

Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes
June 11, 2019
7:30 PM
Town Hall, Room 204

Present: Al Vlajinac(Associate), Christine Russell, Jason Cole, Mike Majors, Roland Bourdon, Sahana Purohit (Associate), Steve Noone, Tom Farley

Absent: Christi Andersen, Dave Wellinghoff

1. Opening

Chair Roland Bourdon opened the meeting at 7:30 PM

This meeting was recorded by Acton TV.

2. Public Participation

None

3. North Acton Fire Station

Town Manager, John Mangiaratti, & Fire Chief Robert Hart spoke before the Committee. They will continue to include the public in addition to providing regular updates to the BOS as part of the NAFS design process. Information & pictures can be found at www.actonma.gov/firestation.

- Need for another station
 - To become compliant with ISO (Insurance Services Office) & NFPA recommendations.
 - Municipal Resources Management letter encouraged 4th station.
 - There have been a couple of attempts at building fire station in North Acton before which speaks to the need for a fire station there.
 - The current longest run time is 11 minutes while the standard is 6 minutes.
- Funding
 - The 2018 Annual Town Meeting voted to fund the design cost for the North Action Fire Station
 - Longer term capital funding will be needed in order to bring the other stations up to par. The North Action Station will be built as a 50 year station.
 - Design funding is still under 25%. There is no defined cost of the new facility yet. A July target date for preliminary figures has been set & funding is planned to be part of the Special Town Meeting in December.
 - Repayments have not been decided yet. Ease of financing vs. long term cost savings discussed.
 - Current staffing & apparatus from the existing 3 fire stations will be spread out to staff & equip the new station as well.
- Concerns

- The Town has been noncompliant for a few years. A gradual population increase led to slower response time. The Town is noncompliant in regards to standards, not law.
- Location:
 - The street is narrow but the fire department is currently navigating it & will continue to need to do so. There will be traffic studies going on as part of study.
 - The garage in the back of the building will be kept intact for Town use.
 - Past discussion spoke of a 3 station model, relocating the stations. This new station is based on a 4 station model with future updates to the existing stations.
- Future Town Forums will be scheduled with care not to conflict with other events residents may be attending.

4. Veterans Affairs Inter Municipal Agreement (IMA)

The Acton's Veteran Services Officer, James MacRae currently helps out in other towns as needed. One of those towns, Boxborough, does not offer its own Veteran Services. Town Manager John Mangiaratti met with Boxborough Town Administrator Ryan Ferrara to create a formal agreement for this arrangement. He described the proposal to FinCom.

- A Veterans Services District would be created. The District would have to be approved by both Town's Board of Selectmen & also the State Department of Veterans Services.
- 3 year agreement, reviewed after 1st year
 - 4 hrs per week for Boxborough, using Acton facilities
 - Cost to Boxborough would be \$15,000, which is 10% of the FY20 Veterans Services Budget
- James would still be an employee of Acton. Boxborough would pay Acton like a contract.
 - Mainly processing Ch 115 claims & provided access to state/federal benefits available through VA
 - His ceremony & flag work would be reserved for Acton
 - He would maintain a log to track the need for additional hours
- The goal is for the agreement to be in effect by July 1st

5. Working with the Town Managers Office

Town Manager John Mangiaratti implored the Members of FinCom to use his office as a resource. He wants to streamline communication between Committee Members & the Town Departments.

6. Point of View Drafting Group

Christine Russell went over last year's Point of View Presentation while the Finance Committee made recommendations on what to keep & what to change.

- The format was discussed. A handout with more charts & graphs was recommended.
 - Could tailor the presentation to the group they are addressing.
 - PTSO last year no time for presentation. Asked for handout.
- Will add metrics on how we compare to other communities.

- Tax Burden vs tax rate
- The timing of the Special Town Meeting & its potential changes for capital spending pose challenges for providing some data at this point

7. Finance Committee Business

A. Approval of meeting minutes

The May 14th minutes were approved as amended.

B. Committee Liaison Reports

Committee Members who are liaisons to Committees that met during the interim between last FinCom meeting and this meeting gave reports as to what occurred at those meetings.

7. Adjournment

At 9:10 p.m., it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting.
The motion was approved unanimously.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

- North Acton Fire Station Slideshow
- Draft Inter Municipal Agreement
- FinCom FY19 Point of View Presentation Slideshow
- May 14th draft minutes

Respectfully submitted,

Finance Committee