**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, April 7, 2015, 6:30 PM**

**Lower Conference Room**

**Members Present:** John Heffernan (Chair), William Podolski, Maureen Hanlon, Dave Roberts, Liz O’Donnell, Steve Bilafer, Sue Carney and Kevin Hughes.

**Members Absent:** Russell Stamm.

Mr. Heffernan called meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Mr. Kern introduced the new Finance Director, Andrea Terkelsen. He explained how fortunate the Town is to have had a quality candidate like Andrea to apply for the position. He thanked Maureen Hanlon for her assistance with the hiring process. Andrea introduced herself to the Committee as well and the Committee welcomed her to the Town.

**ARTICLE 8:** *By the Finance Committee: To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds to meet additional expenses of the current fiscal year not adequately funded under Article Three of the 2014 Annual Town Meeting (FY'15) or any other article thereof; or to take any other action relative thereto.*

Chief of Police, Michael D’Entremont, explained that the Police Department has experienced vehicle repair bills that are higher than normal this year. He explained that since the cost of fuel has gone down, they would like to use the surplus from this year’s fuel and put it towards those bills. There were no questions from the Committee.

Mr. Kern explained that there is a transfer requested, as previously discussed, that will come from Board of Selectmen Personnel Services and be transferred to Board of Health to fund one of the two additional days needed for the Town Nurse.

Ms. Baker explained that they are requesting $20,000 be transferred from personnel services to the general legal budget to cover the anticipated legal services for this fiscal year.

There was also a transfer from free cash to cover Snow and Ice. Mr. Kern explained this is an appropriate use of Free Cash.

Lastly, there was a transfer request from “Veterans Personnel Services” to “Veterans Travel”. Mr. Aitkin explained the requirement of him to attend two additional conferences.

**ARTICLE 22:** *By the Town Manager. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to research and develop a plan to participate in a contract or contracts, to aggregate the electricity load of the residents and businesses in the Town of Dedham and for other related services, independently or in joint action with other municipalities, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 164 of the Acts of 1997, which provision established a competitive marketplace through deregulation and restructuring of the electric utility industry; and further authorize the Town Manager to establish, and/or appoint representatives for a committee to oversee such independent or joint action, or take any other action relative thereto.*

Stefano Loretto of Good Energy presented to the Committee on community aggregation. He explained that when implemented, the default would be that everyone is participating, but they could then opt out if they choose to within 30 days. Mr. Loretto spoke about the high electric bills that are hurting many, and how this effort would be a tool that could be used to get the purchasing power for lower rates. He added that the goal is to have this approved this Town Meeting so that they can hit the January 1st date.

Mr. Kern explained that by approving this article, they would be giving the Board of Selectmen the authority to pursue Community Aggregation.

Mr. Podolski asked if people opt out and then want to opt in if they would be charged a fee. Mr. Loretto responded that they should not be charged. Mr. Kern explained that nothing is actually disconnected when you opt in or out, it is just about where they purchase the power from.

Maureen Hanlon confirmed that the way the bill looks will not change, it is just the source. Maintenance contracts are also not affected.

Mr. Hughes commented that he works with a third party supplier with a no termination clause. He heard recently that some people who opted out of the third parties, NStar is charging a reconciliation fee. Mr. Loretta confirmed with Mr. Hughes that this is correct, and the fee depends on the timing. He explained that if you are enrolled in the beginning the risk of getting hit with one of these fees goes away.

Mr. Bilafer asked why there is a time frame given to opt out if you are supposed to be able to opt out at any time. Mr. Loretta explained that during the “opt out period” is the only time someone can technically opt out, but they can still choose to terminate early. Mr. Bilafer asked if you can opt back in once you opt out. Mr. Loretta explained that is more difficult to do, but on a case by case basis it may be possible, especially when there are misunderstandings. Mr. Bilafer also asked about how much people save. Mr. Loretta responded that they have saved their clients about $100 Million plus, and explained that savings need to be analyzed over a 12 month period in this market.

Ms. Carney asked about Good Energy’s competitors. Mr. Loretto listed a few. Ms. Carney commented that she hates to see the Town rush into something like this if it is only saving them $80-$100 dollars. Mr. Kern explained that all of this is prospective; no one has given this a test drive. Based on the information he has received he is comfortable with Good Energy.

Mr. Roberts asked what other Towns are participating. Mr. Loretto described other towns that are in the process and likely moving forward.

**7:35 PM:** **ARTICLE 23**: *By the Planning Board. To see if the Town will vote to approve the “Comprehensive Concept Plan”, reviewed and recommended by the Dedham Planning Board, and on file in the office of the Town Clerk, for a Planned Residential Development (“PRD”) at 255 West Street (Dedham Assessor’s Map 117, Lot 3) submitted by Concinnitas Corporation and shown on the plan entitled “Comprehensive Concept Plan, 255 West Street, Site Layout Plan C3’, dated December 29, 2014, revised through January 16, 2015, prepared by McKenzie Engineering Group, Inc. with the following conditions: (a) the PRD shall have a maximum of seven (7) dwelling units; (b) the maximum total gross floor area of dwelling units with the PRD shall be 29,792 square feet inclusive of all finished basement areas; (c) the minimum dedicated open space within the PRD shall be 48 percent of the total area; and (d) subject to a comprehensive review of the site development plan by the Planning Board, or take any other action relative thereto.*

Richard McCarthy explained the bylaw provision within the Dedham Zoning Bylaws for “Planned Residential Development”. 255 West Street is zoned as Single Residence A which is 40,000 square feet per lot, and if you choose to go through the Planned Residential Development option you can increase the density by 1.5 times. This property is proposing 7 units instead of the 5 house lots that could normally be developed at that location. Mr. McCarthy explained that this will require Town Meeting approval of the comprehensive concept plan, and then the applicant will need to return back to the Planning Board to have a more specific comprehensive site plan approved. Mr. McCarthy informed the Committee that Planning Board did unanimously recommend the concept plan at their April 1st meeting.

Greg Carlevale of Concinnitas Corporation described the project to the Committee.

Ms. Hanlon asked if this was infringing on space that was supposed to remain as Open Space within the Town. Mr. McCarthy confirmed that it is not; instead this will specify new open space.

Mr. Heffernan asked Mr. McCarthy what percentage of the residents in Town is in the range of 2200 to 2500 square feet. Mr. McCarthy did not have that figure.

**ARTICLE 24:** *By the Planning Board at the request of the East Dedham Revitalization Committee. To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaws, Section 12.0, Arts Overlay District (AOD) as follows: (see warrant)*

Richard McCarthy was present. He reminded the Committee how the boundary of the East Dedham Arts Overlay District was created last spring. This article established art related uses for this specific district. The established and defined the terms, including what art means within this article.

**ARTICLE 25:** *By the Planning Board. To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Map of the Town of Dedham, by changing a portion of Map 96-Parcel 109 from Limited Manufacturing A to Single Residence B, changing a portion of Map 96- Parcel 15 and Map 96-Parcel 17A from General Business to General Residence, changing Map 95- Parcel 74 and Map 95-Parcel 75 from Limited Manufacturing A to General Business, changing Map 95-Parcel 76 and Map 95-Parcel 77 from Limited Manufacturing A and General Residence, to General Business, changing Map 95-Parcel 78, Map 96-Parcel 1, Map 96-Parcel 2, Map 96-Parcel 3, Map 96-Parcel 3A, Map 96-Parcel 4, Map 96-Parcel 18, Map 96-Parcel 27, Map 96-Parcel 31, Map 96-Parcel 32, Map 96-Parcel 33, Map 96- Parcel 38, Map 96-Parcel 110, Map 96-Parcel 112 from General Residence to General Business, changing a portion Map 96-Parcel 13, Map 96-Parcel 14, Map 96-Parcel 15, Map 96-Parcel 28, Map 96-Parcel 29 and Map 112-Parcel 146 from General Residence to General Business. The zoning map changes for said parcels are shown on a map prepared by the Town of Dedham Geographic Information System (GIS) and available for review in the Office of the Town Clerk, or take any action relative thereto.*

Richard McCarthy explained how Article 25 relates to Article 24. It relates to having the Arts and Community center in a more business-oriented district. Mr. McCarthy demonstrated the changes on a map. He explained that this has been recommended by the Master Plan Implementation Committee, the Mother Brook Community Group voted 12-1 in favor, the Mother Brook Arts and Community Center voted unanimously to support the article and the East Dedham Revitalization Committee unanimously supports the article as well.

Ms. Baker informed the Committee that the original motion on the floor of Town Meeting will be from the Planning Board.

**ARTICLE 26:** *By the Planning Board. To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaws, Section 9.6 Design Review Advisory Board, as follows, with text to be deleted shown in strikethrough and text to be inserted shown in bold: (see warrant)*

Mr. McCarthy explained that with this article, one of the changes with the Design Review Advisory Board (DRAB) is to add Graphic Design as one of the disciplines. They will also reflect in the bylaw that members will be on three year alternating terms. The other change is that when applicants file with the Planning Board and it is determined that the DRAB needs to look at something, applicants will no longer need to individually file with DRAB, only the Planning Board. One of the changes is to the terminology “or negotiated” to have it deleted since this is only an advisory board.

Mr. McCarthy informed the Committee that the Planning Board and DRAB voted unanimously to support this article.

**ARTICLE 27:** *By the Planning Board. To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaws, Section 9.5, Site Plan Review, as follows, with text to be deleted shown in strikethrough and text to be inserted shown in bold: (see warrant)*

Mr. McCarthy explained that this article proposes changes to the Zoning Bylaws that would also help to streamline processes. One change is to require a material list of all of the exterior finishes. Another change is with regards to streamlining the peer review process.

**ARTICLE 33**: *By the Town Manager at the request of the Design Review Advisory Board. To see if the Town of Dedham will vote to amend the General Bylaws, Chapter 237 Signs, as follows, with text to be deleted shown in strikethrough and text to be inserted shown in bold: (see warrant)*

Mr. McCarthy explained that this article would clean up the language within the sign code. The process described is actually the way they do it today. Mr. McCarthy reviewed the changes with the Committee.

**ARTICLE 37:** *By the Town Moderator. To see if the Town will vote to amend the composition of the School Building Rehabilitation Committee, originally formed under Article 5 of the December 4, 2000 Special Town Meeting, as follows: One (1) member of the Board of Selectmen or designee; Two (2) members of the School Committee or designees; One (1) member of the Finance & Warrant Committee or designee; One (1) member of the Capital Expenditure Committee or designee; Superintendent of Schools or designee; Principal of affected school or designee; Town Manager or designee; and Three (3) members at large, appointed by the Moderator, for terms of one, two and three years, or take any other action relative thereto.*

Town Moderator Daniel Driscoll explained that he has asked that the bylaw be amended to establish terms for the School Building Rehabilitation Committee. Ms. Baker clarified that this is not yet a bylaw, this is an article from the December 2000 Special Town Meeting, and there will be a formal bylaw proposal in the fall. This will be implemented immediately after the vote of Town Meeting.

Mr. Bilafer commented that he would like the article to specify that one of the at large members should be a parent of children at the school.

**ARTICLE 38:** *By Petition of Carla M. Foley, et al. To see if the Town will vote to amend Article 34, Section 3 of the Dedham Annual Town Meeting of 2013 to read as follows: For the purposes of this Act, Dedham Square shall be the geographical area in the Town of Dedham consisting of Bryant Street, Eastern Avenue, those portions of Washington Street from Bryant Street to Star Lane, Harris Street, and those portions of High Street from Maple Place to Harvard Street, or take any other action relative thereto.*

Attorney Joe Foley was present to discuss the article. He explained that the intention is to amend Article 34 of last year’s Town Meeting. This article proposes the designation of the Dedham Square for purposes of liquor licenses to be pulled back. Last year it was pushed back to Ames Street, and they would like it to come back to Maple Place and the intersection of the Post Office and High Street.

Mr. Bilafer asked for some clarification. Ms. Baker explained that the definition of Dedham Square included this larger area; they would like to amend legislation to reduce the definition. This is specifically related to a restaurant that has been approved to open by the ZBA at this location, and if approved would remove their ability to get one of the liquor licenses for Dedham Square.

Ms. Carney commented that it is difficult for her not to think of the Odd Fellows Hall as Dedham Square. The ability of that restaurant to get a liquor license may just be an unfortunate reality.

An Abutter, Peter Malar, of Church Street expressed concerns about the result of having a restaurant serving alcohol right next-door to his home.

Mr. Foley explained that this would only be changing the definition of Dedham Square as it would relate to the ability to issue liquor licenses.

Sarah Wright an abutter at 10 Pearl Street, and also a business owner at 3 Pearl Street commented that this part of High Street is extremely congested during the day.

Jonathan Taylor, also an abutter, commented that no restaurant can survive without a liquor license. The restaurant will not last where it is without parking, and it is disconnected from the Square. If and when the restaurant does turn over, it would have a liquor license at that location. He thinks that having something with liquor is a problem.

**9:20 PM-** **ARTICLE 3:** *To see what sum of money the Town will raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds to defray departmental and incidental expenses of the Town for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2015, not otherwise provided for, or take any other action relative thereto.*

IT Update: Mr. Kern explained he is here to clarify the IT effort as it related to the Finance Department budget. There is only a draft version of the IT study back to the Town. As a result of the both the Town Manager’s and Centric Consulting’s evaluation of the IT effort it was determined there are sufficient deficiencies in the area of IT, and as such they decided it is time to change the Town’s approach. For budget purposes, the Town will outsource the IT effort. Mr. Kern explained that they will hire an outside firm to accomplish this, and also use half of the Assistant Finance Director position to supervise the IT effort. The transition from staff to contract is difficult to make so they have decided they will be using Hubtech. He chose them because they already exist in Town and they needed their assistance with the transition. Due to 3 vacant positions there is $239,751 available, and there is a quote from Hubtech for $227,432. He plans to replace these 3 vacant positions with the outsourced company. Mr. Kern added that he thinks the Town has a year before they implement some of the other changes from the IT study, and he plans to put together some groups of employees to develop a plan. Mr. Kern explained that Phases 2 and 3 will look at technology to communicate with the people of Dedham, including the website.

Mr. Bilafer asked if they plan to take advantage of William Ralph’s IT expertise do they also plan to add these responsibilities to the job description so that future people in his position will need a similar skillset. Mr. Kern responded that he is not opposed to that, but he is also not opposed to going with a full time IT person down the road.

Mr. Heffernan commented that as long as the Town chooses to outsource IT there will always be a need for that point person to be here. He added that there are a number of current Town Employees that could really contribute to pushing this forward.

Ms. Hanlon commented that she sees this as a baby step towards where the Town needs to be.

Mr. Bilafer asked what the delivery timeframe is for the IT study. Mr. Kern responded it should be finalized in the next couple of weeks.

Ms. Hanlon asked if Hubtech handles other towns. Mr. Kern confirmed that Hubtech works with dozens of other towns.

**9:40 PM:** Discussion on Article 3-

Mr. Heffernan explained that he wants to go through and see if the Committee has any other questions or concerns about Article 3.

Ms. Carney asked if the bathrooms at both library sites are handicap accessible and ADA compliant. Mr. Kern responded that he believes they are already, but he will confirm with the Facilities Department. Mr. Heffernan added that his recollection was that the previous discussions were about security and swipe card access.

Mr. Hughes asked for an update to a question he had asked previously regarding a courier charge. Ms. Baker responded that she believes this was determined to be a typographical error, but she will look again to make sure.

Mr. Roberts asked if the Gateway to the Manor were to be recommended, would the money be borrowed of free cash. Mr. Kern confirmed the money would be borrowed so it would require 2/3 vote.

Ms. Carney commented that she was not present for the Gateway to the Manor discussion but commented that if it is something that is just not going to be recommended, they should let the proponents know. She added that as a result of reading the traffic study, she did not have concerns or see a compelling reason for safety, as a result she is not inclined to support it.

Mr. Heffernan commented that he has been in touch with the proponents for Gateway to the Manor to make sure they are aware that the Committee will be deliberating and voting on it on Thursday night. He added that this project will be under Article 4, not 3.

Mr. Bilafer asked what would happen if the FinCom were to advocate for the Gateway to the Manor project considering that the CEC did not recommend it; would it throw the Capital Budget out of whack. Mr. Heffernan responded that since that project was recommended for funding by the Town Manager, they have already determined that they have the capacity to borrow for it; it just was not recommended to be included by the CEC.

Ms. O’Donnell asked if it would be possible to get accident comparisons of the Gateway to the Manor project compared to other intersections around town.

Ms. Hanlon described her take on the project and why she is not sure if comparing the traffic will be helpful considering how few accidents occur the Gateway to the Manor intersection.

Sue Carney commented that she still has concerns with the request to fund the full salary of the Human Resources Manager at the schools. She believes they can find the money within their budget. She also mentioned that it is her understanding that they have more paraprofessionals than they need so she does not think they should be funding either of those positions. Ms. Carney further explained that she is not for reducing the budget, she just thinks there are other things that could rightfully be funded instead. Mr. Kern commented that if you are not going to reduce the number then you don’t end up with much say. Ms. Carney commented that she will still vote in favor of the budget.

Mr. Roberts commented that this is an exciting time of change with new Town Manager and Superintendent. The Committee heard about some new approaches that will be taken, and is impressed by the Superintendent and the Town Manager. He would like to see how this all plays out after a year. Ms. Carney agreed.

Mr. Bilafer commented that he is not as offended by the addition of the HR position and he thinks it can be justified. Ms. Carney agreed she said her issue is with how the position is funded.

Mr. Heffernan asked if it would be necessary to have the Superintendent present on Thursday night. The committee agreed that they had the information they needed.

Ms. Hanlon commented that while there are items within this budget that she is not happy with, she thinks both the new Town Manager and Superintendent deserve the time to make the adjustments needed to become more effective. She does not plan on being as lenient next year.

Mr. Podolski made a motion to adjourn at 10:20 PM, seconded by Ms. Carney. **It was voted 8-0**.