

**Town of Sterling
Joint Finance Committee
And Capital Fund Committee Meeting Minutes
March 5, 2018
Butterick Building, Room 205**

Finance Committee Chairman Joe Sova called the FinCom meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Chairman of the Capital Fund Committee Gerry Kokernak called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

In Attendance:

Finance Committee - Joe Sova, Barbara Bartlett, Gerry Kokernak, Steve Staudaher, Everett Heller and Mary Cliett

Capital Fund Committee - Gerry Kokernak, Joe Sova, Arden Sonnenberg, Bob Brown, Mary Cliett, Everett Heller and Elaine Heller

Also in Attendance: Selectwoman Maureen Cranson, Selectman Richard Lane, Town Administrator Ross Perry, Andrea Driscoll and Dick Maki

Approve Prior Meeting Minutes:

A motion to approve minutes of the February 20, 2018 Finance Committee meeting was made by Barbara Bartlett and seconded by Everett Heller. The vote was unanimous.

A motion to approve minutes of the February 20, 2018 Capital Fund Committee meeting was made by Everett Heller and seconded by Mary Cliett. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Other Committee Business:

Chairwoman of the Cultural Commission, Andrea Driscoll, appeared before the committees to explain their \$3500.00 request for an increase in their budget. Ms. Driscoll advised members that the Commission is part of the MA Cultural Council, which is their funding agency, so the Sterling Commission is unable to fund-raise on their own behalf. She noted contributions the Cultural Commission makes to the quality of life in Sterling, such as:

- The summer band concerts
- School trips to cultural events, such as one made when sixth graders were taken to the Hanover Theater
- Support programs at the Sterling Grange
- Support the holiday music program at the Senior Center

With extra funds in their budget, Ms. Driscoll said they could support more programs at the library and senior center. Her budget request will be discussed by Committee members.

Review/Discussion of Budget Hearings:

Town Administrator Perry commented on the lack of a merit raise system for employees, which had been a topic of discussion at the meeting on March 3. Based on preliminary budget findings, he is proposing a 3% increase in employee wages across the board for FY19. This proposal would amount to an additional \$48,783.00 in the budget. In doing research, he found the private sector is giving merit raises of 3% or above. The Committee members will consider his request in their review.

Prepare List of Departments/Boards/Committees to Recall:

After discussion, Committee members suggested these committees be called:

- Economic Development Commission
- Historical Commission
- Library
- Planning Board
- Wachusett Regional School District

TA Perry lead a discussion on a request by the 1835 Town Hall Committee to reinstate their revolving account, which had been eliminated a few years ago. Everett Heller made a motion that the Finance Committee not recommend support of a revolving account for this Committee, and Gerry Kokernak seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Discuss Funding for Capital Items - Vote Recommendations for Capital Committee:

This discussion was deferred to a future meeting.

Capital Fund Committee Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn the Capital Fund Committee was made by Arden Sonnenberg and seconded by Bob Brown. With all members in favor, the Capital Fund Committee adjourned at 7:16 PM.

Review of the Omnibus Budget :

TA Perry and Finance Committee members reviewed each budget request. Holds were put on:

- Economic Development Committee
- Historical Commission
- Library
- Planning Board. After discussion, the line item for a Town Planner was removed from the Planning Board budget and added to that of the Town Administrator.
- Wachusett Regional School District

OPEB will be made a line item and added to the Omnibus Budget.

A discussion ensued on Mr. Perry's proposal to increase the salary line item from 2% to 3%. Gerry Kokernak made a motion that the Finance Committee recommend approval of this increase and the motion was seconded by Steve Staudaher. All members were in favor; motion carried.

Committee members suggested the issue of an increase in stipends be handled by the Board of Selectmen, rather than the Finance Committee.

Adjourn:

A motion to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting was made by Mary Cliett and seconded by Barbara Bartlett. The vote was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

