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AUG 14 2014

TOWN CLERK  
ACTON

**Finance Committee Meeting  
Acton Town Hall, Room 204  
July 22, 2014**

Members present: Steve Noone (Chair), Mike Majors (Vice-Chair), Margaret Woolley Busse (Clerk), Pat Clifford, Bob Evans, Mary Ann Ashton, Doug Tindal

Members Absent: Bill Mullin and Herman Kabakoff

Brian McMullen, Assistant Town Finance Director attending

**Chairman Noone called meeting called to order at 7:33pm**

- I. **Public Participation**—none heard
- II. **Report on Board of Selectmen's (BoS) Goals**—Janet Adachi explained the BoS's process of voting on the goals and then presented the list of short term and long term goals for the BoS; various comments were made by committee members, including the following:
  - a. *Maryann* commented that need to have accountability for goals from last year, and ongoing accountability, specifically, last year the biggest priority was improving Town Meeting and nothing was done and it's not on the list for this year
  - b. *Doug* agrees that Town Meeting needs fixing; also feels that the Economic Development initiative should be elevated
  - c. *Mike*--goals should have more to do with the economic vitality and viability of the town (or lack thereof), tax rate, business attractiveness, etc.
  - d. *Margaret*—asked about process of implementing these goals—no longer have BoS liaisons for goals; Janet responded that the Town Manager tries to keep track of progress on goals; asked if the Acton 2020 plan had input into goals—Janet responded that Acton 2020 was reflected in the goals re: Kelley's Corner, complete streets, Senior Center (with community center function)
  - e. *Pat*—hopes that BoS will look at the environmental sustainability of the town
  - f. *Bob*—Re: North Acton Fire Station Evaluation—what will be learned this time around, given the work already done on this issue?
  - g. *Steve*—what about regionalization and Acton Leadership Group (ALG)? Janet—this will involve figuring out whether ALG will have the same members with newly fully regionalized district
- III. **Long Range Financial Planning Update**—Steve presented a draft invitation for the proposed 3-board meeting (Fincom, BoS, Regional School Committee (RSC)) as well as an opening presentation to make the case for doing planning. This presentation covered Acton's overall standing in education, public safety, tax rate, and other metrics, all of which create a conundrum for future budgets. The committee made comments, including the following:
  - a. *Doug*—may want to raise these issues with other towns to see if other towns are dealing with this same kind of conundrum
  - b. *Bob*—the way schools are measured is unfair given use both class size and per pupil spending; *Doug* agreed with this

- c. *Margaret*—Maybe need to think through a more fundamental question, what is the town’s mission? What is the town trying to be? A town that attracts families that want good schools and will maintain property values? Or does it want something else? Assumption is that we do want to be this kind of community
- d. *Maryann*—Part of the reason that our taxes are the way they are is that the community has decided to raise taxes as a reflection of our values. Question assumption that we will indeed run out of reserves
- e. *Pat*—Need to also acknowledge the factor of growth, new housing, as we analyze all of this going forward.
- f. *Margaret*—Assumption re inputs vs. outcomes—do we care about the input of money in our schools and municipal operations, if our outcomes are satisfactory?
- g. *Steve*—Demographics in town have changed—fewer people in their 30s and 40s—more in 50s and under 18, so unclear if a budget override would pass

**IV. Finance Committee Business**

- a. Committee Reports
  - i. *Pat*—*SatSac*—considerable disruptions all along route 2 to Boston
- b. MOTION to approve minutes from 6/24/14 made by *Doug*, seconded by *Mike*, committee voted to approve minutes, with *MaryAnn* abstaining
- c. MOTION to adjourn meeting by *Margaret*, seconded by *Doug*, unanimous to adjourn at 9:32

**Documents used: BoS Annual Goal Setting Meeting, Draft Invitation to BoS and RSC for 3-board meeting; Draft of “Maintaining Excellence” to be used to create an impetus for this planning meeting**