

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
PUBLIC MEETING  
Judge Welsh Room, Town Hall  
Provincetown MA

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2017**

Members Present: Mark Hatch (MH), Chairman; Scott Valentino, Vice Chair (SV); Kathleen Goodwin (KG); Mark Bjorstrom (MB); Duane Steele (DS); Mark Del Franco (MD), on conference call.

Absent: Stan Sikorski (SS)

Others Present: David Panagore (DP), Town Manager; Josee Young (JY), Finance Director; Mary-Jo Avellar (MJA), Town Moderator; Lynn Martin (LM), Management Information Systems; Jody O'Neil (JON), Recording Secretary.

OpenGov: Brian May (BM), Account Executive, North East; Tara Myles (TM), CSM.

MH opened the meeting at 10:11am.

**1. Brian May presentation on OpenGov; will also have Q&A.**

**a) OpenGov Platform Overview**

MH thanked JY for arranging the OpenGov presentation.

BM introduced the Leader's Program which gives Town access to all platforms at a reduced rate as a means for Town to interface on multiple levels through a synergy of energy; explained how OpenGov, a San Francisco co., helps to interface and leverage data for core purposes, help Town modernize its capabilities by unlocking data and directing it to three central areas in a phased approach: Budgeting, Operational Performance Reporting and Citizen Engagement.

MB asked how many states OpenGov is active in. BM replied 49 with 1600 customers in 22,000 municipalities; OpenGov is web-based, available on all devices; Town's implementation will be coordinated with JY and LM's input.

In terms of reporting, BM said data analysis is identified by category and individual reports and then aggregated to customized strategic dashboards where information is tracked, performances measured and strategic goals are set.

**b) Budgeting**

BM said he understood, per JY, that Town's current budgeting process is quite manual; which, he related, is also common, stating that 99% of the budgets OpenGov works with are on the Excel program.

As an alternative, OpenGov has created the only web-based budgeting technology for the public sector in the world – allowing for interfacing within and between departments with dynamic flexibility but also from a place of familiarity. All data and reports are hard-coded to remove risks.

BM utilized a screen presentation to demonstrate how information is organized to generate budget reports with quick oversight; these reports will also conform to the industry and best practices of the Government's Finance Association (GFA). Narratives can dictate to departments what information is needed to produce the desired report in an automated budget document, which is also supported by supplemental documentation such as RFP's. Every action on every proposal is stored in an activity tracker.

### **c) Creating Interactive Feedback**

BM used a Safer Streets Initiative as an example of easily branded content where context and narrative can be added.

MH commented that this aspect of the technology could be useful in helping the public to track the developmental progress of the new police station. BM referenced back to the Leader's Program wherein any customized reporting that Town develops can then be leveraged by other towns and visa-versa.

Open Town Hall was introduced by BM as a function new to OpenGov that allows towns to solicit feed-back in a multi-channel way by providing a unique url and post results via participatory budgeting.

MH asked if there is a mechanism wherein feedback can be restricted to residents, anticipating problems that might arise from open access. BM said Town can require people register, or leave it open.

JY mentioned the ability through OpenGov for Town to track Building Permits which can be made online with greater access and as a time-saving measure. LM said she has building and renting data in a mapping configuration as underlying reportage that could feed into OpenGov.

BM clarified that OpenGov first started communicating with Town during the Cape Cod Commission Transparency Project; the essential reporting piece has been live for a year and the performance, budgeting and story aspects are now being introduced as an expansion of the initiative.

TM mentioned that the rental reporting, featuring data collected by Airbnb, has proven very popular with towns such as Saratoga Springs and suggested that Provincetown might also find an advantage in calculating seasonal residential data through the program. MH said it was useful for Town to compare itself to other municipalities. MB asked of other Cape towns on board; TM replied that Nantucket, Falmouth, Yarmouth, Sandwich, and County of Barnstable are utilizing Open Gov.

DP joined the meeting at 10:38am.

**d) Conclusion**

In response to MB's question per the back-story of OpenGov, BM said the company is a privately-owned venture start-up out of Redwood City, CA that began as non-profit in 2012 until they realized they needed to pay people to make the software; competitors are Oracle, and Secrata (sp) out of Washington, to an extent, but BM said no one in the world is engaged in this depth of budgetary interfacing in local government.

DP spoke of his experience in Hartford with a staff of five crunching numbers and how the OpenGov performance piece is unique in its operational output; that Town has a very engaged community where an amount of mistrust has been built up over time and OpenGov can help answer questions by allowing access to the facts for better outcomes.

DP said he has prepared monthly and quarterly power points in past situations with larger communities to help keep the public updated on a variety of town activity; that the citizen engagement piece can be vital for communication and keeping the public up-dated.

MJA left the meeting at 10:25am, and returned at 11:00am.

MB asked where the OpenGov files would live. BM responded that the system is cloud-based; the files live on AWS servers and that AWS has 27 different server areas around the country, and Open Gov is built on their best practices.

DP mentioned that Town does a download data dump daily so the information is not live inside our system. BM said what is important to know is that Open Gov does not own or copy Town's data. TM added that files are presented as "read-only" to avoid nefarious motivations.

OpenGov presentation concluded at 10:45am.

**2. Budget Season schedule and meeting schedule Q1 2018**

DP requested to move onto item #3 after which budget calendars will be dispersed and addressed.

**3. Warrant Articles from the Finance Committee for ATM, votes may be taken.**

MH presented three Warrant article proposals:

1. To offer a mechanism of relief by raising the resident exemption tax to 30% from 20% to help make people less property-rich and cash-poor, due to the increase in tax burden/property value for property owners. It was noted this is Town's third year at a 20% rate.

DP suggested an analysis could be fruitful to determine the impact on sewer and water rates to those who are land-rich but cash-poor and how, in the interest of generating year-round residents, these property owners might benefit from a year-round, neutral taxation.

MH suggested studying the number of residents taking advantage of the resident exemption tax and apply the dollar value accordingly. DP replied that if the expenditure is held aside and Town assumes the levy will rise each year by a relative constant amount, Town can figure in the value of the resident tax exemption when making analysis. DP added that the State legislature is in its third round of considering the passage of an extension of the exemption tax to those who rent year-round.

DP said he thought the ceiling on raising the tax exemption rate was at 35% and also conveyed that sitting FINCOM members would not be perceived as having a conflict of interest in the Warrant proposal as the article pertains to a general consensus of the population.

MB asked MH why 30% and not 25% or 35% regarding the new rate proposal. MH responded that this figure is in keeping with other, neighboring town policies.

2. A proposal that Town should not spend money on independent contractors or other businesses that do not have strong anti-discriminatory policies in place; seeks to strengthen Town's clauses in that regard, and extend to public accommodations; stated the current wording is not very good and suggested penalties be delivered on those not compliant.

DP said he would have Town's lawyers review the proposal.

MH referenced Salem, MA's policy that required local businesses which were not compliant to adapt to the bylaw or face penalty.

MB asked per the litmus test for compliancy. DP mentioned that major cities have a problem with the rule of law in this regard as tracking down the line of where products come from can be complicated and challenging.

SV said Town would need to be careful not to create so much bureaucracy that DP has to hire a legal staff to address the issues. MH said the proposal was to set a tone and mandate policy.

3. Addressing the state of the current Police Station on Shank Painter Road and the Town-owned VFW land site which is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year of stagnation.

DP referenced that Province Landing took 10 years to reach fruition and that while he will not be sitting on the issue for five years, made mention that the land is not a money-maker unless it is sold for market housing which no one wants.

MH said he feels the FINCOM needs to present something at Town Meeting to put a fire on the topic and start generating action on the two parcels.

DP gave some background on how the properties have been under consideration with three different proposals and feels the time is now for movement; as well as with Harbor Hills. DP cited his 18-month track record for getting things done and suggested that if Town had voted on the Winslow Farms project then the FINCOM would be having a different conversation.

SV pointed out that VFW did serve a function as a temporary home for Coastal Studies while their facility was being renovated and therefore did give a Town business that supports jobs and assist.

DP said Town needs to seek a development partner not a development proposal at this stage and is not in favor of putting anything to vote before the public. MB concurred. MH mentioned this item has long lead times for processes.

MH wrapped up discussion on his three proposals for Town Warrant and said he had spoken to a few other boards on idea topics related to economic development and would report back to the FINCOM any proposals or suggestion brought forth by those boards going forward.

No one added anything in terms of Warrant proposals and DP moved the discussion back to item #2 on the agenda.

## **2. Budget Season schedule and meeting schedule Q1 2018**

DP and the FINCOM addressed the Town calendar at hand. DP noted March 2<sup>nd</sup> is the technical deadline to get articles into Town Warrant; JY added that Town management will keep updating the Board of Selectmen (BOS) with subsequent drafts of the FINCOM's Warrant proposals. MH said he would get input from DP and Town Council and then do a write-up of articles which will be sent to the FINCOM for its review.

MH proposed a meeting for Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> at 10am and no other meeting for the rest of 2017; Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> is to be a 3-way meeting with BOS and the School Committee, and Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> is a budget reconciliation meeting with BOS. MH noted that the joint meeting is required by the Charter.

DP remarked that there is a tentatively proposed Issues Forum for Sat., Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, probably at 10am.

MH said he is in France from March 15<sup>th</sup> through March 21<sup>st</sup>.

DP noted that he gone March 5<sup>th</sup> through March 9<sup>th</sup> for the follow-up to the Learning as Leadership seminar.

#### **4. Reserve Fund Transfer Requests**

MH suggested budgeting the Reserve for 110k this year for emergencies such as crashed police cruisers, unforeseen public education needs, condemned properties, and the like.

JY distributed Request for Reserve Fund Transfer document for signage.

- a) SV made a motion to approve transfer from the Reserve Fund as printed the amount of \$16,202 for OPENGOV Inc. performance and stories software. MB seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0-0.
- b) MB made a motion to approve transfer from the Reserve Fund as printed the amount of \$13,332 for OPENGOV Inc. budget, forecast and performance software. SV seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0-0.

#### **6. Budget Updates**

MB requested clarity on the good news regarding recycling receipts; JY said she would look into it. MB also asked about the good results with Town's banking income; JY said that it is due to having a treasurer who's making sure we're getting value for our investment.

#### **7. Any Items from the Town Manager that pertain to Finance**

Meeting Minutes for approval.

- a) MB made a motion to accept as written the meeting minutes of Sept. 5, 2017; KG seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0-0.
- b) DS made a motion to accept as written the meeting minutes of Oct. 3, 2017; MB seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0-0.
- c) DS made a motion to accept as written the meeting minutes of Nov. 13, 2017; SV seconded the motion, and it passed, 5-0-0.

#### **8. Any other business that may legally come before the Committee**

MJA called attention to the Association of Town Finance Committees handbook which can be viewed online through the Massachusetts Municipal Association website; referencing a letter she sent to the FINCOM a week or two ago from a woman who said she felt she had been maligned by one or two FINCOM members; reminded the FINCOM that even if they think they are private citizens they are always FINCOM members and should conduct themselves accordingly. MJA said she received a letter from the aggrieved party who said she felt somewhat better having been contacted by Town Moderator.

DP mentioned the challenge in trying to conduct a civil conversation on social media as it runs 24/7; said he struggles with an option to just shut it down when conversations go so far, so fast.

MJA spoke of the need for alternates on the FINCOM; said she spoke with Doug Cliggott who expressed interest in returning to the board after completing his book. MJA asked the FINCOM for references for alternates as she hasn't been able to find anyone and thanked the FINCOM for its service.

MH adjourned the meeting at 11:36am.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jody O'Neil