

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, July 15, 2024

Town Hall, 2nd Floor Meeting Room

173 Main St, Groton, MA 01450

Approved

Finance Committee Members Present: Bud Robertson, Chair; Mary Linskey; Scott Whitefield; David Manugian; Mike Sulprizio, Gary Green

Finance Committee Appointment Committee Present: Bud Robertson, Alison Manugian, Jason Kauppi

Also Present: Patricia Dufresne, Assistant Finance Director/Town Accountant; Mark Haddad, Town Manager

Mr. Robertson called the Finance Committee to order at 5:30 p.m. & reviewed the meeting agenda.

Interviews of FinCom Candidates:

Guy Alberghini: Mr. Alberghini explained that most of his work history has been in the private sector, but he is experienced in helping departments manage their budgets. He enjoys playing a part in meeting departmental goals. Mr. Robertson asked why he was interested in serving on the FinCom. Mr. Alberghini replied that he has time available that he could commit to it and he would like to help the Town navigate its budget woes. Ms. Linskey asked what special skills he felt he could bring to the FinCom. Mr. Alberghini said that he has worked for many private sector companies and has done different sorts of analyses for them. He can analyze ways in which a department's performance can be improved financially. He believes he can be instrumental in helping the Town to grow. Mr. Green asked about any formal financial education he might have had, and Mr. Alberghini said he had very minimal financial education. He went on to say that he is particularly interested in helping the school district analyze its budget; their deficits have been growing steadily over the past several years. While he understands that the Town has no direct input into the district budget, the Town can approve or deny it. He ended by remarking that he felt the Town could do a better job of managing its finances, and should never have floated a request for a \$5 Million tax override.

Kristina Lengyel: Ms. Lengyel informed the group that she had been a corporate officer in the private sector for the last 30 or 35 years. She has managed budgets upwards of \$2 Billion, and has rolled-out and managed significant projects for the public sector as well. She and her husband have lived in Groton for 20 years, and now that she is recently retired, would appreciate the opportunity to be involved and participate in sustaining Groton's financial future. She stressed that successful financial management is all about evaluating trade-offs. No one has an infinite budget, and it's crucial to seek out other funding sources such as grants to help augment revenue. Mr. Sulprizio asked about her background serving on public sector boards. Ms. Lengyel replied that she was involved in an educational non-profit that deployed resources to several school districts. She has done a good deal of grant management and has a special interest in non-profits. Ms. Manugian asked whether she has any particular topics in mind to delve into for the upcoming municipal budget cycle. Ms. Lengyel noted that in the face of such overwhelming funding requests, finding alternatives to spending taxpayer money is important. She mentioned that she has no opinion yet on whether taxes should be increased, and will adopt a neutral position for the time being. She would like to help the Town elevate its budgeting to the next level.

Mr. Robertson asked for recommendations from the FinCom members based on the interviews just completed. Mr. Whitefield appreciated both candidates' interest, but would vote in favor of Ms. Lengyel due to her more extensive background and experience. Ms. Linskey agreed that Ms. Lengyel would bring more to the table. Mr. Sulprizio said that Ms. Lengyel has the stronger fiscal and budgeting background, but very much appreciated Mr. Alberghini's willingness to serve. Mr. Manugian said he also preferred Ms. Lengyel for her capital planning experience.

The FinCom Appointment Committee took the following action: Ms. Manugian moved to appoint Kristina Lengyel to the Finance Committee for a term to expire 6/30/27. Mr. Robertson seconded and the motion carried unanimously (The Vote = 3-0-0)

Minutes = On a motion by Mr. Sulprizio, seconded by Mr. Manugian, the Finance Committee voted in the majority to approve and release the minutes from their 5/18/24 meeting. (The Vote = 6-0-1 Ms. Lengyel abstained)

Re-organization of the Finance Committee for FY25:

Mr. Green nominated Mr. Robertson for the position of Chair; Mr. Whitefield seconded that nomination, and the motion carried by majority vote. (The Vote = 6-0-1 Mr. Robertson abstained)

Mr. Sulprizio nominated Ms. Linskey for the position of Vice Chair; Mr. Robertson seconded that nomination and the motion carried by majority vote. (The Vote = 6-0-1 Ms. Linskey abstained)

Mr. Green nominated Mr. Manugian for the position of Clerk; Mr. Sulprizio seconded that nomination and the motion carried by majority vote. (The Vote = 6-0-1 Mr. Manugian abstained)

FinCom remained in session and joined the Select Board at 6:00 pm in the same location.

Ms. Linskey left that meeting at 7p.m.

Following the discussion of Line-Item Transfers and Island Rd Bridge:

Other Business: Mr. Robertson informed the members that while Mr. Doody has given up his seat on the Finance Committee (due to his plans to relocate at the end of the year), he has expressed an interest in continuing to serve as the FinCom's representative on the School District's Building Committee for FloRo. The members discussed that as the project is nearing completion, there are really only formalities left to oversee. Additionally, the project would benefit from a knowledge and consistency perspective if Mr. Doody continued his involvement through to the end.

On a motion by Mr. Manugian seconded by Ms. Lengyel, the Finance Committee voted unanimously to approve Mr. Doody's continued participation on the School District's Building Committee (The Vote = 6-0-0)

Mr. Robertson officially adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m. (Following joint session with Select Board: meeting minutes for that session are recorded separately as FinComMins071524b)

Respectively submitted by Patricia Dufresne, Assistant Finance Director/Town Accountant