



TOWN OF TEWKSBURY

TOWN HALL
1009 MAIN ST
TEWKSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS 01876

FINANCE COMMITTEE

David Aznavoorian, Chairman
Damin Sutherby, Vice Chair
Rob Kocsmiersky, Clerk
Raymond Lisiecki
Thomas L. Cooke
Laurence Sanford
Paul McDermott

Meeting Minutes November 20, 2014

1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by David Aznavoorian at 7:01 p.m. at the temporary town hall (Pike House). Present at the meeting were Tom Cooke, Ray Lisiecki, Larry Sanford, Paul McDermott, Damin Sutherby (arrived at 7:24 p.m.), and Rob Kocsmiersky (arrived at 7:04 p.m.). Also present was Richard Montuori, Town Manager, Karen Kucala, Finance Director, and Melissa Johnson, Recording Secretary.

2) Town Manager and Finance Director Reports (as applicable)

Discussion took place in the town's bond rating and the tax rate that was recently set by the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Montuori explained that the a borrowing was recently done for the purpose of the town hall renovation, water main improvements, sewer debt, and the final borrowing for the High School. Mr. Montuori explained that he tried to get an upgrade, but was unsuccessful. Mr. Sanford asked why an upgrade was not awarded and Mr. Montuori explained that this was due to OPEB and retirement liability. A consistent approach to addressing each must be established and maintained for a period of time. Currently, Tewksbury has two years of an established approach and the hope is to receive an upgrade next year. Mr. Aznavoorian discussed ways to get this information out to the public. Mr. Montuori explained that a press release was done and it was also discussed at the Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Mr. Kocsmiersky arrived.

Mr. Montuori explained that the tax rate was set approximately two weeks ago. The Board of Selectmen has shifted more of the burden on commercial/industrial properties than in the previous fiscal year. Mr. Montuori explained that the town has seen an increase in residential property values and a decrease in commercial values. As a result, the Board feels the shift is appropriate. The average bill will see an approximate increase of \$290 per bill. Mr. Lisiecki expressed concerns with the shift pushing commercial/industrial businesses out of town. Mr. Montuori explained that the Board shares the same concerns and will be watching this closely.

Discussion took place on the State budget deficit of \$325 million. Mr. Montuori explained that this is a concern and noted that there was also a deficit last year at this time and it was corrected. Some adjustments can be made within the budget to address the cuts via the stabilization fund and local receipts. Mr. Montuori noted that there will also be no CPA fund match in FY16. Mr. Cooke suggested the members write to the legislators to express their concerns and unhappiness with cutting aid to cities and towns.

Mr. Sutherby arrived.

Discussion took place on the assessed values of property in Tewksbury. Mr. Cooke suggested a comparison to other communities be done and discussed older properties paying old assessments. Mr. Montuori explained that funds will be requested at the next town meeting for a re-evaluation and that the process is State regulated with strict guidelines.

Mr. Montuori explained that he would like to put together a group to do a wage and classification study for all AFSME employees. Mr. Montuori requested two members of the Finance Committee participate in the group with Board of Selectmen members Todd Johnson and Scott Wilson. Mr. Aznavoorian and Mr. Lisiecki will participate in the study.

Discussion took place on the town hall renovation. Mr. Montuori noted that the project continues to move along. The contractor has been providing daily reports which can be found online. Mr. Montuori offered tours of the town hall to any members interested in doing so. Mr. Cooke commended Mr. Montuori and all of the administration for the daily progress reports.

Discussion took place on the new town website. Mr. Cooke requested more information be put in for the Finance Committee. Ms. Kucala will look in to this.

3) Finance Committee Matters of Interest (as applicable)

Mr. Aznavoorian provided the members with a copy of the 2014 MMA Financial Handbook on disk as well as a copy of the Beacon.

Mr. Aznavoorian discussed the FY16 budget schedule and noted that he will send the draft schedule to the members for their review tomorrow. Mr. Montuori expects to have his recommended FY16 budget completed by the last week of January/beginning of February. Mr. Aznavoorian noted that he does not intend to schedule any Saturday meetings and there will be no liaisons, other than the school department, for this budget cycle. Each department head will be invited to a meeting of the Finance Committee to discuss their budgets. Mr. Aznavoorian noted that in the past Mr. Lisiecki has been the contact person for the school department and suggested another member also work with Mr. Lisiecki on this to better understand the process. Annual Town Meeting will take place on May 5, 2015 and Special Town Meeting will take place on May 7, 2015.

4) **Committee Member Reports (as applicable)**

Economic Development Committee (EDC):

Mr. Sanford noted that members of the EDC recently meet with the Master Plan consultant to provide their input. The consultant asked things like why did you move to Tewksbury and all three representative from the EDC stated because of the price of homes and its location.

Mr. Montuori noted that he will ensure the Finance Committee members are also included in the Master Plan process.

Green Committee:

Mr. Cooke noted that the Green Committee is also meeting this evening to discuss additional energy conservation measures. Mr. Cooke was unable to attend due to the scheduling conflict with the Finance Committee.

High School Building Committee:

Mr. Cooke noted that he was unable to attend the last two meetings. Mr. Montuori explained that the flooring study to address the cracking along the control joints has been completed. It has been determined that the flooring was not installed according to manufacturer instructions. The contractor has been notified of the issues and continues to correspond with the town to resolve the matter.

Computer Study Committee:

Mr. Aznavoorian noted that the Computer Study Committee has not met in quite some time and referenced an email that was sent by Mr. Montuori regarding software the town would like to purchase. Mr. Montuori explained that the software will help better service the town residents on things like water usage, taxes, etc.

5) **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

MOTION: Mr. Sanford made the motion to approve the September 24, 2014 meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. McDermott and the motion carried 4-0-3. Mr. Cooke, Mr. Sutherby and Mr. Lisiecki did not take part in this vote.

MOTION: Mr. Sanford made the motion to approve the October 7, 2014 meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. McDermott and the motion carried 4-0-3. Mr. Cooke, Mr. Sutherby and Mr. Lisiecki did not take part in this vote.

6) Approval of Recording Secretary and Timesheet

MOTION: Mr. Sutherby made the motion to approve the Recording Secretary's timesheet in the amount of \$146.32; seconded by Mr. Lisiecki and the motion carried 7-0.

7) Future Proposed Meeting Dates (subject to change)

The next meeting has tentatively been scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2014.

Adjourn.

MOTION: Mr. Sutherby made the motion to adjourn at 7:57 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Kocsmiersky and the motion carried 6-0.

Approved: December 18, 2014

**Documents Presented and/or Discussed
November 20, 2014**

- 1) MMA 2014 Financial Handbook on disk
A copy can be found with the Finance Committee Chairman
- 2) Meeting Minutes – September 24, 2014 and October 7, 2014
A copy can be found with the Town Clerk's office or with the Recording Secretary
- 3) Recording Secretary Timesheet for October
A copy can be found with the Finance Department