March 10, 2014

Town of West Bridgewater

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting

The meeting convened at 7:03 P.M. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room in the West Bridgewater Town Hall.

Committee Members Present: Chairman James Lang, Ms. Jeri Sренд, Mr. Peter Fredericksen, Mr. Anthony Kinahan, Ms. Cheryl Adams, and Mr. Steve Currier. Absent were Ms. Jennifer Clark-Croes, Vice Chairman Meredith Anderson, and Ms. Maura Moroni.

Non Committee Members also present were Mr. David Gagne, Administration and J.P. Waller, Secretary.

Ms. Cheryl Adams motioned to accept the February 10, 2014 meeting minutes provided to the committee. Mr. Steve Currier seconded and the Committee voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

Mr. Steve Currier motioned to approve the January 13, 2014 meeting minutes provided to the committee. Mr. Peter Fredericksen seconded and the Committee voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

Mr. Steve Currier motioned to appoint the finance committee secretary as signatory for approval of meeting minutes going forward. Ms. Cheryl Adams seconded and the Committee voted unanimously in favor of this motion.

Mr. David Gagne started the discussions by reviewing the conversation and topics discussed at the end of the previous meeting. He stated that some of the topics discussed were out of scope and inaccurate statements were made. He reminded everyone that the meetings are videotaped for the public and the statements made during the meetings need to be on topic and accurate. He specifically pointed out that statements regarding vacation times for town employees are in the West Bridgewater town by-laws and union contracts signed over the years were inaccurate. He also pointed out that inaccurate statements were made about town employee performance evaluations and recent ethics violations. Chairman James Lang also reminded everyone that rumors around town can spread and the Committee members need to careful about anything that could be considered a rumor since this is an official town meeting.

The next topic brought to discussion was an update on the budget book review. Currently all budgets are submitted except the Water Department budget and the insurance budget. The Water Department budget is dependent on the insurance budget due to the way it is structured. Mr. David Gagne stated that he hopes to have this information on Wednesday of this week and hopes to have the entire book completed by the end of the week, which would be 5-6 weeks earlier than in previous years. Chairman James Lang informed the Committee that this is only the first pass of the department budgets. Mr. David Gagne explained that any changes to Union contracts could affect these budgets, so no potential increases are reflected in this version of the budget book. He also informed the Committee that
Warrant Articles aren’t included in this budget; they follow a different process which requires going through the Board of Selectman before reaching the Committee.

The Committee then began discussing the progress of the sub-committees and any updates on their statuses. Chairman James Lang commended the subcommittees thus far, saying they are much farther along than in previous years due to their efforts. Mr. David Gagne explained that there is no need for the sub-committees to submit official reports, but that it also doesn’t hurt the process. He explained that they can be used as individual notes after the Committee gets the final budgets approved by the Board of Selectman and that the Committee will be ahead of the curve by using this process. He also informed the Committee that he has heard nothing but positive feedback from the Departments about the sub-committees and this approach. The Committee then briefly discussed the GIS system and its potential and already realized benefits that many departments are seeing from this program.

Mr. Steve Currier then provided an update on the last school committee meeting and the process they used for reviewing their budget. He explained that they went through the budget line by line in the general meeting. He suggested setting up a smaller meeting with the School Committee and Vice Chairman Meredith Anderson so they can focus better. The Committee then began discussing how the Committee budget reviews will proceed, suggesting that the Sub-Committee members take the lead on the departments they have reviewed in depth. Mr. Peter Fredericksen inquired about what happens if any information is missing during this Committee review. Mr. David Gagne explained that the Committee can ask for the Department heads to come in and explain if anything is missing or if they have unanswered questions. There was then an open discussion about what the plan is for Sub-Committees next year and if they will be assigned the same departments or if they will be mixing it up so everyone has exposure to a variety of departments.

Mr. Steve Currier then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Cheryl Adams seconded and the Committee approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM and the next meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2014 at 7 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeni Screnic, Secretary

Meeting Documents:

1. Copy of Amended January 13, 2014 meeting minutes.
2. Copy of February 10, 2014 meeting minutes.