

TOWN OF IPSWICH  
Finance Committee Minutes  
Tuesday June 13, 2023 at 7:30pm  
Ipswich Town Hall, Meeting Room A  
25 Green St. Ipswich, MA

With a quorum present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 7:35pm.

Finance Committee members present: Walter Hartford, Emilie Smith, Ken Swenson, Joseph Bourque, Rob White, Jamie Fay, Michael Schaaf, Leah Niska

**1. Welcome/ Pledge of Allegiance – W. Hartford**

**2. Citizens Queries – W. Hartford**

- Joe thanked Michael Dougherty for his years of service with the Finance Committee and as the Chair for the past two years. He also thanked Robert Chambers for his time on the Finance Committee.

**3. Meeting Minutes Approval/Votes – S. Crane/W. Hartford**

-4/11 and 4/25

- Joe said there are two type-o corrections.
- Motion to approve meeting minutes with corrections from 4/11 and 4/25 made by Walter, seconded by Joe.

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 8-0*

**4. Reserve Fund Transfer Vote – S. Crane/W. Hartford**

-Copy Machines: There are two costs for two different machines in different accounts.

-Boat Equipment: The engine has been purchased and is on the boat, this request is for the electronics.

- Motion to approve the request for \$27,221.54 for the purpose of electronics for the boat equipment made by Rob, seconded by Ken.
- Michael asked why this was not in the Capital Plan, it's because they weren't expecting the motor to die so soon.
- Motion to approve the requests for \$9,226 and \$9342.60 for the copy machines made by Rob, seconded by Emilie.

→ *Motion to approve both transfers passed unanimously, 8-0*

- Jamie asked Sarah for an update on finances. Sarah said the Reserve Funds are about \$70k and Police Overtime is about \$60k. We went over what we had thought we would need for Police, it looks like \$105k will be needed. Fire OT will need about \$47k and ESCO is \$65k. It's roughly \$207k in transfers. Jamie asked Sarah to get them a report that shows where they are now and if they will have any shortcomings, and if they will be asking for any internal transfers.
- Michael asked about Free Cash this year. Sarah said we have \$1.5M coming in in revenue, and we are turning back \$500k. We also have \$600k in unused Free Cash. So basically, we have \$2.6M. If we collect a higher percentage in real estate taxes this year, that will also bump up Free Cash.

- The Finance Committee expressed concern that they were not made aware of this sooner.

## 5. 2023 Annual Town Meeting Review – W. Hartford

Stephen explained that the motion for the \$2.5M water infrastructure vote was not subject to the Bamford Bylaw, but the motion itself in the PowerPoint did have the Bamford Bylaw reference. Because of this, Bond Counsel decided they could not sign off on issuing the debt. This will have to be corrected at Fall Town Meeting. Jamie asked what the schedule impact is, Stephen said Vicki and the vendor are working on that. Vicki is also working on a grant, so it is possible that when we go back in the fall we could be asking for a lesser amount. Stephen also said he thought it was a great meeting and went well.

Emilie said she was impressed by the amount of civic engagement in the audience. Emilie also said it seemed like there were some items that were there and then got pulled at the end. Joe and Jamie said they agreed with Stephen that it was a great meeting. Walter said he thinks they need to educate tax payers on the school budget and how money is allocated. Michael said he felt like it was one of the more contentious Town Meetings he has attended. The vote on the schools had a resounding endorsement for a particular approach, Michael said he is hopeful that the School Committee can take that information and move forward. Leah said going forward, she thinks it's important to communicate to the people in town as much as possible.

## 6. Feoffee Reappointments (three-year terms) – W. Hartford

-Nat Pulsifer (Term Expired 2021) – 6/30/2024

-Mark Evans (Term Expired 2023) – 6/30/2026

-Will be rescheduled to another night.

## 7. Subcommittee Appointments (two-year terms) 2023-2025 – W. Hartford

-Strategic Planning Working Group: Rob said he is on this but it hasn't met in at least 18 months and it may be revitalized soon, and if so the conversation would be better with a few FinCom members vs just one.

-Public Safety Building Committee: Jamie said he is on this now and it's demanding but he is happy to continue for now.

-Public Safety Property Re-Use Working Group: This group has been paused.

-Strategic Planning Working Group

-Water Subcommittee: Joe

-Wastewater Subcommittee: Joe

-Electric Light Subcommittee: Michael

-Audit Committee: Walter is on it currently but Rob and Jamie have thoughts that the FinCom should be more involved with this. Rob asked Sarah if we should switch auditors, Sarah said they have 2 more years with their contract. Sarah said she really likes this auditing firm and suggested that instead we could switch partners, to get a fresh set of eyes on things.

-Climate Resiliency Committee: Ken

-Payne Grant: Leah

-Town Government Study Committee: Emilie

**8. Finance Committee Reorganization, Chair (one year) 2023-2024 – W. Hartford**

- Rob nominated Jamie as Chair for one year, seconded by Walter.
- Jamie said he would want someone to be brought along as Vice Chair for the second year. Jamie said he is very encouraged by the elections we just had and he really admires Michael a lot for the job he did as Chair this past year. Jamie said he is optimistic that they are going to have a much more collaborative approach between the boards. The town needs to come together and find ways to work together.

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 7-0-1, Jamie abstained*

**9. Finance Committee Reorganization, Vice Chair (one year) 2023-2024 – W. Hartford**

- Emilie said she would love to expand her role on the Finance Committee and would love to be vice chair for the year.
- Joe nominated Emilie as Vice Chair, seconded by Rob.

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 7-0-1, Emilie abstained*

**10. New/Old Business – W. Hartford**

- Michael said Michael Dougherty's term ended early so they will be looking for someone to fill the position.
- Walter mentioned they had discussed having a Whittier Rep to come to a meeting to discuss the new school.

**11. Adjourn – W. Hartford**

- Motion to adjourn made by Emilie, seconded by Rob

→ *Motion passed unanimously, 8-0*

Respectfully Submitted By  
Alyson von der Esch  
6-20-23