

Minutes of the Acton Finance Committee Meeting JUNE 28, 2011 7:30 pm – Faulkner Room, Acton  
Town Hall

Pursuant to a notice duly posted with the Town Clerk and with a quorum of members present, the Acton Finance Committee convened at 7:30 p.m. on June 14, 2011, to review various matters.

Members Present: Mary Ann Ashton, Maynard Brandon, Patricia Clifford, Paulina Knibbe, William Mullin, Steve Noone, Clint Seward, and Doug Tindal. Members Not Present: Robert Evans

Chairman Mullin called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. In the absence of any public participation, he recognized Mr. Tindal to finalize minutes from his tenure as Clerk. Mr. Tindal reported he had submitted revised minutes to the committee for the following dates: November 30, 2010, January 1, 2011, February 9 and 22 2011, March 2 and 22, 2011, and April 4, 2011. Mr. Noone moved approval, seconded by Mr. Seward. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Clifford reported that the minutes for June 14 had two minor corrections. Mrs. Ashton moved approval of these minutes pending correction. Mr. Tindal seconded the motion which was unanimously adopted.

The Chair welcomed Assistant Town Manager, John Murray, who presented a Fiscal Primer, the Mechanics of Municipal Free Cash. The PowerPoint Slides are attached to these minutes for reference. In introducing the subject, he reminded the committee that local government finance is a cash based statutory system that DOR considers is a safety net for cities and towns. There are some issues revolving around the timing of appropriations at the local level and the actual funding by the State that create misunderstanding of the reserve position as traditionally understood on a balance sheet. It is expected that ALG will look at the model and the sources of conflicting information to clarify the language. The Chair agreed that he would initiate this discussion early in the ALG process.

Following Mr. Murray's presentation, the Chair updated the committee on the issue of year end spending by the School Administration. The committee agreed that the definition of a level service budget needed further clarification, revolving around the conflict between appropriated dollars and specific spending choices, especially after budgets are finalized. The discussion would likely be part of the ALG working agenda next year and should be initiated by the Finance Committee representatives.

The Chair asked for status of the work plans for the White Paper project. Mr. Noone reported that he expected the subcommittee on OPB would be ready to deliberate at the end of July. The Chair and Mrs. Ashton are continuing to work on Metrics project and Mary Ann said she would circulate some information to the members electronically for input and comment. The long term financial strategy section is ongoing and several documents will be updated. Pat Clifford has a meeting on school capital spending planned for later in July.