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FINANCE COMMITTEE

TOWN CLERK
ADAMS MASS.

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

CLERK

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES, 7/11/17, 6:30 p.m.
ADAMS TOWN HALL, 1ST FLOOR**

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman Burdick at 6:30 p.m. Parrott, Kleiner, Chittenden, Corrigan, Tomkowicz, Lefebvre, Johnson, Smigel, Giroux, Tomkowicz and Cowie were present as well as Town Administrator Tony Mazzucco.

Election of Chair/Vice Chair: Nominations were requested; move by Member Lefebvre to nominate Member Burdick as Chairman, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous. Move by Member Lefebvre to nominate Member Cowie for Vice Chairman; second by Member Tomkowicz. Vote: unanimous.

Reserve Fund Transfer Requests: WWTP – Rental/Lease – (Refuse Sludge) (06441–52790), \$18,000; WWTP – Repair/Maintenance (Pump #3) (06441–55320), \$4,750; WWTP – Engineering (Septic Study) (06441–53035), \$9,750. July 15, 2017 is the close of the FY2017 expenses. Previous transfers were reviewed. Permit compliance is expected to be considered in the upcoming year. Individual line item needs were explained by the Town Administrator. The Scum Pump will need to be replaced in the near future. The costs are not directly related to new DEP regulations. The study will be done to determine whether septic waste may be taken at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Work is being done to reduce sludge hauling costs and to generate up to \$40,000 per year. The challenge of flushed disposable wipes was reviewed. The engineering will look at hauling contracts, biological issues and chemical costs. \$70,000 will be left in the Reserve Fund, which will go into the Stabilization Fund. The quote for engineering was from FY2017 and will be processed with FY2017 funds. Discussion took place about why the transfers were not on the Town Meeting warrant. Move by Member Lefebvre to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer of \$18,000, \$4,750, and \$9,750, for a total of \$32,500, second by Member Cowie. Vote: unanimous.


Discussion on DLS Report: Town Administrator Mazzucco reviewed the Fiscal Evaluation and Management Review by the Division of Local Services. Discussion took place on the recommendations for a sewer fee and the size of the Finance Committee, which would require a bylaw change. Town Administrator Mazzucco noted the lack of the sewer fee is an imbalance. Approximately \$2 on the tax rate goes toward sewer fees. Rental multi-family properties were compared with single family homes for equitable sewer cost. Opposition for the fees and concern about regulation was expressed. Enterprise funds and their regulation by law were explained. Water bill fees were given as an example of a large bill increase without explanation and the potential for the sewer fee to be the same. The levy ceiling was outlined, and the fairness and equity of fees. Chairman Burdick recommended a sub-committee be formed to do more research on sewer fees. Determining a sewer fee may require information from the water district. A suggested future model could be to merge with the Fire District.

A flat fee for residential units was discussed, versus commercial and industrial units. Topic prioritization was suggested for sub-committee creation. Town Administrator Mazzucco will put the tasks on a list with suggested teams to work on items. The size of the Finance Committee was discussed. 7:19 p.m. *Member Johnson departed the meeting.* The reasons for downsizing were debated. The increased complexity of municipal finance was discussed. Training is provided in the Eastern part of the state. Resistance to change was mentioned. Elected officials versus appointed officials were discussed, and the possibility of putting a recall vote in. System changes were debated. A seven or nine member finance committee was suggested, as opposed to the current fifteen member committee. Combining offices was suggested. Hiring out Assessing was suggested but may not be financially viable. It was recommended that the DLS report become a public document to allow the citizens to give input, and it will be put on the Town website. Going out to bid for audit services may take place in the fall. Town infrastructure needs to be centrally managed. Pros and cons for the downsizing of the Finance Committee will be reviewed by a sub-committee and discussed in August. Town Administrator will bring the Committee information about enterprise funds, and a bylaw will be discussed. Concerns will be addressed prior to Town Meeting. Suggested changes from Elected to Appointed positions were discussed to create an efficient system for the future. Creating a Finance Director and lower paid positions of Tax Collector and Treasurer was a suggested change. Firing practices according to the Town Charter were reviewed. Charter review was also outlined as a priority. Due process and the personnel policy were explained. Charter Review would take up to eighteen months. Initiating a Sewer Fee would take around three years of research. The Town Administrator will produce a list of suggested sub-committees to work on the thirteen DLS report items. Concern was expressed about the low number of Town Meeting Members showing up to Town Meeting, and the possibility of the number being changed through Charter Review.

Financial Update: Town Administrator Mazzucco updated the board that the Tax Collection rate has increased this year. The Howland Avenue property will likely be taken in land court. Reserve Fund and Stabilization Fund projected numbers were given.

Adjournment: Move by Member Cowie to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Lefebvre. Vote: unanimous. *The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary



Timothy Burdick, Chairman