

Finance Committee Meeting
Minutes- November 9th, 2015
Town Hearing Room, Community Center, 219 Massapoag Avenue

Attended: Gordon Gladstone, Patricia-Lee Achorn, William Brack, Hannah Switekowski, Charles Goodman, Arnold Cohen, Edward Phillips, Ira Miller and Steven Ross.

Absent: Aaron Agulnek, Laura Nelson and Alexander Korin.

I. Review of Options for Better Communication of Town Budget Information to Citizens of Sharon:

a) Presentation by Alan Jones Visual Government *Consortium*<http://www.arlingtonvisualbudget.org/>

Alan Jones, founder of VisGov discussed how it works specifically, such as its ability to allow residents to input their taxes and then create an expense tree map of where their tax money goes. They will provide a forecasting tool as well as add ratios to show municipality's financial health and comparable benchmarking. The average cost was provided at about \$3,000 to start up with consultant support. Open source code is available for free download.

b) Presentation by Chris Bullock of ClearGov
<http://www.cleargov.com>

Chris Bullock, founder of ClearGov discussed the service and how it shows infographics and compares towns with a similar population, average home values as well as within a small radius. He discussed that residents can input their own tax bill and personalize the system. The data is controllable by backend along with benchmarking intelligence. The system is mobile application enabled. It costs an average of \$3,000 in start up fees and has annual maintenance fees. Chris stated that he would honor the original offer he had made to the Town of Sharon of \$1,500 in total start up costs.

A considerable discussion around both VisGov and ClearGov is given. Next week the Finance Committee will all send questions regarding the two systems to William Brack who, with Fred Turkington, will have a call to each vendor. The Finance Committee feels strongly there is potential to use both systems, one internally and one externally. The Committee would like to make a decision at the November 30th meeting.

II. Update on FY 2017 Budget Process

There was a discussion about restricting one-time revenues for capital purchases. An overall goal of the budget policies is to focus and agreement on key areas of expense. Capital Outlay is just starting their review process with the police and fire, then the schools and finally reviewing other requests. In February Capital Outlay will be making their recommendations built on FY16 capital expenditure. One consideration is the need for a latter truck that alone will be about a million dollars (near the total capital in the FY 16 budget).

III. Update on Budget Goals Process

Operating budgets have been submitted on schedule. The goal is to get data and discussions ahead of the upcoming FinCom meetings schedule for budget review.

Tim Farmer, Superintendent, is to be invited of future FinCom meeting to discuss School Committee major capital and budget priorities as well as a sense on timing of the Heights Roof and the high school. A similar request is to be submitted to the Town for budget priorities and capital goals.

Fred Turkington discussed the calculations that would be utilized in providing employee expense as “fully loaded” (inclusive of healthcare, retirement and other benefits). The calculation will be “per capita benefits” i.e. will be the total cost of benefits divided by the covered employees.

There was considerable discussion on planning a follow up to the September 10th meeting as well as a formal review with the schools. It was agreed to potentially getting Norfolk Retirement Board in for our next meeting.

IV. Approval of October 26th Minutes

Deferred.

V. Other Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated

The committee discussed the Schools as a department of the Town with a focus on cooperation and integration across all Sectors.

There will not be a Special Town Meeting early in 2016. There will potentially be zoning articles for the Annual Town Meeting; FinCom is requesting a schedule with earlier notification with final text.

FY 16 property tax calculations have been submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue for review.

VI. Adjournment

MOTION by Ted Phillips to adjourn **SECONDED** by Hannah Switekowski **VOTED** 9-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Next Finance Committee Meeting: November 30th at 7:30 p.m.