

Town of Sandisfield  
Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee  
Joint Meeting Work Session  
Minutes

Wednesday, November 7, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex.

Board/Committee Members present: Select Board: Mark Newman, Chairman; Brian O'Rourke; George Riley (arrived at 7:23 PM). Fred Ventresco, Town Administrator.

Finance Committee: Joe Gelinas, Chairman; Bogart Muller; Alex Bowman; Kathy Jacobs.

Chairman Newman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

Finance Committee Chair Gelinas asked to make some preliminary comments about agenda items 1 and 2, and what he/FINCOM would like to get accomplish tonight. Chairman Newman interjected that #2 on the agenda really cannot take place tonight because the moderator is not present. Gelinas explained that he has spoken with the Moderator about this meeting, and that he was OK with it proceeding and then being filled in later, as he was heading out of the area. Also FINCOM is really not proposing much that involves the moderator's domain, it is about the preparation for the Town Meeting by the Board. The Moderator will indeed be brought in to discuss the important parts pertaining to his role at the Town Meeting.

Gelinas explained that he and the Finance Committee were very "disheartened" about the happenings at the October 16, 2018, Special Town Meeting. FINCOM, and especially he, were "hung out to dry," and it was a very antagonistic meeting overall. The goal tonight is to make these special town meetings less antagonistic and personal, and improve the process to and be more prepared. Gelinas relayed that he had recently spoken with two people knowledgeable about Town Meetings and they were appalled about what happened at the October meeting. Michael Wilcox, a former moderator, and Kathy Martin, the former Town Manager of Granville for 30 years, then offered him some ideas to improve our process. FINCOM is presenting it proposed form and process here tonight for Select Board approval at a later date so it is on the agenda of a regular meeting.

**1. Discuss the process for submitting ad hoc budget requests**

Chairman Newman is still concerned that the Moderator is not present. "The meeting is his to run. Correct?", Newman asked. Gelinas further explained that mostly what they are proposing here is before the Town Meeting and thus before the moderator is involved. The main issue is that no one on the Select Board or administration was prepared to explain and advocate for most of the spending articles at the last Special Town Meeting. The moderator only chooses how to word the motions and takes this from those making a motion for them, and makes sure it is re-worded correctly and the procedures for approval are in order.

Selectman Riley joined the meeting at 7:23 PM. Chairman Newman asked Mr. Gelinas to briefly recap what has taken place so far, which he did. Selectman Riley asked about the moder-

ator not being present, and was he informed and invited; Mr. Gelinas explained that he has spoken with Moderator Winchester and he is fine with this taking place tonight and being filled in later. He and Mr. Winchester will then meet with Michael Wilcox, the moderator in Alford, for some guidance.

FINCOM Member Alex Bowman briefly summarized the new Ad-Hoc request form. All requesters would have to use it. It is submitted to the Town Administrator who makes sure it is complete and then schedules it for Select Board Meeting for consideration/approval. FINCOM approves it as well. This could be a joint meeting or FINCOM approves after BOS. Selectman O'Rourke asked if there is/should be a timeline for requests to put on the warrant. It was agreed about 5-6 weeks would be needed., but Mr. Gelinas and Mr. Ventresco will consult with the Town Clerk about this.

It was agreed that the signature part of the form is not needed and to include a place for the date, and on hold until discussion with Dolores.

## **2. Discuss how a town meeting should proceed, such as who presents, to whom does one address comments**

We have already discussed some of this, Gelinas stated. Someone on the Select Board, or a designee, has to explain and advocate for the warrant articles, and that all should know their roles. The Moderator has broad discretion at the meeting. Gelinas read from the The Town Moderator Times to explain that basically, in summary and in part, the articles can be amended, including the amount, and that there is no specified limit to changing the amount, despite what they had been informed. All that is necessary is for the articles to state the basic nature of the subject matter to be acted upon.

Selectman O'Rourke explained that he thought that the Board was not supposed to advocate for articles at a Town Meeting. He would like to arrange a workshop/meeting with the moderator and all involved to discuss the various roles all should play at Town Meetings, maybe right after the first of the new year. He emphasized we want to work as a team. It was agreed that Gelinas and Simon would meet with Mr. Wilcox and then they would get back and have another meeting.

## **3. Update on the operational and capital budget processes**

Town administrator Ventresco gave the update stating that a few budgets have already been submitted, but that many had submitted only the spreadsheet and not the narratives requires in the Management Letter. Select Riley asked if all had reported in as required on November 1; Mr. Ventresco said no, and he is going to send out a reminder or give those a call. All agreed that all budgeters should put in what they feel they need; they should not hold off including something because they think it will be rejected. FINCOM feels that the Library should submit their budgets earlier, and not wait until after the deadline because they are waiting for grants. FINCOM Member Alex Bowman does not see why they cannot estimate, as it does not change that much from year-to-year.

As for the Capital Budget, a committee has not been formed as of yet, as only one volunteer has come forward. Gelinas explained that the committee's work does not even begin until January. In the meantime, the Departments should be working on their asset inventory. Gelinas reminded

the Board as well that they had said they would assemble an ad-hoc committee of Select Board and FINCOM Members if no volunteer members had come forward. Selectman Riley asked to be clear if we were going to expect the Departments to put together an inventory of assets on their own. Gelinas and FINCOM think so, as well as prepare their own capital requests. Chairman Gelinas offered to assist if anyone wants his help.

4. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair  
No topics brought forth.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM

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Mark Newman

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Brian O'Rourke

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George Riley