

April 12, 2017

Regular and Budget Meeting of the Finance Committee held on Wednesday, April 12, 2017 beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Conference Room, Town Hall.

Members present: Maureen Downing, Chairman, Heidi Fogg, Susanne Boyea, Joan Cavallo, Richard Moskal, Eric Gregoire, Raymond Yando and Beverly Tokarz

Members absent: Nelson Duarte

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

Re-organization of the Committee: Ms. Downing relinquished the Chair to Mr. Gregoire, the designated representative. Mr. Gregoire reviewed and recapped the procedure. First Mr. Gregoire will ask for nominations from each office, asking three times for each of the divisions and take the nominations. At the conclusion of that he will enter into the election process voting by either hand or voice.

Nominations for the position of secretary.

Moved by Ms. Downing, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to nominate Beverly Tokarz

Nominations for Vice Chairman.

Moved by Mr. Moskal, seconded by Ms. Fogg to nominate Eric Gregoire

Nominations for Chairman

Moved by Ms. Fogg, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to nominate Maureen Downing

All those in favor of electing Beverly Tokarz as secretary, raise your hands

Vote: 8-0 in favor

All those in favor of electing Eric Gregoire to the position as Vice Chairman, raise your hands

Vote: 8-0 in favor

All those in favor of electing Maureen Downing to the position as Chairman, raise your hands

Vote: 8-0 in favor

Mr. Gregoire turned the meeting back to Ms. Downing

At this time Ms. Downing read a letter from Robert Beaulieu which was received on April 4, 2017. The letter was sent to the Board of Selectmen regarding a complaint relative to the March Finance Committee Meeting as follows:

I am writing you this letter to inform you of a comment that was made by a member of the Ludlow Finance Committee on March 22, 2017. The comment was made by Raymond Yando and it was in regards to the services that come out of the Ludlow Veterans Service Office. I found this comment to be degrading and offensive to Veterans of our town. As a lifelong resident and 4th generation member of this town and a Veteran myself, I never thought that someone in our small town of about 21,000 residents would be degrading towards our Veterans who have made sacrifices time and time again for the civilians of this town.

The comment was not only degrading and offensive by there were other finance committee members those members are Heidi Fogg, Eric Gregoire that actually laughed at the comment when it was made and while it was aired on television none the less. As a veteran, I have used the benefits that come out of the Veterans Service Office and I would like to remind you that not all Veterans are proud to use these benefits but we as Veterans are entitled to them, have earned them and use them to help make ends meet. It provides us with assistance to pay our heating bill, medications and other items that we can't afford to pay ourselves. Many of these Veterans also suffer from PTSD which is absolutely NO LAUGHING MATTER! I do hope the Board will take this matter seriously and look into what was said and do the right thing by asking the Finance Committee member and the few that laughed at the comment to step down from the Committee. I would like to suggest that they be replaced with a Veteran in town that cares about the towns needs now and for what is to come in the future and also who can provide some additional education to our town's people when it comes to Veterans. Respectfully Submitted, Robert Beaulieu, Vietnam Vet 1965-1966

After reviewing the tape of the meeting, Ms. Downing responded to Mr. Beaulieu. She did phone him to let him know that a response was coming and that we were paying attention to his concerns. She and the committee feel that every citizen has the right to their opinion and it should be heard. Following is the response letter:

I would like to first thank you for your interest in and participating in the workings of the Town and what actually goes into deciding our finances. I also want to thank you for your input with regards to your letter about the discussions surrounding the Veterans' Department Budget. As Chairman I welcome all comments from our citizens. The Finance Committee was appointed to represent you and all taxpayers. Our mission is to make the best decisions we can for all departments and most especially for the benefit of all taxpayers. As a committee I believe we try to be fair and impartial in our decisions with no personal or political agenda. I apologize for any comments made during that meeting that you felt were of a nature to offend you personally or any other resident. Please know that there was no malice intended to anyone and especially to any Veterans. The Finance Committee has always supported the Veterans Department and its' work 100%. We have always voted to give the Veterans' Department full funding. The questions and discussion this year was in reference to a new part time clerical position. There was not a question of need but a question if the Town could afford a new position with benefits. At no time did we question any money that was directed to/for the Veterans' services. Most of our committee members have close relatives who are or were Veterans and we take great pride in our Community for the support of those Veterans including our current agent, Mr. Eric Segundo who does an outstanding job. In fact, on the referenced tape when Mr. Segundo was actually before us we praised his work with the Veterans and expressed satisfaction that these deserving men and women would be cared for from this department. I have taken your letter and comments very seriously and work diligently to keep our conversations and remarks from misconstrued in any manner offensive to our citizens. Please accept this letter of apology; please keep watching and I welcome any further input. Feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter. Very Truly Yours, Kim Downing, Chairman, Ludlow Finance Committee

Ms. Downing also made a personal apology to any other Veteran that was offended by comments that were misconstrued. She speaks for all the committee that we are always backing Veterans. Unfortunately when you're not in the room of the meeting what is said doesn't always come

across as accurate on the screen. Everyone apologized for any misunderstanding and we hope this will satisfy everyone concerned.

The Planning Board re-organized as follows: Edgar R. Minnie II, Chairman; Joseph Queiroga, Vice Chairman, Kathleen Houle, Secretary, Christopher Coelho, Member, Raymond Phoenix, Member

The Board of Public Works re-organized as follows: Steven Santos, Chairman; Alexander Simao, Vice Chairman, Tom Haluch, Member, Barry Linton, Member, G. Rodrigues, Member

The School Committee re-organized as follows: Charles T. Mullen, Chairman, Michael Kelleher, Vice Chairman, Jeffery Lang, Secretary, James Harrington, Member and Jacob Oliveira, Member

The Board of Health re-organized as follows: Neil Paquette, Chairman, Timothy Fontaine, Secretary, Elinor Kelliher, Member

There is a re-organization from the Town Clerk and also a letter from the Board of Public Works, informing the committee that the Public Works Snow and Ice Removal Budget has been overexpended as of February, 2017. There is no amount of money stated on the letter. We will have a number by the next meeting. In prior years the letter would come to the Finance Committee after the Board of Selectmen would declare a State of Emergency for the overage and the committee would take a vote on it and write a letter to the Selectmen indorsing it. In the new streamlining of the State laws, that is no longer necessary. The Finance Committee is just for informational purposes only. We do not have to take a vote or send a letter.

There is a payroll authorization form that the committee will designate one member of the committee to approve departmental payroll, bills, drafts etc. This is a new provision of the November 7, 2016 Modernization Act. Action must be taken at a meeting where all members are present and signify approval of the signature.

Moved by Ms. Fogg, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to designate Ms. Downing to be the designee for signing of payrolls, bills etc.

Vote: 8-0 in favor

Moved by Ms. Fogg, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to designate Eric Gregoire as secondary signer for payroll, bills, etc.

Vote: 8-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Gregoire, seconded by Ms. Boyea to file all of the correspondence
Vote: 8-0 in favor

At this time Mr. Moskal updated the committee on the Senior Center Building Project

At the last update the plan was to ask the precinct members to authorize payment of 10% for a piece of land which would have been \$40,000. Since then the land per acre increased to \$105,000 per acre. The committee has agreed to look for another piece of land at a later time. There is a request for \$20,000 to get prepared to make a presentation in October. The money

would be used for consulting fee, advertisement, land surveys, open houses and to present proposals. The plan today is to get the \$20,000 approval for a presentation in October and all the associated costs to go with that. After the Town Election in March they have to hire an OPM. Start construction in 2018 and ribbon cutting in 2019. Ms. Villano said the timeline would be appropriation in October, the debt exclusion and ballot question at the Town Election.

They did have a meeting at Veterans Park School and reported that to even start construction for a Senior Center the cost would be 5 million dollars. There are other alternatives for that space. Ms. Villano had a conversation with the Building Commissioner and he concurred with what Mr. Moskal has stated. The Building Commissioner indicated that it would be very costly to modify Veterans Park into a functional Senior Center. The building needs a new roof, new boilers, new windows and a sprinkler system, just to get the building up to code, even before the inside reconstruction. Ms. Downing thanks and commends Mr. Moskal for taking on the project and doing such a good job.

Moved by Mr. Gregoire, seconded by Ms. Boyea to accept and approve the Finance Committee Minutes of March 22, 2017

Vote: 8-0 in favor

Moved by Mr. Gregoire, seconded by Ms. Boyea to adjourn the Regular Meeting and Open the Budget Meeting at 6:26 p.m.

Vote: 8-0 in favor

Budget Review Meeting

Ms. Downing gave an update on the meeting with the Budget Sub-committee and Board of Selectmen on April 11th which was the target date for the Budget Sub-committee to present a recommended budget to the Selectmen. The budget that the Finance Committee recommended went to the Budget Sub-committee and they felt that it was a good budget with what they had to work with. They presented the budget as is to the Selectmen and they were a bit unhappy because it was a 5% increase. It was an in-depth look at all the departments. After much discussion the Selectmen voted to approve the budget.

In regards to the Warrant, the Planning Board and DPW will be meeting with the committee. The Planning Board will meet on April 26th and Ms. Tokarz will reach out to the DPW again to schedule a meeting with them.

There was a question on Article 20 re: the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax to allow the Town to designate a place for donations. The committee wanted to know where the money would go. The Town Accountant stated that the money would go into a Special Revenue Fund.

Moved by Mr. Gregoire, seconded by Mr. Moskal to recommend approval of Article 20
Vote: 8-0 in favor

At the Planning Board meeting the committee will be discussing Articles 23 to 27

Will work on Articles 17 and 20 with the DPW

Article 5: The budget number is \$66,301,773. This is the entire budget including all of the Enterprise Funds, School Benefits etc. and has been approved by the Board of Selectmen

Moved by Ms. Fogg, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to approve Article 5 in the amount of \$66,301,773

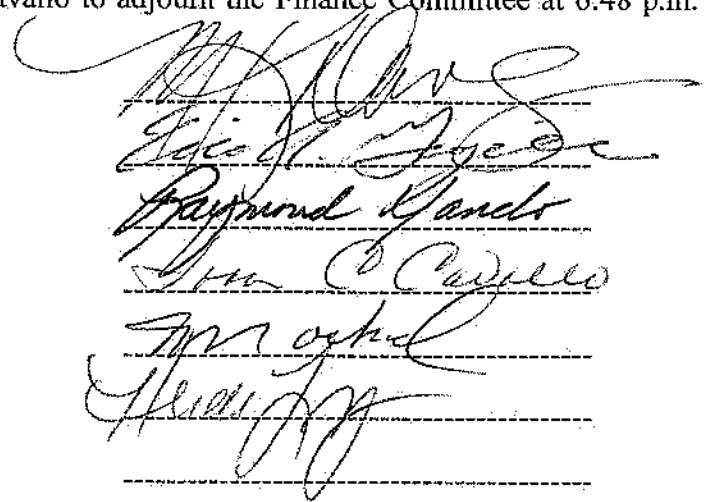
Vote: 7-1 in favor. Mr. Gregoire opposed

Ms. Downing asked if there was a special meeting prior to a budget meeting and sent out communications to all of the departments to utilize some of our funds to offset an Article, could that be done? Her theory is that taxes have already been paid on the Finance Committee money, it would lighten the burden a bit on the taxpayer if that money could be used. Ms. Villano said that if the committee votes in May to utilize the money in the account and there was a big expense there wouldn't be any money. Ms. Downing asked if Ms. Villano had money in the maintenance facility line item. She said not to cover a big expense. Ms. Fogg feels that money should never be returned to the General Fund if there is money left over in the account. She thought the money could go into the Snow and Ice Budget. Ms. Downing said that it's timing, once it's acted on at Town Meeting then whatever happens after that, the money goes back to the General Fund. A letter was sent to departments asking them if they had any needs to come forward. Ms. Villano said Free Cash is being used to offset the outside detail deficit, to Reserve Fund and Capital Projects and the remaining \$700,000 was utilized against the tax rate or into Stabilization or the combination thereof. The rest of the Articles with any monetary value would be Raise and Appropriate. We will reach out to Police and Fire to see if they have any emergency situations regarding the hot water boilers, also send out a blanket statement to departments that if there are any emergency situations that need to be taken care of to please call Finance.

At the end of deliberations there will be votes on Articles 34,35,36.

The next meeting will be held on April 26, 2017.

Moved by Ms. Fogg, seconded by Ms. Cavallo to adjourn the Finance Committee at 6:48 p.m.
Vote: 8-0 in favor

The image shows five handwritten signatures in black ink, each written over a horizontal dashed line. The signatures are: 1. A large, stylized signature at the top. 2. A signature that appears to be 'Edie G. Fogg'. 3. A signature that appears to be 'Raymond Gander'. 4. A signature that appears to be 'Mrs. Cavallo'. 5. A signature that appears to be 'Mr. Gregoire'. The signatures are written in a cursive style.

Ludlow Finance Committee