

Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

October 22, 2019

7:30 PM

Town Hall – Room 204

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

Absent: Christi Andersen, Christine Russell, Dave Wellinghoff

1. Opening

Chair Roland Bourdon opened the meeting at 7:30 pm

This meeting was recorded by Acton TV.

2. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

3. ALG Update

Chair Roland Bourdon went over the ALG Spreadsheet and updates from the last ALG meeting with the Finance Committee. Principal Assessor, Brian McMullen and Board of Selectman, David Martin assisted in the review.

- Spreadsheet numbers for ABRSD Debt and the North Acton Fire Station Project have been updated. The spreadsheet is still in draft form. Town budget won't be settled until Budget Saturday.
- The Department of Revenue certified the Town's reserves at 3.7 million in the General Fund/Free Cash
- The ALG Spreadsheet review is done at the Annual Town Meeting, but FinCom will work on a message to put out at the Special Town Meeting because of the topics expected. The warrant will be released November 26th.
- The next meeting on Nov 12th will be a Tri Board Meeting.
- Nov 19th 7:30 pm at the E.O.C. will be the next FinCom meeting.

Twin School Building Project

- MSBA will not reimburse for the demolition of the old Douglas School Building or the old septic system. Jason Cole said that this was not unexpected.
- Also not reimbursable are the asbestos abatement and temporary modular structures needed at Gates during the construction. The 2nd stage of the project has been removed because MSBA will not reimburse for it.

- Acton's share of the project will be 66.3 million resulting in an increase of \$452-\$509 per tax bill. The funding was calculated at level payment, 3% interest over 25-30 years. AB's share will be about 78 million dollars.

North Acton Fire Station

- Cost is at 9.5 million dollars using 3% interest rate for 30 years. Previous cost of 7.5 million was pure construction costs with no soft costs, such as design contingencies, factored in.
- Design plans changed to remove interior mezzanine and putting mechanicals on the roof.

West Acton Sewers

- The numbers for this project were left off of the ALG spreadsheet as they are still being finalized. The project is expected to be brought to the Special Town Meeting, so figures will be released to FinCom as soon as possible.
- Through the State's Revolving Fund, 11.5 million dollars will be funded at 2% or lower. This money will be paid back through sewer betterments.
- The remaining 3-3.5 million dollars of the project cost is deemed the Town's general obligation and thus ineligible to put through the State's Fund. It includes costs such as paving and police details.
- They are still looking at the timing of money that can't go through the State's Fund, market rates, and interim construction loans.

4. Town Meeting Warrant

Chair Roland Bourdon asked the Committee for their opinions on the Warrant Articles.

- Minuteman Debt Exclusion may be on the Special Town Election Ballot but not an article at the Special Town Meeting because the project was already approved and is complete. Could also be pushed to the Annual Town Election.
- Expected articles are the Twin School Project, the North Acton Fire Station, the West Acton Sewer Project and the changing of the Board of Selectmen to Select Board.

Pros

- Now is a good time for interest rates.
- Seems fair to put out all the financial articles at once so people can see what's coming.
- It's good to pair a school article with a public safety article because Town Meeting attendees tend to be older.
- Growth in North Acton warrants fire station there. Also gift money of \$500,000 from Avalon and expected \$500,000 - \$600,000 from Avalon II will be used towards the project.

Cons

- Not going to vote on anything until the language is released.
- Minuteman funding seems endless.
- More information on Sewer Project needed. All residents deserve to vote, but those facing a potential sewer betterment will feel the weight of the decision more heavily.

5. Point of View Outreach

Committee member Sahana Purohit gave an update on upcoming opportunities for Point of View Presentations and asked for a volunteer to take over as she will not be available.

- November 4th 7:30 pm at ABRHS there will be a roundtable meeting with the Superintendent, PTSO Chairs, and School Committee.
- November 7th 7:00 pm at the Library the League of Women Voters is having a forum with the Sewer, School, and North Acton Fire Station Project representatives presenting.
- Outreach is still needed for individual PTSO's, the Rotary, and the Acton Chinese Language School.

6. Finance Committee Business

A. 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.

B. Approval of meeting minutes

The meeting minutes of September 24th, 2019 were reviewed and approved as amended.

7. Adjournment

At 8:43 pm, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting

ALG Spreadsheet

September 24th, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Respectfully submitted,

Finance Committee