

## Harwich Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

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*June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 7:00pm*  
**Harwich Community Center, Rm 2**  
**100 Oak St., Harwich, MA**

**Members Present:** *Jack Brown (Chair); Jon Chorey; Angelo LaMantia; Dana DeCosta; Mark Ameres; Tom Sherry*

**Members Absent:**

**Others Present:** *Carol Coppola (Finance Director)*

**I. Call to Order** The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Mr. Brown.

### **II. Topics for Discussion**

#### **A. Introduction of new Members**

The chair introduced Tom Sherry, new member of the Finance Committee.

#### **B. Approval of May 3<sup>RD</sup> and May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018 meeting minutes**

- On a motion by DeCosta seconded by Ameres, we move to accept and adopt the meeting minutes from May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018.
  - No abstentions, none opposed, approved unanimously.
- On a motion by DeCosta seconded by Ameres, we move to accept and adopt the meeting minutes from May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018.
  - No abstentions, none opposed, approved unanimously.

#### **C. Discussion of Annual Town Meeting**

As usual, the Town approved a great deal of funding at this meeting. The Chair requested Committee members to share their feedback and comments on how the last Town Meeting played out. Committee member commentary included:

- If the Town were able to pay a bit more attention, they'd be amazed at the amount of information shared with them.
- The Chair notes that despite the many public meetings scheduled to share information prior to Town Meeting, very few people showed up.
- LaMantia also notes that transparency is extremely important. Additionally, when a FinCom member makes a statement at Town Meeting, they should include additional information.

- DeCosta and Chorey believe that televising budget discussions would be helpful to ensure the public was informed. This would be in addition to Selectmen meetings. This could also be useful to provide transparency into how the FinCom actually works.
- There is a need to clarify the timeline of decision-making and warrant production which affects the discussion process. The time between the submission of the warrant articles and the printing of the warrant is quite slim.
- The Committee discussed the issues of the Pet Crematorium business plan and noted that the Committee should have taken a vote to officially request a business plan for the project. Individually, FinCom members have limited power; however, as a committee the group has significant investigative power.
- LaMantia notes not only are the specifics of budget amounts necessary to review, but also the terms and debt structures for each project as this has long-term affects on the Town. Particularly since FinCom is responsible for presenting all relevant financial details to the Town.
- Brown brings up the need for keeping to timelines. Because many decisions happened behind schedule, FinCom was a month behind in the decision-making process.
- FinCom should have its own discussion session earlier in the budget process with its own questions in order to review specific project. The process of the Saturday morning was not effective.
- Sherry re-emphasized the need to televise FinCom meeting discussions prior to Town Meeting to alleviate misconceptions and address common questions/issues related to the Warrant Articles.
- Overtime is a recurring Town issue that needs to be further investigated and managed.
- Brown says he watches the Selectmen meetings and finds it valuable to see the discussions. He also notes that Planning and other committees are televised. Perhaps not all of our meetings need to appear but certainly the more relevant meetings that involve discussion of large projects.
- LaMantia is concerned that there is not a clear understanding of “free cash” – where it comes from, how it’s properly used.
- We continue to struggle with the effective communication of data through the existing IT system and limited personnel.
- We need a real personnel strategy. We’ve been adding people at the rate of 2 per year which is unsustainable. Rather than providing 1-off personnel recommendations, we need to develop a holistic approach and strategy to understand where we’re going.

#### **D. Discussion of Liaison Assignments**

Brown developed a new list of liaison assignments:

<i>Department/Commission</i>	<i>Committee Member</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Water/Wastewater	John Chorey	
Fire	Dana DeCosta	
Police	Dana DeCosta	
DPW	Tworek	
Golf	John Chorey	
Waterways	Angelo LaMantia	
Assessors	Laurie Gillespie-Lee	
Selectmen	(All)	On rotating basis

Recreation & Youth	Mark Ameres	
Brooks Free Library	Mark Ameres	
CPC	Laure Gillespie-Lee	
Planning Board	Angelo LaMantia	Agenda Driven
Wastewater Support	Tom Sherry	All Meetings
Capital Outlay	Dana DeCosta/ Angelo LaMantia	
Real Estate & Open Space	Jack Brown	
Schools: CCRDSD	Kenney	
Schools: MRSD	Jack Brown	

Brown clarifies that the role of liaison is not to be a member of another committee or provide advice, but to listen to the discussion and report back to FinCom.

- On a motion by Sherry seconded by Ameres, we move to accept and adopt Angelo and Dana for the Capital Outlay Committee.
  - No abstentions, none opposed, approved unanimously.

**E. Start assembling list of study items for FY19**

DeCosta requests a copy of the recap sheet passed by Town Meeting from the Finance Director for last year, this year and the one voted.

**F. Re-organization**

Since 2 FinCom members are absent, the committee decided to push this discussion to the next meeting.

**III. Adjourn**

On a motion by DeCosta, seconded by Ameres, we move to adjourn at 7:42pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Sarah Manion*