

Lenox Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: June 9, 2021

Members Present: Dave Carpenter (DC), Kristine Cass (KC), Michael Feder (MF), Mindi Morin (MM), Joan Bruno (JB), Andrea Pignatelli (AP)

Guests: NA

Absent: David Neubert (DN)

Meeting called to order at 7:01 PM.

KC made us aware that Clarence could not attend, and AP will be recording the meeting.

KC started the meeting as an open discussion regarding the town letter. MF felt that the COVID piece needed to address more than just Tanglewood as the biggest driver. Emphasized that a drop in the taxes and possibly not receive dollars from our usual revenue streams (state and federal aid, room and meal taxes), surpluses as a buffer for cash deficits and the capital expenditures. MM mentioned this concern would be better suited possibly for a different paragraph or section

KC found the most recent numbers to be a drop in overall meals and rooms tax by 33%, therefore it is highlighting the losses we are predicting. MF provided a paragraph to be placed under Section 1 of the draft town letter. DC and MC discussed these points and feel that it ties into the letter as MF stated. All members agree it will be at the top of the letter.

JB asked about who facilitated the negotiations for the teachers and KC informed us this is the HR component of the school committee along with the select board and town manager. MF suggested that the Finance Committee be a part of this discussion. We will further discuss this along with the Finance Committee having a seat at the table regarding the capital projects, suggested by MF.

MF explained his concern that restaurant are not capable of being open 7 days a week due to staffing and feels that we should focus more on this and not Tanglewood. Discussion regarding adding a line in the letter regarding employee constraint to the letter. KC read sentence from our draft letter and discussion to change language. Motion to make this change agreed upon by the committee.

KC started the discussion on the school committee paragraph and JB suggested we add a dollar amount by the % so that the value is understood. MF wanted more clarification on the breakdown of what the school specific benefit number is to the town and discussion around the % of children that live in Lenox vs. choice. MM suggested this discussion focus on what should be placed in this letter and that this answer can be addressed as we work with the school committee moving forward.

KC reread this section of the letter and DC had also suggested what JB suggested, and we added in the \$\$ amount to the 5%. DC brought up the three opposed votes and MF suggested an addition to the letter address that comment. MF wanted to address those pensions for retired teachers comes from the town budget. DC suggested that Chris Ketchen, town manager, review our letter to ensure numbers are accurate. AP and DC suggested additional language that has been added.

Committee agreed on the school budget section.

MF suggest a debt service sentence into the capital projects section of our letter. KC reviewed this section and agreed with changes made. MF suggested we also thank Mark and Joan for their contribution to our committee in addition to Elliott.

MF moves to approve the letter in its current form subject to KC checking numbers with Chris. KC seconded the motion and approved by the committee. KC will send one more time to the group.

Committee feels we should have this letter emailed and handed out at the town meeting with the warrants. KC will ask Kerry and Chris if we have a budget to print this and have it mailed to town residents or if there is already a mailing.

MF moves to approve the minutes and KC amended to approve the last two meeting minutes. All approved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:03pm.

Respectively Submitted,
Mindi Morin, Interim Secretary