



Finance Committee

3/1/2022, 9:00 AM

Virtual Meeting

Minutes

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting was conducted via remote means.

1. Call to order

Members participating remotely: Steinberg; Griesemer; Schoen; Miller; Walker; non-voting members: Hegner; Kubiak; Holloway

Members absent: none

Others participating remotely: Finance Director Sean Mangano; Comptroller Sonia Aldrich; Assistant Assessor Kim Mew; Planner Ben Breger; Planning Director Christine Brestrup; Treasurer/Collector Jen LaFountain; Assistant Town Manager Dave Ziomek; Minute Taker W. Kaizen
Steinberg declared the presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 9:03 am, confirmed all participants can hear and be heard, and announced audio and video recording

Because of computer issues, Steinberg switched to his cell phone and Schoen took over as chair at 9:56; Steinberg resumed chairing at 10:18

2. Action items

- a. CPA Project, discussion and possible vote on remaining historic preservation recommendations
Mangano, Breger and Brestrup addressed the following questions:
 - * Can the town place conditions on CPA grants that would allow for money to be returned to the town upon sale of the property? The town attorney said yes, restrictions can be placed on the property's deed to protect investment of CPA funds including the return of funds
 - * What is the importance of privately owned houses in relation to CPA funds? Ziomek said that there are seven structures on the National Historic Register in town and that they make up the essential fabric of Amherst; he compared these to APRs and farmland preservation; Brestrup added that they are tied to economic development because they bring people to Amherst
 - * Are there maintenance standards currently required for CPA grantees? No, but adding restrictions could add these
 - * Can CPA grants be restructured as loans? The town attorney said they can be, but staff has some concerns about this
 - * Can the town decide to cap the use of CPA funds? The attorney said that the Town Council can already lower fund awards and that the council could only further restrict these funds in this way preemptively, in a non-binding guideline to the CPA committee

Members and staff discussed:

- * if CPA funding for historical preservation can be mandated to owners in restrictions;
- * what happens in the case of bankruptcy;
- * publicly accessible buildings versus buildings that are largely for private use;
- * enhancing vs. preserving the value of an applicant's property;
- * and competing needs for CPA funds

Members discussed future actions/next steps

VOTE

Motion: Miller moved and Steinberg seconded to recommend the Conkey Steven's House and The Amherst Women's Club to the Town Council for approval as part of the CPA's recommendation subject to having a historic preservation restriction agreement in place on both properties

Discussion: Schoen said this doesn't go far enough to speak the concerns that she and others have raised and that the whole council should discuss this matter; Steinberg said he would vote yes subject to restrictions being imposed; members discussed town council holding a public forum on the topic; members and staff clarified how this motion will work and how deed restrictions works relative to CPA funds

Vote: Steinberg Y; Griesemer N; Schoen N; Miller Y; Walker N; non-voting members: Hegner recused; Kubiak N; Holloway Y—motion fails

Steinberg will draft a report to TC summarizing the discussion

b. **Transportation Fund Recommendation**

Members discussed the various new fees proposed and their ramifications, particularly in relation to raising non-resident permit fees more quickly; members discussed how to manage the reserved spaces in the lower level Boltwood garage; Steinberg will report to TSO on the finance committee's discussion that their general sentiment was in favor of increasing parking fees in general and to raise these fees more quickly for non-Amherst residents

3. Discussion items

a. **Assessing University and College Property**

Schoen introduced the topic of re-evaluating the assessed value of property owned by the colleges and University in Amherst in order to potentially seek payments in lieu of taxation if allowed by revisions to state law or by agreements with these institutions; she said that there is a statewide movement to do this and that New Haven and Burlington have both done this; members discussed state legislation related to this subject and whether or not UMass would be excluded from being taxed; they also discussed Northampton's attempt to do this

Mangano said that the potential pathways to accomplish this were either a state pilot program or a town pilot program like the one Northampton did; Mew recounted the work she has been doing to account for the property value of UMass buildings; members made suggestions for how to get the best data and do the best research on the subject; Mangano will report back with further developments at the next Finance Committee meeting

- b. Water/Sewer Rate Policy
Not discussed

4. Approval of Minutes: January 19, 2022, February 7, 2022, February 8, 2022, and February 15, 2022

- 5. Public Comment**
None

6. Approval of Minutes: January 19, 2022

VOTE
Motion

Griesemer moved, Miller seconded that the Finance Committee approve the current slate of minutes with slight changes recommended by Steinberg
Vote: unanimously in favor

- 7. Announcements and next agenda preview**
Next meeting: March 22th at 9:00 AM

- 8. Items Not Anticipated by the Chair 48 Hours in Advance**
None

9. Adjourn

Steinberg declared the meeting adjourned at 11:36 am

Minutes prepared by W. Kaizen

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented:

03-01-2022 Finance Committee Agenda

2022-01-19 DRAFT Finance Committee Minutes

2022-02-07 DRAFT Finance Committee Minutes - Public Forum on Appropriations

2022-02-08 DRAFT Finance Committee Minutes

2022-02-15 DRAFT Finance Committee Minutes

CO FY22 - 10 Water and Sewer Rate Memo 4.8.21

CO FY23 - 07 CPA - Project Allocations

Community Preservation Act Committee Report for Fiscal Year 2023 FINAL

Memo to Town Council - Parking Recommendations - 01-14-2022

Parking Questions - FinCom 3.1.22

PermitPkgRegs 2.22.22 - clean

PermitPkgRegs 2.22.22 - markup

Water and Sewer Rate Discussion 5.4.21