

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes – Town of Acton, Massachusetts

May 10, 2016 Acton Town Hall Room 204

Members in attendance: Bob Evans, Jason Cole, Shuyu Lee, Steve Noone, Chair Mike Majors, Vice-Chair Margaret Busse, David Wellinohoff

Members Absent: Clerk Doug Tindal, Roland Bourdon

Other: Janet Adachi (BoS), Brian McMullen

Chairman Majors called meeting to order at 7:31

Public participation – none

Town meeting review – Chair Majors comments on efficiency of the meeting and the potential for using technology to tally votes. Vice-chair Busse notes smartphones are often used. Are handheld devices practical? Ms Adachi comments the Moderator is currently investigating additional usage of digital support for Town Meeting. Mr Noone repeats his request that warrant material be presented earlier than it currently is. Mr Evans comments on the efficient use of peoples time when attending town meeting. Mr Lee and Mr Cole comment on town meeting as well.

Approval of Minutes – Postponed to next meeting.

Minuteman Vote – Town of Belmont voted No on matter of debt issuance. Chair Majors reads Superintendents letter on No vote regarding the debt issuance. Ms Adachi notes Arlington and Needham voted to support issuance the evening before. Belmont had BoS and Fincom recommend against debt which influenced town meeting. Superintendent does not want to have a district wide ballot on the matter. Ms Adachi believes they could meet with MSBA to possibly extend deadline for debt approval. An original date of June 17th was for a district wide vote if MSBA is not flexible with deadline.

New Officials Finance Forum 2016 – June 1st workshop at College of Holy Cross in Worcester. Topics include general budget process, tax recap, debt and reserve use policy. A big picture overview of finance committee. Deadline is Monday the 23rd. Association of Town Finance Committee meetings are coming up on May 5th, May 12th, and May 19th.

School Tour Feedback – An invitation was extended to tour the three elementary schools, Douglas, Gates, and Conant. Mr Evans comments on tour as interesting and well done. Two modular buildings were still in use although they were claimed as a disaster years ago when requesting funding. Accessibility of Douglas is challenging. Little to no discussion of what additional educational benefit will be provided by capital investments. Planning process would necessitate one project at a time moving forward (rather than three). Overcrowding is the result of the State redefining what space a student needs. We have run a K-6, 7-8, and 9-12 system for as long as can be remembered. Could something be built that accommodates a new layout for a different student setup. Chair Majors commented the tour

was informative and educational. Difficult to accommodate all the new programs that exist today. Can the space be used more effectively? Not enough conference rooms. Many classrooms have one or two outlets that wouldn't support many laptops. The kids seem happy and the teachers seem motivated. Mr Noone comments each school needs about \$15 million of work. Around 1/3 would be categorized as health and safety. None of the buildings meet current code. Some updates will require all items to be brought up to code. Mr Cole comments student population expectations for a decline in enrollment may not be accurate.

Fincom Reorganization – Mr Noone thanks Chair Majors for a terrific year. Mr Noone proposes Vice-chair Busse as Chair, Clerk Tindal as Vice-chair, Mr Wellinghoff as Clerk. Seconded and votes all made in affirmative. Vice-chair Busse thanks Chair Majors as well. Chair Majors wishes everyone good luck.

Other – Chair Majors notes feedback on Superintendent should be submitted as appropriate. Vice-chair Busse requests feedback be directed towards her to be discussed at next meeting.

Also, the new Moderator Ashton has appointed a representative, John Benson, to attend Fincom meeting as an Associate member. Mr Noone comments that Associate members are not allowed to vote or be counted towards a quorum. He or she would be allowed to participate in discussion, work on subcommittees (w/o voting privileges), and do general fincom work/research/analysis. Chair Majors notes the town Charter contains discrepancies regarding Associate privileges and whether they are allowed or not.

Next Meeting – Vice-chair Busse suggests reviewing committee/subcommittee assignments and whether changes need to be made or not. Also proposes meeting starts at 8pm on May 24th.

Mr Cole motions to adjourn at 8:36. All affirmative.