

Final minutes

Town of Brattleboro Finance Committee

September 9, 2015

4:00 p.m.

Minutes by Paula Melton, Recording Clerk

Attending

Paula Melton, Recording Clerk

Franz Reichsman, Chair

Jacqueline Stromberg

The meeting opened at 4:03 p.m. and adjourned at 5 p.m.

Deliberations

- Franz reported that he had looked through approximately 20 years' Representative Town Meeting reports. Not a single one included a Finance Committee document as part of the bound report. He suggested that since this has not been common practice, we may not need to pressure ourselves to include a report in the bound booklet. Franz found a few substantive takeaways from his research:
 - Finance committees have been recommending long-term financial planning for a long time. We are looking forward to the current Town Manager, Peter Elwell, finally following this recommendation.
 - Finance committee recommendations have tended to look at the big picture. Franz thought we should consider providing a clear analysis of the budgets RTM will actually be voting on.
 - The complexity of Town finances, and of school budgets in particular, is daunting. The Town alone has 31 separate funds for various aspects of its business.
- We discussed the legality of sharing documents with one another on Google Drive.
- Paula noted she has been having difficulty getting in touch with Frank Rucker, business administrator at WSESU, beginning as early as July. The administrative assistant passes on messages, but they are not returned.
- We discussed the Town's liability for healthcare costs. Franz pointed out that we have not planned long term for retirees' health benefits,

- suggesting that the committee should be trying to support long-term planning of this funding.
- Franz felt we should also be asking for some quantification of the Town's return on investment for the new police and fire facilities: how much will it improve public safety as well as working conditions?
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Action Items

- By October 14:
 - **Franz** will research the proper use of online document sharing based on the Open Meeting law.
 - **Franz** will get a list of the 31 Town funds maintained by the Finance Department, and will send the list to all committee members.
 - **Jackie** will research these funds to investigate the efficiency of having so many.
 - **Paula** will be more aggressive in her attempts to contact Frank Rucker.
 - **Franz** will pass any relevant Selectboard agenda items to the committee.
 - **Paula** will research workers' compensation claims as well as liability and health insurance rates.
- By November 4:
 - **Franz** will find a venue for the November meeting (Town offices will be closed for Veterans Day).

Decisions

- The committee accepted the August 12 meeting minutes as submitted.