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## TOWN OF BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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### Brookline Finance Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, March 31, 2020

Meeting Date: 3/31/20 at 7pm via Zoom

\*Meeting Held Virtually Under Emergency Order #12\*

Committee Attendance (via Zoom): Brian Rater, Dennis Comeau, Matthew Mailloux  
Public in attendance: Melissa McGoldrick, Buddy Dougherty

Meeting called to order: 7:03pm

Brian Rater (BR) – Welcomed all attendees to the “first ever virtual meeting” of the Brookline Finance Committee. BR announced that the meeting was being held under the provisions of Emergency Order #12. Under this emergency order each member in attendance is required to announce the reason for attending virtually, their location, and if anyone other than themselves is in the room.

BR- Attended virtually from home due to social distancing guidance, BR is the only person in the room.

Dennis Comeau (DC) - Attended virtually due to social distancing guidance, DC is the only person in the room.

Matthew Mailloux (MM) - Attended virtually due to social distancing guidance, MM is the only person in the room.

BR asked if there were any adjustments to the published agenda.

**There were no adjustments.**

BR sought to approve the meeting minutes from the last meeting. BR stated that since he is the only returning member eligible, he is the only member able to approve the minutes, however he stated he had not received them from the outgoing committee secretary. **BR stated that he will reach out to the outgoing secretary and approve the minutes at the next meeting.**

BR advanced the agenda to public input. **There was no public input at this time.**

BR advanced the conversation to the election of officers. BR stated that the committee requires a Chair and a Secretary. There is the potential for a Vice-Chair position as well.

MM said he could make an argument for or against but given the size of the committee it seems unnecessary. DC was impartial either way, asked what the duties of a Vice Chair entail. BR explained the duties, including running the meeting in the absence of the chair.

**MM, DC, and BR agreed not to proceed with the position of Vice Chair.**

BR stated his desire to continue as chair given his past experience and familiarity with the board. **DC moved to nominate BR to the position of Chair. MM seconded.**

BR stated that because the meeting is being held remotely, all votes must be taken as roll call votes. **BR entered the voting mode and voted yes. DC voted yes. MM voted yes. The motion carried 3-0, BR was elected as Chair.**

BR advanced the agenda to the election for the position of Secretary. BR described the duties of the position including taking meeting minutes.

**MM stated his interest in serving as Secretary. BR nominated MM for Secretary. DC seconded.**

**BR entered the voting mode and voted yes. DC voted yes. MM voted yes. The motion carried 3-0, MM was elected as Secretary.**

BR advanced the meeting agenda to set recurring meeting dates and times. BR asked if the committee wanted to continue using Zoom to host meetings as necessary under the state of emergency. MM and DC concurred. DC cited Zoom's ease of public access compared to other hosts, such as Google Hangouts. **The committee agreed to continue using Zoom for meetings.**

BR described the typical workload of the committee over the course of the year, with the busiest time of the year being the fall during the budget process. BR stated that the committee should continue to meet monthly to acclimate the new members to the responsibilities and duties.

BR asked the preference of the other committee members for meeting times and dates. MM said any weekday evening is doable, with a preference for Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday nights. DC agreed that midweek evenings are best, saying that a 7pm start time works well.

BR said the committee has previously met on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7pm. **The committee momentarily agreed to continue meeting monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7pm with April 14<sup>th</sup> as the next scheduled meeting.**

BR advanced the meeting agenda to the discussion of budgetary impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. BR stated that the Selectboard is concerned about a significant revenue decline for the current year.

BR explained that because towns raise taxes primarily through property taxes, which are not tied to income, there may be difficulties for some residents to pay should their circumstances change. BR stressed the importance for the town to be sensitive in its spending during an economic downturn.

Buddy Dougherty (**public input**): Joined the meeting and was asked by BR if he had anything to add. Dougherty said that cable access is working to rebroadcast meetings; however, some meetings might conflict. The Conservation Commission is currently scheduled to meet the same

day and time as the Finance Committee. Dougherty mentioned the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month is currently open.

BR acknowledged this and sought to modify the meeting dates to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month. DC and MM agreed to the proposed change. **BR said he will communicate a final decision on future meeting dates via email after verifying that the date is unconflicted.**

The meeting returned to the published agenda. BR stated that the Selectboard has instructed department heads to hold off on spending as much as possible until more is known. BR stated that he had spoken to School District Superintendent Andrew Corey about school district expenses as well.

MM agreed with BR and stated that the worst of the pandemic is still ahead. The town is right to be cautious with discretionary spending given the unknown nature of the next few months.

BR has requested that Town Administrator Tad Putney share monthly financial updates with the committee as is done for the Selectboard.

MM mentioned that it will be important to stay apprised of actions taken by the Federal and State governments for potential stimulus funding for municipal revenue replacement related to COVID-19.

BR advanced the meeting agenda to committee assignments. BR described the three primary committees that should have a representative from the Finance Committee. The newly formed Committee to Study the establishment of a Town Budget Committee (BudComm Study) that was approved at Town Meeting, the preexisting Department of Public Works (DPW) Committee, and the School Administrative Unit 41 (SAU 41) Budget Committee.

BR explained that the Selectboard will establish the committee membership for the BudComm Study. The report from this committee is due by October 1, 2020.

BR explained the recent history of the DPW committee, including that it had hoped to bring recommendations to the 2020 Town Meeting but was unable to do so due to time constraints. Given this, the committee is being reformed for this year and work is continuing in advance of the 2021 Town Meeting.

BR explained the role of the SAU Administrative Budget Committee and its work alongside the Brookline School Board, the Hollis School Board, the Hollis Budget Committee, the CO-OP School Board, and the COOP Budget Committee. This committee makes recommendations on the SAU Administrative budget, which is ultimately approved by the SAU board.

\*Zoom's free version set a 40-minute meeting time limit, which was waived. BR agreed to look into solutions to this issue for the next meeting\*

BR recommended that the finance committee assign one member to serve on each board. DC said he is willing to serve anywhere. MM expressed his interest in serving on the BudComm Study committee.

BR mentioned his past experience on the SAU committee, but is looking for a change. He referenced his interest in the DPW committee given some of the high priority issues the committee will need to resolve.

**DC agreed to serve on the SAU committee, BR the DPW committee, and MM the BudComm Study committee.**

BR mentioned there are committees that may be worth monitoring in an unofficial capacity, such as the economic development committee. MM said he is willing to assist. DC said he is also interested and would like to learn more to help boost economic development in Brookline.

BR mentioned that the Capital Improvements committee from years past will likely not be reestablished this year.

BR reinforced that it is good practice to attend Selectboard and Brookline School Board meetings whenever possible.

BR advanced to the next agenda item and asked the committee if there are any goals that it should set for the upcoming year. BR said that goals have varied year-to-year. BR expressed interest in writing a primer on the budgetary process to improve general understanding of the process for members of the public.

BR also expressed interest in studying potential energy efficiency best practices that the town may be able to take advantage of.

MM concurred with both of the recommended goals, citing his experience working on energy policy in Concord.

**The committee agreed to revisit these goals in a future meeting.**

BR advanced the meeting to the last agenda item: action items.

**BR will speak with Tad about future meeting dates to reduce potential conflicts.**

**BR will look into a Zoom account for future meetings**

**BR will ensure the committee is included on monthly financial updates provided to the Selectboard**

**MM will circulate draft meeting minutes to be approved at the next meeting.**

Public input: Buddy Dougherty mentioned that the committee may want to nominate alternates for the committees with finance committee representatives.

BR agreed this is a good idea. It was determined that an alternate for the BudComm Study committee was not needed. **DC agreed to be the alternate for the DPW committee. BR agreed to be the alternate for the SAU committee.**

**BR made a motion to adjourn; MM seconded. BR entered the voting mode and voted yes. DC voted yes. MM voted yes. The motion carried 3-0.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:37pm.**