



CARVER FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF JUNE 27, 2022 MEETING

Present: Chairman Alan Germain, Vice-Chairman Adam Holmes: Ron Clarke, Bill Cullum, Walter Cole, Patrick Meagher and Elizabeth Sulger.

Also Present: Sue Moquin, Bob Fennessy. and Recording Secretary Ashley Swartz.

Absent: Tony Macrina.

Mr. Germain opened with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:01 PM.

Meeting to be recorded by Area 58

Public comment

Grant Applications

Raymond Yox - Legal aid provider for Southeastern MA – provide free legal services for civil matters for low-income families and those 60 or older. There are no other organizations like this in the area – they are a not-for-profit organization who have utilized grants in the past (which help with hiring the staff). The centers located in Brockton and Hyannis could be service locations for residents of Carver.

Some of the areas they cover are: housing laws, public benefits, family law, immigration work, consumer issues, and education law. They provide “equal access to justice”. They also coordinate with local bar associations providing pro-bono work. This year they are asking for \$5,000 to help represent the residents of Carver (which is the same as the last ask). Mr. Meagher began with stating they provide a great service. He asked about the number of clients served (particularly in Carver). Raymond responded with about 15-20 clients from Carver.

Mr. Clarke asked why there was no means testing – they cannot perform these tests for residents over 60.

Mr. Holmes asked how people go about requesting services – they are on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter), they distribute pamphlets to local businesses and also distributed when someone is informed, they can obtain legal services. He followed by saying they don't pay for advertising. Mr. Germain suggested putting the contact information for the Council on Aging bulletin board. Mr. Holmes followed up by saying this could also be posted at Town Hall. Mr. Germain said he noticed no grant had been submitted last year so he reached out asking if he wanted to submit an application.

Ms. Sulger made a motion to approve the grant, seconded by Mr. Clarke. Approved unanimously 7-0-0.

South Shore Community Action Council

It has been requested to put this off

Capital Outlay

Mr. Clarke made a motion to appoint Ms. Sulger as the representative to Capital Outlay, seconded by Mr. Holmes. Approved 6-0-1 with Ms. Sulger abstaining.

Town Administrator, Finance Director Update:

Sue created a worksheet regarding End of Year Transfers. There is \$362,000 + that needs to be allocated elsewhere (since it wasn't used for its original allocation).

A third of the amount is for police salaries (due to overtime), as explained by Bob, contractual salaries have gone up but the bottom line for overtime has stayed the same. He noted that previous years likely showed a deficit because of this.

The other one to note is Legal Services.

Mr. Clarke reiterated that overages in some departments would move into the shortages, and asked if some of those overages would end up in free cash. Mr. Germain pointed out that \$125,000 for storm clean up this winter would be reimbursed by FEMA. This has been approved and they should receive those funds back into general funds (to move to free cash later).

Mr. Germain pointed out that the Veteran's Services have asked if there could be a discretionary service of extra funds (with limitations outlined by them) to assist with paying some necessary bills for Veteran's in need (for example, prevent the electricity being shut off).

Sue discussed a "gift account" that could be donated by the community. Mr. Germain noted the Finance Committee could not fund that.

Mr. Germain questioned the Health Insurance. Sue explained it was an article from 2016 and she has yet to receive an explanation as to what that is for. Mr. Clarke said it was to act as a buffer for inflation. The insurance came in less than what was budgeted, leading to the overage.

Bob said once this was voted on, it would go to the Board of Selectman and no other discussion needs to be had (unless changes).

Mr. Meagher noted nothing was extreme or unusual. He wanted to compliment both Sue and Bob for coming up with this and for finding the sources to cover it. Mr. Holmes echoed Mr. Meagher and said he appreciated the transparency and how clear it is to follow. He said this was all unforeseen – he asked if after we know what we know now if they think there will be issues regarding the budget that was just passed for FY'23. Bob said, "yes – police and legal". He said he foresees something happening down the road with the police budget. He noted the legal fees have gone up and he thinks they could be in the same predicament. He said he is going to try to make sure departments stay within their budgets and exceptions will only be made for emergencies.

Ms. Sulger asked about the \$60,000 from the school. This is a donation from the school due to the officer at the school. Mr. Germain thinks the town and the school should each fund an officer that should be at the schools from open to close. He also stated that he appreciated the donation and thinks this should be built into their budget. Bob added that the request was for \$40,000 and the school increased it to \$60,000.

Mr. Clarke said he thinks they should vote the transfers tonight, which would assist the Select Board. Mr. Clarke made a motion to approve the transfers as presented, seconded by Ms. Sulger. Mr. Germain commented about the budgets that could be short next year – said this time next year they could be presented with similar numbers. HE asked if ARPA would could for any of this. Bob said ARPA, once used, will be gone. This is money already allocated and available. ARPA is being used for the North Carver Water District, as a loan. Once the loan is paid back the money will go back to ARPA. Next town meeting will replenish the ARPA funds. The motion was approved unanimously 7-0-0.

Discussion of current FinCom by law and establishment of sub-committee to revise

Mr. Germain noted this was supposed to be done last year and he believes it should not be as restrictive as it is. He used the example that FinCom is simply an advisory committee and anything they suggest may not necessarily be approved. He noted that the committee is good at self-policing by abstaining from anything that may be considered a conflict of interest. He has asked for two people from the committee (with opposing opinions) to work on an updated by-law. Mr. Cullum said his opinion is similar to Mr. Germain, he worked on this before and felt progress was not being made. Mr. Clarke added that Kingston is the only town with no restriction to Finance Committee but the other towns used ambiguous language that didn't really define anything. He doesn't think Finance holds authority since they act as an advisory board. Mr. Clarke said he once was in favor of having restrictions but now he doesn't believe it makes a difference. BROAD VIEW. Mr. Holmes said that he doesn't have a preference as to what the by-law says but there needs to be clarity around it and enforcement of it. He thinks the by-law needs to be clear and if it isn't enforced there isn't a point of having it. Mr. Holmes questioned if there was a by-law that restricted Selectboard members from being on other committees. He believes that if it is relevant to FinCom it should be relevant to the Selectboard. Mr. Holmes believes this by-law was proposed but never brought up and voted on at Town Meeting. The conversation continued regarding conflicts of interest (or appearance of a conflict). Mr. Germain said changes have been made but the by-law language hasn't been updated (i.e. regards to pay). Mr. Clarke and Mr. Meagher agreed to work on updating the by-law. Mr. Holmes made a motion to appoint Mr. Clarke and Mr. Meagher to the Finance Sub-Committee, seconded by Ms. Sulger, approved 7-0-0. Mr. Holmes suggested having language by the fall to add a placeholder to the warrant.

Read and approve minutes:

06/27/22 Ms. Sulger made a motion to approve the minutes of May 23, 2022 as amended, seconded by Mr. Holmes, approved unanimously 7-0-0.

Next meeting date: July 11, 2022 at 7:00 PM, if needed.

Ms. Sulger suggested that when they approached the budget for next year, they should create a budgeting calendar to follow certain benchmarks. Mr. Clarke suggested to formally ask the Town Administrator to ensure this gets done. Mr. Germain noted he believed Bob would be

more disciplined with this, the issues with transitions this year may have caused a bit of confusion.

Motion to adjourn Mr. Clarke, seconded by Ms. Sulger, unanimously approved 7-0-0.

Adjourned 8:08R PM

Minutes submitted by Ashley Swartz.

Voted & Approved