Preston Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at 7:00 P.M.
Teleconference Call

Call to Order – John Moulson called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

1. Roll Call

Members | Alternates
---|---
John Moulson – Chairman | Matthew Davis –
Bob Congdon - Vice Chairman | Vacancy
Stacey Becker - Clerk
Andy Depta
Denise Beale
Zachary Maurice

Also Present
Sandra Allyn-Gauthier – First Selectwoman
John Spang – Financial Director
17 other members of the public

2. Correspondence

John Moulson asked Board members to refer to their packets for the plethora of emails and letters received by the Board of Finance.

3. Public Comment

There was none.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. May 20, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

Andy Depta motioned to approve the May 20, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. Stacey Becker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. May 28, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes

Bob Congdon motioned to approve the May 28, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes as presented. Andy Depta seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

c. May 28, 2020 Public Hearing Minutes
Stacey Becker motioned to approve the May 28, 2020 Public Hearing Minutes as presented. Zach Maurice seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

d. June 10, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes

Matt Davis asked that Melissa Lennon’s statement at the end of the meeting be omitted because Public Comment had closed.

John Moulson stated that she had asked for a Point of Order.

Stacey Becker pointed out that Andy Depta has asked for a Point of Order when he was a citizen observer.

Andy Depta added that it has always been up to the chairperson to allow a Point of Order and that John had allowed Melissa Lennon to speak so the statement should not be omitted.

Matt Davis pointed out that John Moulson had closed Public Comment so it shouldn’t be in the Minutes.

Stacey Becker stated that it is part of the recording and can’t be eliminated.

John Moulson stated that it’s part of the recording, so it needs to be left in the minutes.

Andy Depta stated that Melissa Lennon had permission to speak so her statement should be left in the Minutes.

Bob Congdon clarified the order of events that evening. After Public Comments he asked to make a comment before adjournment for which he was given the ‘Go ahead’ by the Chairman. Next, Matt Davis asked to say something and was given the Go ahead. After he spoke, Melissa Lennon requested a chance and she too was given the Go ahead. Then there was a motion to adjourn. All of it is part of the record.

Stacey Becker motioned to approve the June 10, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes as presented. Andy Depta seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Candidate for Alternate Interview (None due to format)

Stacey Becker asked for the plans to fill the vacancy.

John Moulson stated that he will send a letter to each party chair and request nominations or suggestions to fill the vacancy.

Stacey Becker pointed out that virtual meeting may continue for months and that it come to virtual interviews in order to fill the vacancy.

John Moulson stated that he will send out the letters to the respective party chairs.

6. Town Revenue and Status Report
John Spang report that not much has changed since the June 10th meeting and that revenue projections remained the same.


John Spang reported that again not much has changed since last week. He did point out the biggest area of savings seems to be the area of transportation. There are 3 areas included in this. One is the Special Services which is when we must have other bus companies transport when our buses can’t cover. Fuel costs savings have gone down, because the buses have been involved with in town activities. The final area of repairs which hasn’t been used due to lack of bus use. Those 3 areas show a total savings of $140,000. The surplus as it stands now is $158,748 which is expected to increase a bit more when then final numbers are in.

Andy Depta asked if any of the $12,000 for Food Service Meals would be reimbursed by the COVID monies that the school is expecting to receive.

John Spang answered yes eventually some of it will be. There are several Grants that we can apply for and are doing so. FEMA reimburses 75% and can be used for these expenses. There is also the CARES ACT that we can apply for and finally the CFR which primarily goes to municipalities but can cover some educational costs. For all you need to spend the money first and then be reimbursed after submitting invoices and proving that you have applied to all possible other funds/grants available to you first. Our first FEMA claim will go in at the end of June.

Andy Depta asked when the funds come in will it go to the town or the Board of Education.

John Spang reported that FEMA and CFR will go to the town, and that the CARE ACT will eventually go to the Board of Education; however, none initially go to the Board of Education.

a. BoE Liaison Report

Andy Depta reported that the Board of Education went into Executive Session to renegotiate contracts, so he had nothing to share.

John Moulson let the Board members know that the Board of Education is looking for a Board of Finance member to be a Negotiation Observer and asked if anyone was interested. No one volunteered.


Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that they were still fine tuning the numbers and that could be an additional $25,000 in savings making the surplus as high as $175,000.

Stacey Becker asked if Sandra had an idea as to when the Town Hall would be opening.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated she was waiting for an Executive Order.

Stacey Becker asked how many could fit in the Town Hall’s downstairs conference room.
Sandra Allyn-Gauthier was not sure.

Andy Depta asked if the school could be used.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier pointed out that inside gatherings are limited to 25 people and that by law we need to allow citizens access.

9. **PRA Update**

Sean Nugent was not present so there was no update.

10. **Old Business**
   a. **Amend Rules of Order to Allow Alternates Members of the Board to participate in the discussion of motions after they have been seconded**

John Moulson shared with the group that the Town’s Attorney let him know that they could make it a policy and that if it doesn’t disrupt the majority, they can do what they’d like in his opinion.

**Bob Congdon motioned that alternates and ex officio member be allowed to discuss once a motion is seconded. John Moulson seconded the motion. Bob Congdon, John Moulson, and Denise Beale voted yes. Stacey Becker, Andy Depta, and Zach Maurice voted no. The vote was 3 to 3, a tie so the motion failed.**

Bob Congdon stated that we make better decisions if we get as much input and clarification as possible.

Andy Depta stated that he felt that input is important and that whoever is speaking must be speaking to the topic at hand.

Stacey Becker shared her frustration with the information from the attorney because she has been told point blank at multiple CCM workshops that alternates can’t speak after a motion is seconded.

John Moulson shared that he felt that the Board has done their due diligence in this matter.

Andy Depta shared that the State Statutes are clear with seated alternates, but not with the role and abilities of an unseated alternate. It concerns me that the lawyer doesn’t cite a State Statue that his opinion is based on. We haven’t done our due diligence.

Bob Congdon stated that confusion comes because Land Use Boards have very specific rules.

Andy Depta suggested shelf the issue at this time.

Stacey Becker asked where are we with our policy.

Matt Davis read the Board’s policy on the subject – ‘that alternates can participate in any and all matters that come before the Board’; and then he asked if the policy needs to be reworded.

John Moulson asked if it was form from a State Statue.
Stacey Becker shared she didn’t believe so.

Andy Depta read State Statue Section 7 – 340a. which clearly stated the roll of an alternate when seated but doesn’t address the roll of an alternate when not seated. Andy stated that this issue is unclear.

Matt Davis asked again if the current policy needs to be reworded.

Denise Beale said that she didn’t think they could because it’s clearly stated in State Statues what an alternate can do yet silent about their role when not seated.

**Andy Depta motioned to change the policy to read that alternates may participate in discussions up to such time a motion is made and seconded and deposed of by the 6-member Board. Denise Beale seconded. Andy Depta and Zach Maurice voted yes. John Moulson, Bob Congdon, Stacey Becker, and Denise Beale voted no. The vote was 2 in favor and 4 against. The motion failed.**

Bob Congdon pointed out by allowing say John Spang to add to the conversation but not an alternate; we’re treating our alternates like second class citizens.

Denise Beale withdrew her second.

Andy Depta stated Point of Order – Denise can’t withdraw unless the motion is withdrawn.

John Moulson agreed and took the vote.

**Bob Congdon motioned that alternates may participate after a second if recognized by the Chair. Denise Beale seconded the motion. Bob Congdon, Stacey Becker, Denise Beale, Zach Maurice voted yes. Andy Depta voted no. The motion carried 5 to 1.**

Denise Beale asked why alternates couldn’t speak.

Stacey Becker stated she wasn’t sure how other alternates on other Boards participate.

Andy Depta shared that other Boards are different according to their Charters.

Matt Davis clarified when he could speak.

John Moulson explained that he could after he was recognized by himself.

Matt Davis asked about the use of the Town Hall and school; when an event has too many people they are turned away. Could we not do that for our meetings?

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that we would need to a larger area.

Andy Depta shared that he felt it would need to be the decision of the Fire Marshall.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that a Board meeting and an event are 2 different things and can’t be compared. Also, per Executive Order we are limited to 25 people.
b. **Annual Report Status – Stacey Becker**

Stacey shared a visual of the report with those online. She stated that the report is posted online for citizens to access. She also shared that after a number of years spearheading this job for next year another member of the BoF will need to take the lead.

Andy Depta congratulated Stacey for producing an excellent report.

Stacey Becker thanked him and shared that she was pleased that the report is more than just the finance side of each Board, Committee, and Commission. It gives the Town an idea of what they are supporting. She also pointed out that usually several hard copies are placed at the Town Hall and Library and should that be done this year.

John Moulson said that there should be some hard copies made so that they are available once places begin to open.

Stacey Becker suggested that some be placed in the Town Hall foyer, about 20 copies.

Bob Congdon suggested the Transfer Station.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier suggested to contact Tracey and put them wherever she puts the Pipeline. Sandra would get Stacey contact information so that could be arranged. She also told Stacey that they could be printed in color.

Stacey also mentioned the contribution that Zach Maurice and Denise Beale made to complete the Town Report.

c. **Resurfacing Tennis and Basketball Courts**

John Moulson stated that the Board has heard about this in a few months so he will be eliminated from the agenda.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier pointed out that the Recreation Department is continuing to work it to get final numbers for the cost. They are presently working on the specs and then will work with John Spang to develop acceptable postings for bids.

d. **2015-18 Bond Package Review**

John Moulson pointed out that there was a need of information before this could be acted on. It was decided that it would be done at the July meeting.

11. **New Business**
   a. **Stipend in lieu of Health Benefits – gov’t employees**

Andy Depta asked if there were regulations or policy to guide us in this area.
Bob Congdon stated that there has been a policy of a $2000 stipend in lieu of taking Health Insurance. This year’s Board of Selectmen budget has passed, and this is a moot point.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that the Board of Selectmen are looking into it for next year.

Andy Depta stated that it should come off the Board of Finance agenda and allow the Board of Selectmen to take care of this.

John Moulson asked if there are any takers for the stipend.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier answered that there are 4 people at this time who take the stipend.

b. Approval of Audit Bill

Bob Congdon motioned to pay the $3325.00 Audit bill from Sandra Welwood. Denise Beale seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Stacey Becker pointed out the lateness of their actions and asked if there would be interest charged, and will we need to move funds to pay this.

John Spang assured the Board that there would be no interest added.

c. Issues with our email system

John Moulson stated that apparently there have been issues with emails and Drop Box; he asked Stacey to share her thoughts about these.

Stacey Becker share that emails are going into the Board of Finance box and all e-mails receive are directly forwarded to each individual BOF member. She is investigating the issue of why the e-mail address of the originating author is not provided in the forwarded e-mail. The way that the BoF mailbox is run - the Clerk and Chair manage it. Everything should be coming from the Chair. She also warned members to not ‘reply to all’ when answering an email because that then becomes a meeting.

John Moulson stated that he would leave the issue for Stacey to resolve.

Andy Depta asked about the email with an FOI request.

John Moulson stated that the Board of Selectmen or the Town Clerk will respond to that email.

Sandra Allyn-Gauthier stated that there is a form on the Town’s website that needs to be filled out.

Andy Depta asked if the Minutes would suffice.

Stacey Becker stated that the request was for a transcription of a portion of the meeting.

John Moulson will notify the person to fill out the formal request posted on the website.

12. Public Comment
Nick Vegliante stated that he is an attorney and that he feels that the Board of Finance is inaccurate in their interpretation about the roll of an alternate. He cited State Statute 9-167a that in no event can the Board of Finance upset the minority rule.

John Moulson stated that alternates are considered a Board minority.

Nick Vegliante stated, ‘You are wrong.’

Andy Depta called for a Point of Order; this is Public Comment not a debate.

Bob Congdon agreed with Nick Vegliante that the Board can’t seat 5 Republicans.

Mark Phelps stated that this is Public Comment and he agreed with Nick Vegliante and to debate State Statute is wrong, and that the Board needs to read Robert’s Rule.

Melissa Lennon stated that Minority Rule applies when seating alternates.

Kevin Gauthier agreed with Nick Vegliante and stated that the Board needs to get clarification.

13. Adjournment

Stacey Becker motioned to adjourn at 8:42P.M... Bob Congdon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang

Recording Secretary