

Finance Committee  
Minutes  
Zoom Number 891 7837 2387

2023 SEP 28 AM 9:20

Date: August 8, 2023

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Present: O'Connor, O'Connell, Kuphal, Pratt, Cooper

Absent: Wells, Cooney

Meeting called to order at 6:36 p.m.

Motioned by Kuphal, seconded by O'Connor to accept the minutes of June 22, 2023 as written.  
O'Connor, yes; Kuphal, yes; Pratt, yes; O'Connell, yes

Jennifer Barrett, Finance Director, was present at the meeting.

Jen O'Connell: We are here because we need to appoint a person to serve on the Town Manager Screening Committee. Sean has resigned and we need to have a Committee set up within 30 days of his resignation, per the Charter. We will probably need to increase the salary for this position. I would have to research before we decide on a dollar amount. How does everyone feel about using a Search Firm for this process? We have hired one in the past, but it is a lot of money.

Judith O'Connor: I would like to see who is on the Committee first to determine if we need one. I think we need to talk about it before making a decision.

Jen O'Connell: It will be interesting to see who they put in as the Acting Town Manager tonight.

William Pratt: We haven't had a good track record with the previous Search Firms.

Jen O'Connell: People, in the past, have gone to the State commenting about a member of the Finance Committee being on the Committee. After much discussion and research, we are allowed to be on the Committee. The Committee will consist of 9 members. One member from each of the following Boards. The Board of Selectmen, Board of Assessors, School Committee Finance Committee and Personnel Board. There are also 4 that would be appointed by the Moderator.

Kevin Kuphal: Is the number of candidates coming from the Committee or just from the Search Firm?

Jen O'Connell: That would depend on what the Committee decides. I would like to serve on the Committee, as I have never served on it before. I don't know if anyone feels strongly about serving on it. I would not stand in their way.

Kevin Kuphal: I would like to do it, but if someone else wants to be on it, I am okay with that.

William Pratt: I feel the same way Kevin does.

Judith O'Connor: I do not want to be on the Committee. It takes up a lot of time. I would be willing to nominate Jen.

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Pratt to nominate Jen O'Connell to serve on the Town Manager Screening Committee. Kuphal, yes; O'Connor, yes; Pratt, yes; O'Connell, yes

Jen O'Connell: If someone is really interested in serving on the Committee, please reach out to the Moderator. He is supposed to balance out the Committee.

Charles Cooper entered the meeting.

Jennifer Barrett: The Board of Selectmen will be voting on the date for the Fall Special Town Meeting tonight. The date, as I have been told, will be November 14, 2023.

Jen O'Connell: What is the cost incurred due to the resignation of the Town Manager?

Jennifer Barrett: The only cost is for his vacation payout.

Jen O'Connell: How many potential Warrant Articles do we have for the Special Town Meeting?

Jennifer Barrett: We have 11 right now. The new Fire Station is substantially complete, so the insurance has already started. Also, we had additional people sign up for the Health Insurance during the open enrollment.

Jen O'Connell: Do we still have room within the levy?

Jennifer Barrett: Yes, we do.

William Pratt: Would the Deputy Town Manager, if she steps in as Acting Town Manager, be getting an increase to cover this position?

Jen O'Connell: I wouldn't expect that the pay would increase. This was previously discussed when she took the position.

Charles Cooper: Has Karen come to any of the Finance Committee meetings in the past?

Jen O'Connell: She has been on Zoom, but not in person.

Jennifer Barrett: She will be at your next meeting. She would have been here tonight, but she is at the Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Jen O'Connell: We can schedule a meeting in September to go over what we will be doing to get ready for the Special Town Meeting, then another meeting in October to vote. I want to get in front of some items that we need to track for the upcoming budget season.

Jennifer Barrett: We also spoke before about increasing the fee schedules.

Judith O'Connor: You spoke at the beginning about the cost of a Search Firm. Shouldn't we meet to discuss this?

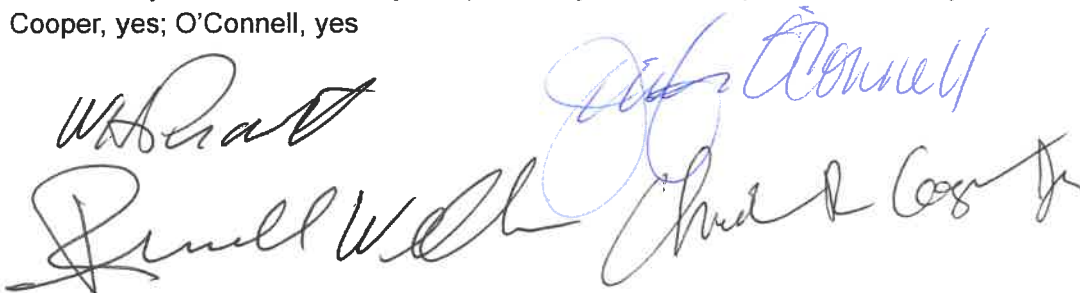
Jen O'Connell: After tonight, there should be at least 2 people appointed. Once the Committee is formed, we can look into this.

William Pratt: Are you familiar with base salary and performance bonus criteria?

Jennifer Barrett: I have dealt with fixed salary increases for yearly and 3-year contracts.

Jen O'Connell: We also need to look at our by-laws. I believe that the Superintendent should always be on the Committee, since they would deal directly with the Town Manager throughout the year.

Motioned by Pratt, seconded by Cooper to adjourn at 7:08 p.m. O'Connor, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; O'Connell, yes



Handwritten signatures of the participants: William Pratt, Jen O'Connell, Jennifer Barrett, and Charles Cooper.