

Minutes  
**STOW FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
January 11, 2011  
7:30 PM  
Town Building  
**Approved**

**Call to Order**

Chairman Gary Bernklow called the meeting to order at 7:31pm. Present were,  
*Members:* Christopher Sarno, Richard Connelly, Peter McManus and Ann Deluty  
*Associates:* Richard Rollins, Eric Sears and Bruce Walbridge  
*Secretary:* Elizabeth Tobey  
Guest: Mike McLaughlin

**Correspondence**

- Letter and email from David Walrath appointing Peter McManus a committee member
- Letter and email from David Walrath appointing Patricia Heron an associate member
- Copy of Bolton Selectmen article on budget constraints
- The Beacon newsletter January 2011

**Meeting Minutes**

After a review of the minutes Ann Deluty moved to approve December 14, 2010 minutes as Amended. Richard Connelly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously (Bernklow, Sarno, Deluty, Connelly and McManus)

**Reserve Fund Transfer Request**

Fire Department – Salary FF/EMT Overtime Wages - \$10,000.00

Mike McLaughlin explained that he has a pending RFTR. He stated that he had been reviewing the payroll for the past 3 years comparing the fulltime Firefighter/EMT overtime. He wanted to bring the RFTR to Fincom before he ran out of money.

The firefighters put in a lot of free time. They conduct summer Sunday night required training. The full time fire fighters do this for no pay.

The overtime is legitimate overtime. They have to take refresher classes yearly. Fulltime firefighters work from 6am to 6pm, 2 days on and 2 days off. There are 4 fulltime firefighters. In the evenings and there are two Per Diem firefighters from 6pm to 6am. This allows the ambulances to get out quickly. From 6pm to 6am full time firefighters take turns responding to emergencies from home. It is extremely difficult to handle a medical call with just two people due to equipment hauling. The call Lt. fulltime firefighter is a minimum of 2 hours pay. Sometimes two to four calls go out at one time. The bulk of call back is the on-call officers. They also handle the transport to Emerson and Marlboro Hospital. They also go back to the station and stay until the ambulance gets back.

We have expended \$20,700 so far this year.

Regular Overtime – If a fulltime firefighter goes on vacation someone has to come into fill the vacation time.

Holidays – There are ten holidays. We try to have on-call or per diem come in to fill the shift. Some fulltime firefighters have to work the holiday. If the holiday is on their day off they get a comp day if they have to come in. It is very rare that any of them take a sick day.

Recently 5 of the 6pm to 6am took fulltime work in other departments.

What I have explained is what is in the overtime budget.

Call volume is increasing every year, which causes the firefighter volume to go up.

We are currently down to a little over \$7k. I anticipate running out in the beginning of February. If it continues I will need a little over \$22k to finish the year.

We have recently increased the ambulance rates. We are now competitive with other towns in the area.

Chris expressed that it would be beneficial to know how much money they have put into the general fund. Mike explained that he is sitting down with the Administrator, Selectmen and Finance Committee to see if there is a better way to work all of the issues.

Gary stated that Bill Wrigley had contacted him to meet with fire to discuss fire future expenditures. He then asked if Mike had the numbers on the volume of runs.

There was an increase in numbers as follow: 638 in 2006, 750 in 2009 and 850 in 2010.

Mike explained if they take an out of town calls they bill for a medical.

Gary explained that Bill Wrigley is not comfortable giving the full amount until the end of the fiscal year. We will vote a partial amount now.

It's a safe bet you will go through 19k by the end of the year, Chris expressed. Chris recused himself from participation in the budget.

Ann Deluty moved to approve the reserve fund transfer request in the amount of \$10,000.00 for overtime expenditures. Christopher Sarno seconded the motion.

The motion carried 4 for (Bernklow, Sarno, Deluty and McManus)  
1 abstained (Connelly)

Mike McLaughlin out at 8:11 pm

### **Liaison Reports**

*NRSD*- a resident has asked that the school budget review be broadcast on local TV. Chris will not be able to participate in the school budget, as his wife is a teacher in the district.

Gary suggested that all liaisons meet with their departments.

There is an opening for a Liaison for NRSD. Bruce volunteered for the Liaison to NRSD.

Gary commented that the budget review sessions will be upstairs and televised. It will be a joint boards with the selectmen.

Budgets to focus on:

Fire, Police, Highway, NRSD, Minuteman, Library, Recreation and ESBC

On 2/8 - schedule: IT, Police and Highway.

On 2/15- schedule: NRSD

On 2/22- schedule: Fire, Recreation and Library

*ESBC* – Gary explained that the present budget is at \$32.6mil down \$6.447mil. \$3.2mil paid by the state. The state has not approved the final budget as of 1/10/11. The Concerned Citizens Group asked for a break down of the budget and cost to the citizens. The savings of \$2.6mil will save the average taxpayer \$70 per year in taxes. There is a delay of three weeks on the project completion due to the steel delivery. Everything will be on schedule. There was a problem with the concrete and fired the vendor. They have hired the next vendor on the list. In January 2012 the 4<sup>th</sup> grade will move into the new school.

*LACAC* – Rick explained the expenditures and income. The franchise fee is at 2.5%. Most towns are at 5%. They plan to ask for a raise in the rate. They wish to expand to three channels. They have had enquiries to run content from outside of Stow, however the charter is to just support Stow and Stow residents. There was talk of providing access to Stow TV on the Internet. They would charge users to access the site. They would also like to put up a flat screen monitor in the front lobby of the Town Building to broadcast Stow TV.

*FIRE* – Gary explained he would be attending a meeting with Bill Wrigley regarding the Fire Department budget.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Christopher Sarno at 8:40 pm. Peter McManus seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (Bernklow, Sarno, Deluty, Connelly and McManus).

**Action Items:**

Chris to get the number for the amended ESBC plan

Gary to get info regarding ESBC Auditor

Next meeting vote Vice chair and the vacant liaison positions

**Future meetings:**

January 25, 2011

February 8, 2011

February 15, 2011

February 22, 2011

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth A. Tobey,  
Secretary