



**Budget-Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes**

October 16, 2024 at 6:30pm

At Broadcast Studio & Via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Karen Lockwood, Deanna Lee, Frank McDermott [arrived at 6:56pm], Shawn McKillop, Cliff Small, Don Willard

Committee Members Absent: Chris Hanson

Town Staff Present:

Melanie Fernald (Town Clerk); Brenda Fox-Howard (Finance Director); Sue Look (Town Manager); Jason Williamson (Assistant Code Enforcement Officer)

1. **Called meeting to order** at 6:30pm by Chair Lockwood with a quorum present

2. Approval of Minutes
 - September 18, 2024

Motion to approve as amended by Mr. Small. Seconded by Mr. Willard.
Mr. McKillop noted that he is referred to as co-chair, and that it should be Vice Chair. Requested that be amended.
Chair Lockwood called for a vote on the minutes with the requested amendment.
Unanimously approved

3. New Business
 - a. Update on the bank statement reconciliation for June, July and August
June statement is still in progress, due to irregularities with the prior month's reconciliation process. Since December of 2022, our TRIO accounting software was not used to reconcile the bank statements. Had to clear checks for the auditors for a full year. There will be a movement of money \$100,000 to properly close out the FY2024 – the close out instructions left behind for staff were not correct/clear to instruct which fiscal year items needed to be paid from. Working with auditors to get their review finished.
Auditors predict it may be early 2025 before their review/report is finished.

 - b. Consideration of the purchasing policies collected from other communities
Have not been able to obtain the policy from Yarmouth.
Chair Lockwood has made a summary sheet to compare the policies collected. All policies compiled use the Town Manager or their designee as the Purchasing Agent.

Significant sized purchases require prior approval by the Select Board or a Town Meeting. In Gray, a CIP plan is required to make big purchases. Three bidders are required for most town's policies for larger purchases; written specifications needed for item.

Committee discussed that they could make recommendations to Select Board/staff. Current policy was amended to match what was in practice. That made sense at the time, but should be looked at again.

Mr. Willard believes bidding is important. Mr. Small notes that a written bid makes it clear that all bidders are working on the same thing.

Select Board Vice Chair Sadak wanted it clarified that Public Works' purchases have all been cleared through Town Manager and the Select Board was aware.

Peter Leavitt, Leavitt Road – Comprehensive Plan Committee followed the RFP Policy. Some purchases are so specialized that multiple bidders may not be possible. In the example of finding a Planning Firm to help with the Comprehensive Plan, there was only one timely bidder.

Select Board Member Denis Morse - questioned some purchases made, whether the process was followed.

Vice Chair McKillop suggested that this committee make a recommendation and leave it to the Town for the details.

Mr. Willard agreed and suggested that the committee recommend that the staff/administration look at policy and bring a proposed revision to the Select Board and Budget-Finance Committee.

c. Review of State bid and Town truck specifications and pricing (Don Willard)

From a procedural view, would like to see bids; State bid specifications are 100+ pages long, list of trucks, municipalities can pick from those if needs match up. Recommend to select board/staff that a purchasing policy that's uniform across all departments, which includes a competitive bidding process.

Select Board Vice Chair Sadak asked how 3 bids are obtained when purchasing a specific item like a fire truck – those aren't made by regular manufacturers.

Mr. Small spoke to determining the desired specifications, then inviting qualified bidders/manufacturers to make a competitive bid, nationally sourced - current fire truck is being built in Wisconsin, we've bought from Canada in the past.

Mr. Willard noted that fire trucks are more specific items, Public Works equipment can be bought more locally, and local vendors can be used for maintenance and parts down the road

Ms. Sadak asked if a generic purchasing policy using bidding hinder Public Safety from obtaining bids.

Mr. Willard said that it shouldn't make things more difficult. There are vendors selling identical trucks in other states, they should submit bids to ensure we're getting the best price.

Select Board Member Denis Morse – ambulances can also be priced & purchased as the chassis and the body, which can extend the life of the whole unit. That also can shorten the current 3-year wait for an ambulance.

Motion to recommend that Town staff review the purchasing policy relative to other municipalities' for review and improvement by Mr. Willard. Seconded by Mr. Small.
Unanimously approved

d. Consideration of Financing a New Dump Truck & Excavator
(item was incorrectly included in one version of the agenda).

Motion to table the item by Mr. Small. Second by Mr. McKillop.

The truck has been ordered, it will not be financed, will be received in next fiscal year and paid for with next fiscal year's funds.

Unanimously approved

4. *Public Comment

Chair Lockwood opened the floor for public comment, the following individuals spoke:

Denis Morse – watch the Select Board meeting, watch how they handled the minutes.

Peter Leavitt, Leavitt Road – Public review of the draft version of Comprehensive Plan, draft is posted on website, at the beginning of the Comprehensive Plan is the statement to “invest in road and traffic improvements”. The Plan has assigned responsible parties to help with certain action items within the plan. Speeding is a national issue, accidents may be down, but deaths are up. Solving the traffic/speeding issue will likely be a multi-step process: traffic-calming measures, signs, speed tables, speed bumps, increased police presence.

Noted that implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will need to be a group effort, with the backing of all the boards and committees in town.

5. Budget-Finance Committee Comment

Chair Lockwood opened the floor for Committee Member comments, no one spoke.

6. *Next Meeting

- Friday, **November 8, 2024 @ 6:30pm** (due to availability of videographer)
Discussion of if and when to hold the next couple of meetings.
Finance Director Fox-Howard said based upon her current knowledge and the extra work being done on the audit, budget season may need to start later than usual.
Town Manger Look said she'll sit with the Finance Director to come up with a plan, then run it by the Select Board, then set dates with the input from the

Budget-Finance Committee. The budget schedule will be forthcoming – will gear up soon.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:05pm by Mr. McKillop. Seconded by Ms. Lee.

Unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Fernald, Town Clerk