

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

**ALSO PARTICIPATING IN VIDEO CONFERENCE:** Andrea Llamas, Town Administrator; Patricia Kinsella, Interim PVRSD Superintendent

Stearns called the meeting to order at 6pm

*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"*

- **PVRS UPDATE**

- Kinsella discussed budget process (she had sent some material beforehand for the FINCOM to review before the meeting). Discussion.
  - FY23 Priorities
  - Actions of steps completed
  - In Process of Review
  - Key Factors for FY23
  - Facilities Master Plan, work needed over the next 30 years if the facilities are to support an educated program that is well-aligned to the PVRSD educational vision. ESSER funds are available to do the work of creating such a plan. Stearns asked about the composition of the committee for the Facilities Master Planning. Kinsella stated it would include town officials from the (4) towns, school committee members, parents, students.
  - Revised Regional Agreement discussion. What is the status of it? HEART had provided information and a lot of work and nothing has come back from the School Committee. Original district agreement is still in effect, per Kinsella. DESE had sent a determination letter regarding Warwick, so there is a pause on the going forward with the new agreement, per Kinsella. Kinsella will ask SC for status update of the Regional Agreement. Discussion on Capital vs. Operating. There is a review of the lease between Bernardston and Leyden due to a contradiction of words.
  - Llamas, NES Principal Demarias, Kinsella and the New Facilities Coordinator, Gretchen Licata, met and looked at previously listed concerns and projects for NES; moving old article funds to support new projects.
  - Stearns would like PVRSD budget turned in a timelier fashion than in past years; Kinsella is hopeful to do so. State Law March 1 school budgets must be finalized.
  - Discussion on proposed merger between the two districts (Turners and Pioneer).
  - Kinsella announced her wanting to apply for the permanent superintendent position.
  - Discussion on The Tech school, not a competition between the two schools but rather focus on what each school can offer for students.
  - SRO position has been positive and a valued member of school community; however current SRO has given his notice and posting for new SRO is out. Chief Hall has met with Kinsella. The current SRO reported that there is a Concern about new radio system-it does not work in certain spots in PVRS. Upgrade would need a "repeater" and other safety infrastructures will be presented at budget time. Kinsella also wants the ability to be able to reach out and be reached by radio to all school buildings; PVRS, Bernardston and Northfield.

6:48 Kinsella leaves FINCOM meeting

- **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Minutes from the 11/29/2021 meeting were reviewed.



- *A motion was made by Campbell, seconded by Spanbauer, and VOTED unanimously to accept the November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting minutes as written.*
- **COA REQUEST FOR TRANSFER FROM RESERVE FUND**
  - Stearns does not believe it meets requirements for a Reserve Fund transfer (circumstances that are extraordinary or unforeseen). Director of Senior Center- the position description was reviewed and added more job responsibilities and resulted in a two-grade increase. Llamas stated that it could be done at Annual Town Meeting and not this Special Town Meeting. (Side note that the Stearns had also mentioned that the Selectboard gave a step increase to the Police Sergeant at the last meeting with no mention of source of funds, assuming that the Police Budget will cover). Going forward, it would be beneficial to know where these types of funds will come from when there is salary increase. Llamas recommends just having the COA use what funds they have, in the event they do not have enough, then have an article at town meeting in May, to cover to overage.
  - *A motion was made by Campbell, seconded by Porada and VOTED unanimously to table the Reserve Fund Transfer Request from the COA at this time*
- **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES INCLUDING SOURCE OF FUNDS**
  - Article for \$5000 to join the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District (because Northfield Opted out for the state spraying). This is a recognized district with the state. Source of funds: Free Cash
    - *A motion was made by Spanbauer, seconded by Campbell, and VOTED unanimously to support the mosquito control article and funding it through Free Cash*
  - Other articles were already reviewed at past FINCOM meetings.
  - Porada concerned about Article 7, \$100,000 for capital stabilization states that it was requested by the Selectboard, and should state that it was requested by the Finance Committee. Llamas to correct. Stearns stated she wanted to read that motion.
- **DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS ON “FISCAL PROCEDURES POLICY”**
  - Llamas and the Collins Center (consultants) have been working hard on this along with Stearns, two members from accounting, treasurer/collector, and selectboard member Jacques. This policy addresses and assigns responsibilities and who does what, whether it be FINCOM or Selectboard. Porada, agreed it was a good codification for clear guidelines. Matteo felt that as a town, we seemed to be following it well, now it’s just an officially written document and available for reference. This is also an important document to have when going out for a bond for lending of major projects.
  - *A motion was made by Campbell, seconded by Spanbauer and VOTED unanimously to adopt the Fiscal Procedures Policy for the Town of Northfield*
- **REVISED FINCOM HANDBOOK AVAILABLE FROM MMA**
  - Stearns would have to notify MMA if member wants a handbook-only accessible online. Matteo and Campbell would like access.
- **COMMUNICATIONS**
  - End of month balances
    - Areas of concerns, Porada asked about Street Lights. Budgeted at \$16,500. Why does Northfield still have what is considered “old style” street lights, especially being under the “Green Community” standards. Surrounding towns have upgraded and costs are much lower. Eversource had covered full costs for this in other towns, per Porada. Why hasn’t this happened in Northfield. Llamas has done some research on this. Lights must be owned by the town. Llamas to put this back on her list.



**NORTHFIELD FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**JANUARY 10, 2022 6:00 PM**

**VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM**

- Campbell asked about Town Hall Maintenance. Clarification on amount and what it covers.
- Status update on Bridge project; Llamas waiting to hear back from state for an update on the timeline. Town has done everything required, only 1 of the 3 property owners has responded to the payment of easement; waiting to hear back from 2. Property owners have (1) year to respond.
- Budget Letter and Budget worksheet to all departments/committee had gone out and are slowly coming back to Llamas. Some boards/Committees are meeting within the next week or so and will get information to Llamas.
- FINCOM budget
  - Reserve Fund last year \$55,000. The Fiscal Procedures Policy had a recommendation to have at least 5% of the budget in Reserve; this amount satisfies this recommendation.
  - Finance Committee Expenses \$1629 (this includes a line item that gets affected by COLA should one get voted on- Secretary Wages)
  - ***A motion was made by Matteo seconded by Spanbauer and VOTED unanimously to recommend the FINCOM budget with an amount of \$55,000 for the Reserve fund and for an amount of \$1629 plus any applicable COLA for FINCOM expenses***
- **REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED REPRESENTING FINCOM**
  - Porada: Emergency Services Facility Meeting held on 1/4/22, it was well attended. Site survey was being done and things are going well; hoping to have a report within the next couple weeks if not sooner. RFQ was brought forward. Group was briefed by Llamas that the negotiations are in progress with the parcel owner and are going well.
  - Matteo: Community Preservation Committee met and approved changes from Handbook. Had open space plan that came out, approved that. Waiting on projects to be submitted; deadline is January 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - Spanbauer, Industrial Park Committee, no movement with this committee.
- **OTHER ITEMS NOT GENERALLY ANTICIPATED 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THIS MEETING**
  - NONE
- **NEXT MEETING**
  - 1/24/2021 Special Town Meeting: Be there at 6:45 (PVRS Auditorium) Moderator not available, nomination will be on the floor. Normally it would be the Selectboard chair as first candidate.
  - 1/31/2021 6pm (Future meetings will start the budget discussions)

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:53pm

Submitted by:  
Bethany Walker  
FINCOM Secretary

Approved On: 1/24/2022

Approved By: Daniel R Campbell