

PARTICIPATING FINCOM MEMBERS: Lois Stearns, Jack Spanbauer, Dan Campbell, Bernhard Porada, Tony Matteo and Sue Kaczinski

ALSO PARTICIPATING IN VIDEO CONFERENCE: Heath Cummings, Selectboard Member (6:00-7:48pm); Andrea Llamas, Town Administrator; Tom Walker, Highway Superintendent (6:07-6:35pm); Isaac Golding, Chief Operator of the Wastewater Plant (6:37-7:10); Alex Meisner Selectboard Member & Sewer Commissioner(6:39-7:10); Beth Walker, FINCOM Secretary, and Tyler Bourbeau, BNCTV

*The FINCOM meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Stearns
This meeting was broadcast live via Facebook and on BNCTV*

Stearns read the following statement as per the agenda:

"Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, MGL, C30A. s20, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Town of Northfield Finance Committee will be conducted via remote participation. These minutes will be posted on the Town of Northfield Website as soon as possible after the meeting"

- **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Minutes from the February 8, 2021 meeting were reviewed
 - *A motion was made by Spanbauer, seconded by Kaczinski and **VOTED** to accept the February 8, 2021 minutes as written. IN FAVOR: Stearns, Spanbauer, Matteo, Porada and Kaczinski. ABSTAINED: Campbell*

- **REVIEW FY22 TOWN CLERK BUDGET**

- Campbell addressed increase line items within his budget
 - Within the Town Clerk portion of his budget increases on Salary (COLA only) and Dog Supplies up \$150
 - The Election portion of Campbell's budget had increases for wages for election workers, postage, constables and adding poll pads for check in's for elections
 - Campbell addressed his need for a possible assistant and the future of the Town Clerk position.

- **REVIEW FY22 HIGHWAY DEPT BUDGET/CAPITAL REQUESTS**

- There seems to be a miscommunication of funds on the Bridges and Rails as T. Walker explained that it seems that Chapter 90 money last year was taken out of this years Highway Bridges and Rails and causing a deficit in (current) budget; to be worked out with accountant.
- T. Walker discussed increase in line items
 - Wages increase due to COLA and Step increases
- Capital Projects discussed
 - Trade back hoe in for new loader, keep old loader as back up
 - Purchase Hook Truck, current 2007 truck is in need of a lot of repairs, the 2012 truck is having a lot of electrical issues
 - Old Wendell Rd Improvements. Building lot was purchased (and other building lots are for sale) and since this is a town road, maintenance and improvements need to be done to allow for access and building.
 - At the highway garage the heating system is failing. The "Green Community" status does not support the existing heating system as it is wood burning; they would prefer propane. T. Walker is awaiting for quotes and will advise Llamas and FINCOM the outcome of quotes.

- COMMUNICATIONS

- ConsCom is not attending this meeting to present budget; Stearns to try for next FINCOM meeting
- Llamas had made (3) attempts to get the ZBA budget; if not received by next meeting Llamas to submit as level fund

- REVIEW FY22 SEWER COMMISSION BUDGET/CAPITAL REQUEST

- Reviewed increases
 - Increase to wages for Golding. The Sewer Commissioners agreed at the time of hiring of Golding that after 6 months he would receive a rate increase. Golding was at Grade 11 step 2 and will go to Grade 11 step 4; Meisner stated it is about a \$2.00 increase. Meisner made it clear that his commission (2 out of the 3 members) approved this. Stearns reminded Meisner that according to the Personnel Policy there is a process for such increases.
 - Currently there is a vacancy in the Part time position; Llamas still put in the COLA increase should they end up hiring someone.
 - Down to (2) Notes and approximately 2 years left of payments
 - The DEP has not provided anything in writing for the Sewer Commission to act on
 - The Sewer Comm. will be replacing lines, not expanding at this time.
 - Meisner stated that there are a few ongoing issues with a couple users of the system; therefore not receiving payment from these users. Could be going to litigation.
 - Meisner stated that there was a change in the way they calculate sewer based on a EDU classification and no longer based on water usage. This new method has been in effect the last couple years.
 - Discussion on the impact the college could have on system

- UPDATES

- Llamas stated that everything has been submitted and hoping for certified amounts for next meeting (free cash, Sewer and EMS enterprise funds)
- State aide not available yet, only the Governors figures
- The FCTS (Franklin County Tech School) has not yet voted on their budget
- PVRSD has controversy with budget; effected by whether or not to support moving the 6th grade to Pioneer. There will be a special school committee meeting. Northfield assessment is about a \$200,000 increase.
- Llamas stated that Deb Kern (Dickinson Library Director) had a reduction to budget; Llamas to update budget request.
- Llamas stated that any day now she should have the engineers proposal for the drainage at Town Hall
- Follow up discussion on EMS agreement with Erving.
 - Did Town Council review? Per Llamas, yes, Town Council did review the first agreement between Bernardston and Northfield EMS and the agreement with Erving was the same with just changes to reflect Ervings namesake and area of service since it is not the entire town of Erving
 - Discussion on length of time of the terms of agreement, 10 years vs. 3 years
 - Porada wanted clarification on the Questions and Answers of Agreement
- Possible change in the Annual Town Meeting date. Caucus moved to nomination papers only. Per TA, Election date is set based on town meeting vote but the Selectboard can change the date of the Annual Town Meeting even though this has been set by Town Meeting. Also out for review is changing the position dates to start July 1 and end on June 30th regardless of election date.

NORTHFIELD FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 22, 2021 6:00 PM
VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

• **REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FINCOM**

- Matteo (CPC): Attended a meeting on 2/18/21 and had discussions with applicants of the (4) projects. Projects included a shed for Council on Aging, Fixing Trails around golf course, Pavillion behind NES and additional funds for work at the Unitarian Church to correct an issue discovered with some rotten timbers at the time the Town Clock repair work was being done. Next meeting 2/25/2021 to make final decision.
- Porada (Public Safty Facility): Met today at 4 pm. Scott Thayer was the low bidder for repair work to be done inside the current fire station and will begin immediately. The property off of Main St for a potential building site had a wetland study completed. Found 55,000 sq ft available that would not require a permit. Square footage over 99,000 would require a special permit. The cost for this study was about \$2,000. Group is looking at (2) additional properties. Next meeting date in March.

• **NEXT MEETING**

- 3/1/2021 start deliberations
 - The Selectboard and the FINCOM to hold joint meeting once the final proposed budget has been put together to review

*A motion was made by Campbell, seconded by Spanbuaer and VOTED unanimously to adjourn the
FINCOM meeting*

Meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm

Submitted by:
Bethany Walker
FINCOM Secretary

Approved On: _____

Approved By: _____