



# Town of Acton Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Acton Memorial Library • 7:30 pm

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Members in attendance: Bob Evans, Mike Majors, Margaret Busse (Chair), Roland Bourdon, Shuyu Lee, David Wellinghoff (Clerk), John Benson (Associate), Jason Cole, Steve Noone, Doug Tindal (Vice-chair)

Members absent: None

Other: Brian McMullen, Steve Ledoux, Kristen Connell, Janet Adachi (BoS), Bonnie Lobel (Council on Aging), Robert Hart (Fire Chief), Marianne Fleckner (Director of HR), Sharon Mercurio

Chair Busse called meeting to order at 7:31

**Public participation** – None.

**Approve minutes** – Motion to approve August 9<sup>th</sup> amended minutes, all affirmative except Doug Tindal who abstains. Request to review individual Committee member’s notes for April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting and summarize for Margaret. Mike to review agenda. Doug suggests postponing review of March 21<sup>st</sup> minutes till next meeting.

**Senior Center Lease Agreement** – Steve Ledoux introduces Bonnie Lobel, chair of the Council on Aging, along with Sharon Mercurio. Current senior center has space issues, lack of parking, lack of confidentiality/privacy, and other issues. Town submitted RFPs which included two components with the first non-monetary and focused on technical specs. Min 16000 sqft, minimum parking for 90, minimum 10-year lease w option, adequate utilities/etc, commercial kitchen, and dining for 100. The second component was the price proposal. There were three proposals from June request which were 8 Post Office Sq \$13.98/sqft, 526 Main Street (1 Acton Place) \$15.76/sqft, and 30 Sudbury Road \$8.76/sqft. The town is moving forward with 30 Sudbury Road. Estimated initial total cost is \$251,853

funded by \$75,000 of free cash and additional gifts. Two-thirds vote needed for lease. Lease effective November 1<sup>st</sup> with potential for move before Christmas. Question regarding location and whether there would be significant pushback. Sharon believes the seniors will be happy with the new center.

**Fire Labor Policy** – New proposed salary charts with pay differential between firefighter and officer include adjustments of FY17 4%, FY18 4%, and FY19 5% (it is currently 3%). COLA on base salary for 40 personnel are adjustments of FY17 2.5%, FY18 2.5%, and FY19 2.5%. Does not include steps which are already included in budget. FY18 introduces advanced life support for Basic paramedic which adjusts 2.5% to 4% and FY19 4% to 6%. Paramedics license will bring FY17 stipend from 0% to 0%, FY18 0% to 9%, and FY19 9% to 15%. Considering a bonus system to pay cash to firefighters for using less sick time which would help save on overtime cost. ALS coordinator position will pay \$66,000 annually. Annual cost over three years would be \$342,000. ALS would have brought \$380,000 in revenue in most recent year and should cover expenses making program a win from both a service and a financial perspective. CPI-U is around 2% and compares to 4% differential with the difference being used to ramp force on ALS. Steve Ledoux comments that they expect increases to revert to normal CPI-U after FY19.

**Review draft warrant** – Reviewed draft warrant and assigned Fincom reps per each article.

**Discuss Reserves Policy** – Should we recommend a minimum or maximum? Should we use the reserves? Comment that we should steer away from ‘doom and gloom’ forecasts when in reality we replenish reserves regularly. Committee should be more thoughtful. Response that negative viewpoints are in reaction to negative material presented to town meeting, it should be consistent with what auditors and rating agencies receive. A similar topic was the Preserve the Reserve discussion at town meeting in 2008. What is a reasonable amount of reserves to hold? Should Steve/Doug’s Near Term Capital/Repair Needs proposal be considered for reserve use? We are looking at 5% of town spending and the school is working towards its ceiling of 5%. In aggregate, we would look at 5% of spending in reserves which would leave \$5.9 million of excess reserves at the town. Proposal to go with the DoR’s recommendation of 5% of spending which would be \$1.7 million of the town budget. Proposal that it is a ceiling. The official Fincom position on reserve use is to recommend that the town maintain a ceiling of 5% of spending in reserves. 7 affirmative, 2 against. Reserves are fungible and differences between town and school shouldn’t be distinguished.

Regarding Steve’s proposal and current reserves in excess of recommendation. ALG should prioritize list of projects potentially over a 3-year period to handle the most pressing needs.

**ALG Plan** – Postponed.

**Review committee updates** – Leadership committee (Margaret, Doug, Dave) to meet and review POV document. Would like to have draft PoV by October 14<sup>th</sup> ALG meeting. Jason

volunteers Steve to draft PoV who quickly ropes Jason in as a drafter as well with draft due Sept 27<sup>th</sup>. Minuteman vote is on September 20<sup>th</sup> at the Junior High, plan on voting before Fincom meeting that evening. Town capital committee initial meeting next Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup>. School committee will meet on 15<sup>th</sup>. Nagog Park meeting coming up.

**Chair's minute** – Tri-board social meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> at Nara at 6:30.

Next meeting September 20<sup>th</sup>.

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dave Wellinghoff  
Finance Committee Clerk

Documents referenced:

Senior Center Lease Agreement (Senior Center Lease Agreement.pptx)

Fire CBA presentation (PP presentation Sept 2016 Fincom.ppt)

Steve Noone document on Reserves spending for capital (Near Term Capital.docx)