

*Approved October 12, 2016*

## Finance Committee of Brattleboro Representative Town Meeting

September 14, 2016

6:00 p.m.

*Minutes by Paula Melton, Recording Clerk*

### Attending

Ralph Meima

Paula Melton, Recording Clerk

Franz Reichsman, Chair

Avery Schwenk

Carrie Storm

The meeting opened at 6:02 p.m. and adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

### Deliberations

- The group discussed its extensive research so far on the amount other towns and cities pay to their selectboards, city councils, and school boards.
  - Brattleboro is already paying on the high end.
  - We feel we need more information to make a solid recommendation.
  - A subcommittee will meet to write and distribute a survey. We will be clear that this is not a scientific survey, so we will present the results as anecdotal.
- Franz shared a case study on using auxiliary power supplies in police cruisers to decrease idle time. He has shared the information with the police chief and expects fleet management to be part of long-term financial planning for the town.
- Franz reported on a recent Selectboard meeting
  - The tax rate was set at 2.5 cents below budget estimates due to savings on pension plans and the police / fire project bond.
  - The Town agreed to a \$725,000 settlement to Kingsbury Construction—contractors working on a sewer line whose scope of work increased due to unforeseen conditions. Officials printed a document listing lessons learned, including strengthening of contract language regarding latent conditions.

- The committee discussed the Comprehensive Review of Town Operations and felt that it made sense.
  - Avery noted, “The ideas are solid, but anything odd is going to pop up in the numbers.” The committee generally agreed.
- We discussed the deliverables that Representative Town Meeting expects of us in March, and some members began volunteering for specific tasks.
  - Analysis of town budget (Franz)
  - Analysis of long-term financial plan
  - Reports on Town and school audits (Maya and Paula)
  - Analysis of school budgets (Paula)
  - Report/recommendations on board compensation (Franz, Avery, Ralph)
  - Recommendations on the human services budget
- Paula presented information about the Act 46 merger vote that is coming in November.
  - We will receive the same tax breaks regardless of when we merge, but we lose other incentives if we wait for the State to take charge and do the merger its own way.
  - There are economic efficiencies in addition to the major issue of correcting inequities.
  - The committee decided not to make a recommendation about the merger vote.

### Action Items

- Paula will find out when the school audit reports will be available.
- Franz will warn the subcommittee meeting.

### Decisions

- We approved the minutes of the August 10 meeting.
- We reached consensus that we would not address the school district merger vote as a committee.