

Rowe Finance Committee
November 1, 2017
6:00 P.M.
Rowe Town Hall

Finance Committee: Chair Wayne Zavotka, Loretta Dionne, Paul McLatchy III
Board of Selectmen*: Chair Jennifer Morse, Dennis May, Executive Secretary Janice Boudreau
**During Joint Meeting*
Audience of Citizens: None

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chair Zavotka at 6:05 P.M., a quorum of the committee present.

Minutes: The minutes of June 19th, June 28th, August 21st, August 28th, September 20th, October 10th, and October 18th were presented. A motion was made by Ms. Dionne and seconded by Mr. McLatchy to approve all but September 20th as written. The motion passed unanimously. A motion was made by Ms. Dionne and seconded by Mr. McLatchy to approve the September 20th minutes as corrected (one line was removed). The vote passed unanimously. In future meetings, time will be set aside to make sure minutes are read and approved, to avoid them piling up.

Additional Members: Chair Zavotka spoke to the two vacancies on the committee. He is still interested in talking with Abi Phelps, who expressed interest but wasn't able to commit a few months ago. This may have changed since. He also brought up the names of Dennis Humbert, Jenna Crowningshield, and Andrea Crowningshield. Mr. McLatchy will speak with Ms. Phelps, and then Chair Zavotka will speak with Jenna or Andrea Crowningshield, depending on how Ms. Phelps responds. There seemed to be a desire among the committee members to appoint younger individuals, to allow for a more diverse membership.

Eligibility Bylaw: Mr. McLatchy spoke to whether or not the current bylaw governing committee eligibility should be looked at. He is a member of the Bylaw Review Committee, and felt this would be the best time to address changes, if any were desired. Currently, no one earning more than \$2,500 from the town or serving in an elected capacity may serve. Mr. McLatchy noted that Rowe has some of the more strict bylaws in Hampshire, Hampden, Franklin, and Berkshire Counties. He will bring information to the next meeting.

Correspondence: The town received a booklet containing demographic data for all the towns in the state from the Massachusetts Municipal Association. It contains useful information, including population, per capita income, etc... It will be left in the Finance Committee box for members to review.

Recess/Reconvene: The Committee recessed at 6:27 to move to the next room to meet with the Board of Selectmen. The meeting was reconvened at 6:47.

Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA): Last year's COLA per the Social Security Administration was 0.3%. The town ultimately used a 1.5% COLA. This year the COLA per the SSA is 1.9%. Ms. Dionne asked what this would represent in terms of dollars, and several employees were looked at to provide examples. Mr. McLatchy stated that he felt that the town has historically raised the COLA when it was low, but didn't lower it when it was higher, and that it should be explored further. A motion was made by Chair Zavotka and seconded by Ms. Dionne to recommend that the Selectboard set a 1.9% COLA for the FY19 budget. Ms. Dionne then made a motion to amend it to recommend a 2.0% COLA, for ease in budgeting. The vote was 2-1, with Mr. McLatchy dissenting. The Selectboard then voted to set a 2.0% COLA.

Capital Requests: Selectman Morse has a sheet used for capital requests. This will be sent out to the Finance Committee for review.

Broadband Borrowing: The Selectboard asked where the Finance Committee stood on this. The Finance Committee has been waiting for more information on costs, and has not taken a position on it. In the meantime, Treasurer Joanne Semanie can begin the borrowing process until a decision on how much, if any, is to be borrowed. Chair Zavotka said that he would prefer that the Selectboard make a proposal for the Finance Committee to review, rather than the Finance Committee making a proposal.

Letter: A letter was received from resident Sharon Hudson. In it, she raises questions regarding town finances, primarily focusing on the position of the Park Ranger in town. The Selectboard has drafted a response.

Recess/Reconvene: The Finance Committee recessed at 7:29 and reconvened at 7:31 to continue their own meeting separate from the Selectboard.

Letter (Continued): Chair Zavotka asked the members how we would like to respond at this point. Mr. McLatchy will draft a letter saying it has been received. A more substantive response will need to wait, as the letter was quite lengthy and will require some time to explore.

Liaisons: Liaisons were appointed for the upcoming budget season:

- Department of Public Works- Wayne Zavotka
- Park, Culture, and Recreation- Loretta Dionne
- Safety- Paul McLatchy III
- Education- Loretta Dionne
- Library- Paul McLatchy III
- Local Government- Wayne Zavotka
- Human Services- Paul McLatchy III

If any additional members are appointed in the near future, the work will be further divided up.

Next Meeting: The Finance Committee will meet on November 15th at 6:30 P.M.

Adjourn: A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The vote was unanimous in favor, and the meeting was closed at 7:52 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Paul McLatchy III, Secretary

Approved on: November 15, 2017

Wayne Zavotka, Chairman

Paul McLatchy III, Secretary

Loretta Dionne, Member

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Selectboard Meeting Packet
3. Letter from Sharon Hudson