

Minutes of the

# Weare Finance Committee

Wednesday, 4 September 2019

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:30pm. An exact time was not recorded, as a secretary had not yet been elected.

In attendance were (from right to left as seen by the audience): Neal Kurk, Gary Evans, Matt Whitlock, Christine Hague, Megan Thellen, James Drury, Tom Clow, Tammi Hagman, Lori Davis, Dennis Aubin, Keith Erf.

Naomi Bolton and John Foss were present in the audience and were recognized to converse with the committee.

## Officer Elections

- Matt volunteered to be Secretary. Neal nominated Matt for Secretary. No other nominations were made. Neal moved for a vote. Matt was elected Secretary without objection.
- Neal nominated Lori for Chair. Dennis seconded. No other nominations were made. Neal moved for a vote. Lori was elected Chair without objection.
- Chris nominated Neal for Vice Chair. No other nominations were made. Neal was elected Vice Chair without objection.

Choosing a day for the monthly meetings of the Finance Committee. Tom suggested to continue meeting on the first Wednesday of each month. There were no objections. Lori suggested starting the meetings at 7pm. There were no objections.

It was decided that Keith and Tom will attend the CIP subcommittee meetings on 9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8 at 8:30am in the conference room of the town office building. Lori extended an invitation to other members of the Finance Committee to attend the CIP meetings as well.

## Subcommittee Assignments

- Weare School Board: Keith, Neal, Megan, Tammi
- Board of Selectmen: Dennis, Tom, James
- John Stark School Board: Chris, Gary, Matt, Donna

Lori instructed the members of the Finance Committee to announce, when speaking at board meetings, whether they are speaking as a representative of the Finance Committee or as a private individual.

Tom expressed a desire to have a Finance Committee member sit in on contract negotiations but acknowledged that this could only happen by consent of both the board and the bargaining unit responsible for each contract. Lori clarified that such an observer would not be empowered to bargain on

behalf of the Finance Committee in such contract negotiations. Naomi was asked to check with the Board of Selectmen regarding whether this would be acceptable to them.

Lori invited the public to attend Finance Committee meetings and raised the question of allowing public comments. Chris pointed out that the committee must respect the time of any department heads invited to speak and that any public comment period should not inconvenience the department heads. Tom requested that there be a clear separation between any public comment period and the committee meeting proper. Neal raised a concern that a public comment period could be abused by interested parties to push their agendas on the Finance Committee by means of appeals to emotion, whereas the committee's recommendations are supposed to be based on facts and figures. John suggested that public comments could be submitted to the committee in written form as a means whereby the committee could accept input from the public without allowing meetings to be overrun with public comments. Tom agreed with John. Neal clarified that written comment submissions would not take the form of petitions. Lori added that the Finance Committee is not to be lobbied. It was decided that the public could submit comments through Naomi. Chris commented that the Finance Committee members are not "gatekeepers" and that the public should not be bringing their wishlists to the committee, as the committee's purpose is to disseminate information. Lori clarified that the public can obtain hardcopies of budget sheets from the relevant board or SAU and that the Finance Committee will not provide hardcopies to the public.

### **Other Business**

Lori requested that Matt contact Bill Anderson to obtain any outstanding unapproved minutes from last year.

Naomi suggested that Donna O. should be on a school subcommittee to avoid a conflict of interest. John clarified that there is no legal requirement but that he believed this would be appropriate.

Neal raised the question of whether Gregg McDowell had been officially removed from the committee, as he was in the middle of his second consecutive term. John reported that he had attempted to contact Gregg several times but had received no response. Neal pointed out that Gregg would still be a member if no vote had occurred to remove him. Tom suggested to review Gregg's attendance record from last year before calling a vote to remove him. Chris requested a working email address for Gregg. After hearing from all committee members, whose opinions generally were either that removing Gregg would be discourteous to him or that Gregg had effectively abandoned his appointment by ceasing to communicate, Lori moved that the Finance Committee request that the Town Moderator remove Gregg McDowell from the committee. Tammi seconded the motion. The vote was 7 in favor, with 1 (Neal) opposed, and 3 abstaining. John agreed to remove Gregg and inform him of the decision.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee was set for Wednesday, 2 October 2019, at 7:00pm in the conference room of the Weare town office building.

Tom moved to adjourn the meeting. There were no objections. The meeting adjourned at 7:53pm.