

Finance Committee Meeting
Minutes – August 12, 2013
Town Hall, Lower Level Hearing Room, 7:30 P.M.

Members Present: Patricia-Lee Achorn, Aaron Agulnek, William Brack, Arnold Cohen (late), Gordon Gladstone, Charles Goodman, Alexander Korin, Ira Miller, Laura Nelson (Hamilton)

Absent: Michael Fish, Edward Philips

1. Attending the meeting were Bob Lewis and his son, Ethan, a Boy Scout, who came to see a committee meeting for his Communications Merit Badge.
2. Bill Brack announced that the next meeting will be on August 26. There was a request from Cliff Towner, Chair, Lake Management Committee, to present a Reserve Fund Transfer. The fanwort problem is back. They will need \$25,000 to \$30,000 to start work this fiscal year. Norma Simons Fitzgerald, Director of the Council on Aging, was named top ranking director in Massachusetts. Money Magazine announced on CNN that Sharon is the number 1 small town in America because of its low tax rate. There was an interview with a local real estate agent.
3. The first item on the agenda was the criteria for comparable towns. Ben Puritz, Town Administrator; Bill Fowler, Finance Director; and Len Sacon, Chair, Personnel Committee, were here for the discussion.
4. Alex Korin explained how he and Laura put the information together, and Alex prepared a spreadsheet which could be changed with different criteria and percentages to find comparable towns.
5. There was considerable discussion and suggestions to use a geographic filter, population density, and area and size of the town to be added to the criteria.
6. Len Sacon suggested looking at a town by how this information was to be used in comparing towns and contiguous towns would be important.
7. Ben Puritz stated that the Selectmen's budget letter would be going out this month, but a common format for the budget could be done now.
8. Ben Puritz updated the committee on Sharon Commons. There has been a change in the developer. The developer has relinquished its use. Looking for financing investors. Target is not committed at this time and B.J.'s was dependent on Target.
9. Bill Fowler stated that Lone Star Financial owns the property. He met with one developer who was interested. Regarding the north parcel, it is problematic because there is no access road for condos and affordable housing.
10. The next item on the agenda was an update on the Warrant articles for the Fall Town Meeting.
11. Ben Puritz explained the nine pending articles for the Warrant.
12. Article 1. Sacred Heart Field/Open Space. A re-allocation of CPC funds. \$315,000 appropriated at Town Meeting. Demolition special part. \$75,000 final cost. Landscape Design, \$31,000. \$210,000 to \$214,000 to be re-allocated September 3.
13. Article 2. Contract for Refuse Disposal. Town has been with SEMASS. Contract expires on January 15.

This is a user fee-based, contractual authorization.

14. Article 3. AT&T cellular facility. Challenge by abutters. There was a settlement.
15. Article 4. Stabilization Fund. Some Sharon issues impacting finance. Another review by Standard & Poors, downgrade AA2 to AA3. Increase stabilization reserves. There was \$100,000 appropriated to Stabilization Fund. We're recommending to Selectmen that article for this purpose for the Warrant.
16. Article 5. Transfer \$24,900 from High School roof project for Standing Building project.
17. Article 6. \$610,000 for Roadway Improvements—cash pay down FY'12 revenue source not expressed.
18. Bill Fowler stated that we can cover Article 6. Proposing using unexpended money to buy down Article 6. \$24,000 was a mistake on one of the articles. Transferred to roadway improvements. Article 6 is Capital buy down. Get down to \$300,000 or \$310,000. It has never been dealt with. The pay down becomes a budget amount. In the next three to four weeks we will have a definitive number.
19. Article 7. 250th Anniversary celebration of town.
20. Article 8. Rattlesnake Hill. The owner of the property coming in with development agreement article for cluster zoning on September 4. Cluster, not age qualified, and not affordable.
21. Ben Puritz stated that there will be a plan with the open space first then between 110 and 120 detached homes with 3-4 bedrooms. This would be for site plan approval through the Planning Board.
22. Article 9. Adult Zoning. Some technicality in changing judicial decisions. The zoning by town did not meet current requirement. Fall Town Meeting would be the time to re-present this.
23. There was some discussion on this article. The Attorney General's office has sent guideline for technical issues.
24. Bill Fowler stated there would be an Audit Committee Meeting on September 3 at 6 p.m.
25. The next meeting will be August 26, 2013.
26. It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to adjourn.
27. **VOTED:** 9-0-0.
28. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.