

NORTHFIELD FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 25, 2021 6:00 PM
VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

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

ALSO PARTICIPATING IN VIDEO CONFERENCE: Barbara "Bee" Jacque, Selectboard Member; John McGowan, Library Trustee; Deb Kern, Library Director; Bob MacEwen, Board of Health Chair & Board of Assessors Co-Chair; Homer Stavely, Council on Aging; Becky Sommer-Peterson, Senior Center Director; 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

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"

• **LIBRARY BUDGET REQUEST FOR FY22**

- McGowan and Kern present budget and highlight changes
 - Step increase due for maintenance position
 - Kern noted that the accounting software includes the Field Library. Discussion on this issue. Ultimately, it should be separate from Library account as it is its own entity and not part of the Dickinson Library. Stearns will discuss with Town Administrator to try to get it separated
 - Kern reviewed the process of their budgeting with the State requirements in order to receive State Aide.
 - No Capital list items

6:15 Kern and McGowan leave FINCOM Meeting

• **COUNCIL ON AGING BUDGET REQUEST FOR FY22**

- Sommer-Peterson and Stavely present budget increases
 - Much heavier participation of services while the pandemic is happening.
 - Increase to Other Office Supplies, Other Purchases and Other Charges
 - Primarily the need for increase is to make the current senior center area more attractive and "homey" feeling, even to say to make it more like a café setting. Changes to include furniture and lighting. Would like to fix floor but understand that is dependent on the whole project of the back parking lot drainage.
 - The COA would like to have some sort of storage shed for all of their equipment donations that they have received over the last several months (walkers, wheelchairs, bed rails etc.) and for recreational activities that all seem to take up quite a bit of space. They submitted to the Community Preservation Commission a request for partial funding for a structure of some sort. Looking in the area of a\$3,000-\$4,000.
 - Capital request for a new gas range. Current stove has lighting/igniting issues; Sommer-Peterson feels that although it is a inconvenience running the stove, they are only using it once a month currently and feel as though it would be ok to wait until 7/1/2021 to replace (Stearns suggested that the COA reach out to Town Administrator to seek quotes on range).

6:38 pm Stavely & Sommer-Peterson leave FINCOM Meeting

• **BOARD OF ASSESSORS BUDGET REQUEST FOR FY22**

- Walker presented budget; focused on increase and capital items

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- Increase of \$300 on the Mapping account line item.
- Increase of \$8,700 for Property Inspection Services
 - Increase is based on (2) factors: The first one being that it is a Revaluation Year for the Town so the cost is higher than an interim year.
 - The second is a new requirement set by DOR. DOR is having towns appraise all 504 accounts (Public Utilities-Transmission and Distribution). Northfield has two accounts and so therefore it's an added cost for this special/additional appraisal.
- Capital projects discussed
 - \$45,000 for the cost of FY2027 Reval Appraisal for Firstlight. This is based on the scenario of sharing the cost with the town of Erving and adding an increase to the cost based on what it could be in 5 years
 - \$23,310 for the cost of an interim appraisal for Firstlight. This is based on the scenario of sharing the cost with the town of Erving. A cost of \$46,620 was provided by the current awarded bidder for an interim.
- **BOARD OF HEALTH BUDGET REQUEST FOR FY22**
 - MacEwen explained the increase line items in the BOH budget request
 - Solid Waste District Assessment increased by \$495
 - The Nurse increased
 - Postage was increased by \$400, however that was an error and should be changed to level fund
 - MacEwen updated the FINCOM on other BOA news
 - Trash bag sales have increased significantly during this pandemic
 - COVID discussion
 - Stearns to advise Llamas to round up the numbers on the BOA budget so there are not figures with cents. It's easier for whole numbers/cost.

7:04pm MacEwen leaves FINCOM Meeting

- **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - Minutes from the January 11, 2021 meeting were reviewed
 - *A motion was made by Campbell, seconded by Spanbauer and VOTED to accept the January 11, 2021 minutes as presented. In Favor: Stearns, Porada, Spanbauer, Campbell and Kaczinski. Abstained: Matteo*
- **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE**
 - Llamas out this week; update not provided
 - Stearns inquired in the group if anyone had information on the status of Free Cash; no information.
 - Prior Town Meeting information asked at last meeting
 - Stearns had reviewed the original article for creating the EMS Enterprise Fund. It was at the May 2017 Town Meeting that an article was presented to provide an ambulance service
- **REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FINCOM**
 - Matteo (HEART): no update on the status of the 4 Town Agreement that was sent to the School Committee with HEART recommendations. The School Committee was to then review it, make changes if necessary and then submit to state. The town would then have final approval after the State ok's it.

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- Matteo (Community Preservation Committee): group received (4) proposals. Next meeting is on January 28.
- Campbell (Town Clerk position): Looking into whether or not he can hold a non-partisan caucus and also if the signature requirement is still modified for nomination papers. There is a possibility of a Special Town Meeting in March.
- Porada (Public Safety Complex Committee): Local mason, Scott Thayer, was awarded the bid to fix the concrete issue at the Fire station; he will start at the end of the month. Next meeting is set for February 1
- Stearns: Reported that she happened to catch on TV a Bernardston Selectboard meeting and their signing of their warrant for bill pay. One of the items was the payment to the Town of Northfield for ambulance service; however, the two Selectboard members present at the meeting pulled it off the warrant and not pay it yet.
- **NEXT MEETING**
 - 2/1/2021

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm

Submitted by:
Bethany Walker
FINCOM Secretary

Approved On: 2-1-2021

Approved By: Lois M. Stearns