

**Town of Sterling  
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes  
January 7, 2019  
Butterick Building, Room 205**

With the absence of Chairman Sova, Clerk Steve Staudaher called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

**In Attendance:**

Mary Cliett, Everett Heller, Todd Chapman, and Steve Staudaher

Absent: Joe Sova

Also in Attendance: Town Administrator Ross Perry, Town Moderator Amrith Kumar and FinCom Applicant Ezequiel Ayala

**Approve Prior Meeting Minutes:**

A motion to approve minutes of the January 2, 2019 meeting was made by Mary Cliett and seconded by Todd Chapman. Unanimous vote.

**Interview Finance Committee Applicant:**

Steve Staudaher welcomed applicant Ezequiel Ayala and apologized for the lack of communication on January 2, 2019, when the Committee failed to notify Mr. Ayala of the meeting.

Mr. Staudaher noted Mr. Ayala serves on the WRSD Audit Advisory Board and his position on this board is a possible conflict of interest in serving on the Finance Committee. Mr. Ayala spoke on his role on the Advisory Board, which involves choosing a firm for the WRSD audit, a review of the audit, recommendations after the review, and a final perusal of the audit. There is no action on audit issues by the Advisory Board and no involvement with finances. The Advisory Board is appointed by the School Committee.

Town Moderator Kumar weighed in with his belief that there could be a possible perception of conflict.

Mr. Ayala commented he would be willing to resign from the Audit Advisory Board if need be.

**Other Committee Business:**

Town Administrator Perry indicated WRSD representatives are interested in meeting with the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen before submitting their budget to the school committee. Mr. Staudaher suggested a possible joint meeting could be held on February 25, 2019 and Everett Heller made a motion to accept this date for a meeting. Mary Cliett seconded the motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mr. Perry also spoke on a review of health insurance costs. The town's current insurance carrier, Fallon Healthcare, has advised Mr. Perry there will be a 9.5% increase in cost. Mr. Perry is looking at other options.

**Vote on Finance Committee Applicant:**

Committee members discussed the applicant and all stressed the applicant is qualified, but are concerned about a conflict of interest. Mary Cliett made a motion to recommend appointment of Mr. Ayala to the Finance Committee, contingent on his resignation from the WRSD Audit Advisory Board. Everett Heller seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Mr. Ayala will next need a recommendation and vote from the Board of Selectmen in order to be appointed to FinCom. FinCom member Todd Chapman is also scheduled to be appointed by the Selectmen to the Capital Committee. Mary Cliett made a motion that Steve Staudaher represent the Finance Committee at the Board of Selectmen's meeting, scheduled for January 9, 2019. Everett Heller seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

**Adjourn:**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Everett Heller and seconded by Mary Cliett. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 6:56 PM.