mr. Iacabucci asked for a discussion on the proposed rate changes for water, sewer, and solid waste. Mr. Iacabucci said that the town manager had presented the information at the public meeting stating that the changes had the approval of the finance committee. Mr. Iacabucci asked if the committee had indeed given its approval.

Mr. Anzivino said that the finance committee agreed that the subsidy to the enterprise funds had to be adjusted.

Ms. Dolan remarked that the increases seemed harsh for the senior citizens.

Mr. Iacabucci questioned whether it was correct that if the town doesn't decrease the subsidy to the water, sewer, enterprise funds, and solid waste disposal the town risks down grade of its bond rating.

Mr. Rowe cautioned that Moody's had contacted the town, alerting the town that it should take immediate action.

Mr. Lurie asked if it would be appropriate to have an article for the fall town warrant.

Mr. Rowe reminded the committee that a Financial Summit was scheduled for September 23, 2023.

Mr. Anzivino reminded the committee of the public forum to be held on June 27th, 2023 on rate increases. He urged everyone to listen to the first meeting via SMAC taping.

Mr. Tisdelle, town engineer added that the previous public forum had concluded that it would be acceptable to reduce the base rate from \$254.00 quarterly to \$240.00. He said a new pamphlet was prepared with updated information, ready for June 27.

Ms. Gunn expressed concern that the town was on the verge of establishing a program known as Waste Zero that would require the use of plastic bags. She said it seems to be counterproductive at the time when a newly formed Climate Action Committee was charged with finding methods of improving the town's approach to climate and environmental control.

Mr. Hansen inquired about accessibility to the senior discounts.

Ms. Dolan suggested that information could be included in the school's bulk mailings, thereby ensuring outreach to a greater number of residents. She noted also that school documents are published in 4 languages.

Dr. Miner agreed that policies made at the town level now appear to conflict with a mandate to reduce the use of plastic.

Mr. Tisdelle added that he is very sensitive to the concern over climate changes and the health of the environment. He expressed hope that the proposed plan would encourage more recycling.

Ms. Walsh, 1096 Park Street stated that residents will be able to opt out of the program if they choose.

Mr. Iacabucci made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Anzivino.
The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.



