

**MINUTES OF MEETING
FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 21, 2022**

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(Meeting starts at Time Code 2:09:10)

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A meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Monday, March 21, 2022, electronically via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 8:58 P.M. by the Chair, Jeron Alston.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeron Alston, Chair; Sarah Gallagher, Vice Chair; Lesley DeNardis; Betty Wetmore; Cory O'Brien; Marjorie Bonadies; Justin Farmer, (after roll-call)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

PUBLIC INPUT: None

The following items were addressed:

1. Order amending the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year Budget (Community & Youth Services)

-- Moved by Mr. O'Brien, seconded by Ms. Gallagher. **DISCUSSION:** Mr. Alston asked if the \$73,000 amount from Youth Services would be rolled over to the new position would the remainder be offset by the additional transfer before us in the second item on the agenda to make up the \$100,000 salary. Mr. Eatman said the funds are already there. There is enough money in the account to take us into the Fiscal Year ending. Mr. Alston said he is speaking towards next year's budget. Mr. Eatman said next year the Mayor's recommended budget will deal with this by establishing a separate department and budgeting for it. Ms. Gallagher asked for clarification on the \$28,000, is that new funds we will need? Mr. Eatman said the new budget creates the new division and funds it appropriately in the Mayor's proposed 20-23 budget.

Ms. Bonadies said since we are so close to budget deliberations when funding new positions is normally discussed, she suggests this be tabled until budget deliberations when new positions and funding can be discussed at that time. This needs to be discussed. She suggests we table any new positions until that time. Ms. Bonadies motioned for tabling this. Mr. Farmer seconded. The motions were withdrawn for more discussion. Ms. DeNardis concurs with Ms. Bonadies. She believes this would be more appropriately considered when we do our full budget deliberation. We should really have a full fledged discussion about the financial impact on the upcoming budget year.

Ms. Wetmore said people should keep in mind that this is not just the salary, but the benefits which is not figured in. She is not in favor of any new positions. She will be voting against this.

Mr. O'Brien asked the Administration to explain the reason for this request. Mr. Grace said the reason the request is to fund the position now instead of waiting until the new fiscal year is because planning for our summer programming is taking place right now. The idea behind the position is putting all our programs for the community under one division where they can work together and make sure everyone in town is benefitting to the greatest extent possible from our programming. Mr. Alston asked how this planning would get done if this doesn't pass tonight. Mr. Grace said programming will look like it has in the past and we are looking to broaden it.

A roll call vote was taken and the item passed with 4 in favor (Alston) (Gallagher) (Farmer) (O'Brien) and 3 opposed (DeNardis) (Wetmore) (Bonadies)

2. Order amending the Fiscal Year Budget (Planning, Economic Development)

-- Moved by Ms. Gallagher, seconded by Mr. Alston. DISCUSSION: Mr. Grace explained this is part of the same overall thing that was discussed with Item #1-moving what had been Arts and Marketing Manager to Economic Development, fine tuning some of the responsibilities focusing on digital media and marketing and moving it to a different department. It comes with a savings in salary from \$80,000 to \$65,000.

Mr. Alston asked if this has the same urgency as the previous item. Mr. Grace said they are tied together in the way we are working through the funding in this fiscal year.

Mr. O'Brien asked about the digital market and what value that adds and what the roles and responsibilities and actual output would be. Mr. Grace said somewhat similar to the current duties, the digital marketing being done now, just moving it to a different department. Mr. O'Brien said he was not familiar with the digital marketing being used. Mr. Grace said a couple of recent examples of the digital marketing are the recruitment efforts of the Police and Fire Departments- the graphic design work is done by the person in this position now.

Mr. Farmer will vote for it to come out of committee but he is not convinced.

Ms. Bonadies asked for further clarification of the two positions discussed (Item #1 and #2) and their duties, salaries and changes to the positions. She appreciates the \$5,000 savings and would like to see this reorganization work and see the results. She would like to see the savings – a flow sheet of the savings provided.

Ms. DeNardis would like to see this moved out of committee so she will be voting for it, but she is unclear what the overarching purpose of the position is and the role it plays in the overall mission of the town and what performance outcomes are expected. She would like to understand what this reorganization is going to create and what the driving purpose behind it is. She would like to see it discussed in the context of the overall budget deliberations.

Mr. Farmer would like to see the Administration better articulate the vision they have for these two departments.

Ms. Gallagher agrees with Ms. DeNardis about measurable outcomes. She will vote to move it forward to have more discussion, but there is a lot being discussed here- digital media, arts, human services, summer programming, so she would love to see the measurable outcomes toward what we are trying to achieve across that portfolio.

A vote was taken the item passed with 2 abstentions (Wetmore) (Bonadies)

Mr. Alston asked that this be restricted from the Consent Calendar.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Renta, Clerk
Rose Lion, Secretary
for Jeron Alston, Chair