

**FINANCE COMMITTEE  
IPSWICH TOWN HALL, ROOM A  
25 Green Street  
TUESDAY, August 30, 2016, 7:30 PM  
Accepted Oct. 4, 2016**

**FINCOM Members in Attendance:** Chairman Rob White, Walt Hartford, Kevin Murphy, Janice Clements Skelton, Tammy Howe, Michael Schaaf, and Mike Dougherty. Jamie Fay and Mitch Feldman were absent.

Call to order at 7:34 pm with 7 (seven) members present. ICAM was recording, and Cindy Quinn, the Minutes Secretary, was present.

Others in Attendance: Sarah Johnson (Finance Director), Glenn Gibbs (Planning & Development Dir.), Tom Murphy (Town Moderator), Ethan Parsons (Senior Planner), Heidi Paek (Planning Board Chair), Jay Stanbury (Agricultural Commission), Kathleen Milano (Asst. Planning Director)

**Abbreviations used:** FINCOM Finance Committee, BOS Board of Selectmen, TM Town Manager, SC School Committee, ATM Annual Town Meeting, MS/HS Middle School/High School, MSBA Massachusetts School Building Authority, OPM Owner's Project Manager, SBC School Building Committee, STM Special Town Meeting, ZBA Zoning Board of Appeals

**Documents used:**

- Agenda 08/30/16 and Minutes from 4/9/16, 4/21/16, 5/12/16 (Tri-Board), and 6/14/16
- Exec. Session minutes from 4/12/16
- 2016 STM Articles from R. Crosbie, 8/30/16
- Budget Transfers 06.30/16 from S. Frontiera, 8/2/16
- Directorates and Departments from S. Frontiera, 8/2/16
- Potential Zoning Articles for Fall Town Meeting from E. Parsons, by email on 7/12/16
- FinCom Goals and Contact Information from R. White, by email on 8/30/16

**CITIZEN QUERIES:** there were no citizen inquiries.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:**

*K. Murphy moved, and J. Clements-Skelton seconded, to accept the minutes from 4/9/16, 4/21/16, 5/12/16, and 6/14/16. The vote was unanimous with T. Howe abstaining from the first three sets and voting on the last set.*

**TOWN ACTIVITIES**

Town Accountant, Stephanie Frontiera, talked about the budget transfer information she had emailed, the tax deferrals, and the extra money that is coming in, which is about \$200,000. Turning back \$500,000, the Town has encumbered those funds, while the Schools encumbered \$300,000. Most of the roadwork monies have been utilized on roads. She described some of the year-end transfers.

After working with the auditors, she expects a draft in a few weeks. Finance Director, Sarah Johnson, explained how our share for Essex Technical High School has dropped. In October, the Tri-Board could look at the audit. The Veteran's budget has not been fully funded for the past several years, and she noted that the Cherry Sheet revenues (\$74,000) would go into the Management Transfer account for overages (Article 4 of the Warrant.)

Taking the Town Manager's 10-year project forecast, Sarah layered the debt with the least impact on taxes. She will bring the chart to the Tri-Board meeting. She included a 3% tax levy (2 ½% and 1% growth) on this, and with economic development grants, this will lessen the debt. Covering Town and School, this chart does not contain the enterprise funds. Another spreadsheet has the tax recap including revenues, expenses, and levy limits.

She spoke about an article that would use \$86,000 for the security system at the schools and the loss of State funds. Other articles are the Essex Technical High School estimates, which have fallen \$232,000, emergency repairs at the Fire Station, green crabs, Whittier Regional Vocational Tech stabilization fund, amending the school feasibility amount, a land gift, zoning, private wells, and open space. The chiller at the MS/HS is costing more than originally estimated.

For the 10-year plan, Kevin mentioned that the school bond would start in FY21-22 with some borrowing in FY19. For the 5-year budget, Sarah wanted to start in August, but there is a delay in that grant. Other articles would add money to the OPEB trust and the capital plan from the funds returned from Essex Tech. There was a discussion on the dates for a Tri-Board meeting in Sept.

### **STM PROPOSED ZONING ARTICLES**

Planning Board Chair Heidi Paek began with the Housing Article, which is trying to make the bylaw more flexible. The third hearing is this week. Glenn Gibbs, Planning & Development Director, continued with other language changes on community development for 20% affordable housing or a \$20,000 payment to the Town.

Describing what has happened in other towns, Glenn went on to say more information is available to the developer, and more housing can be built. He informed the committee on affordable units' rules and the formula for the size of the project. As part of economic development, he indicated that businesses benefit from additional housing and gave some examples.

The conversation included talk of new overlays, special permit process, increased density for single-family housing, open space, affordability, and smaller lots. The discussion covered to accessory conversions, but the bylaw would have to be clear and protect abutters. Michael thanked Glenn for the Habitat for Humanity partnership.

Under sign regulations, Ethan claimed that they help with the character, safety, and public welfare. To make them more user friendly, the bylaw is being reformatted into a table, and there are new controls. Jay Stanbury is hoping to receive comments from the business community, while Ethan is checking variances through the ZBA. With changes in letter height, signage area, and setback, he clarified that older signs are grandfathered.

Some of the suggested changes are for temporary signs. There was some dialogue on finding a balance, and the Building Dept. is handling enforcement. After explaining the four types of signs, Ethan pointed out that the sign permit might cost \$50. Tammi complemented the group for trying to make it easier to understand the tables.

Heidi said that there were some alterations to Miscellaneous Zoning on multi-family and mixed uses with a new definition for three or more residences. Another change would allow existing retail establishments, less than 1000 square feet, to exist as a right. Several members had some concerns.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE FY17 GOALS**

Rob concentrated on the chart of goals emailed to the group and identified three major goals—the elementary school, five-year budget plan and OPEB. For the five-year proposal, the committee would consider Town priorities, the capital chart, and the tax rate plan.

While thinking about how to fund these, the board considered methods other than free cash. Sarah will be able to assist with this. In order to keep the AAA rating, Rob asked the FinCom to consider this and the next steps. Several members mentioned that they did not receive the email.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Mike reported that the Water subcommittee meets tomorrow. There was an emergency meeting to discuss water usage, enforcing this, and worst-case scenarios. Chief Nikas will have patrols checking the various neighborhoods. Because the Town is now in a water emergency, the subcommittee is looking to develop a five-year strategy. Other topics discussed included private wells, regulations, and the reconnect fee. Several members are interested in how many warnings have been issued, the number of shut-offs, and the impact of having names in the newspaper.

For the Climate Action Plan, Walt inquired about implementing those goals.

Tammi announced the Article 20 (on guns) committee has sent a status report to the BOS.

For the SBC, Kevin reviewed the bond from two years ago and the fees spent on the architect and OPM. If a new site for the elementary school or a new grade configuration is considered, the SBC may go over budget. They have requested an extension from the MSBA, which may mean missing the ATM deadline. The calendar is in flux, and if there are too many delays, the schools risk losing the funding. There was a conversation about public opinion on the schools.

**NEW BUSINESS**—no new business.

*M. Schaaf moved to adjourn at 10:15 pm. W. Hartford seconded, and the vote was unanimous.*

Respectfully submitted by

Cynthia D. Quinn, Minutes Secretary