

Framlingham Town Council
Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held via Zoom
on Thursday 11th February 2021 at 7.00pm

All documents relating to this meeting were made available to Councillors (Cllr) in advance

1. APOLOGIES:

None, all present.

Present:

Cllr D Carter (Chair), Cllr P Collins, Cllr C Eastwood, Cllr S Garrett, Cllr M Hine, Cllr J Jones, Cllr G Kitching and Cllr P Wraight

In attendance:

Mrs E Coe (Town Clerk/RFO)

2. Declarations of Interest:

None.

3. Minutes of previous meeting:

3111221 Cllr Carter proposed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 14th January 2021 (circulated in draft form prior to the meeting) be approved as an accurate record, which was seconded by Cllr Kitching and with one abstention due to absence, all were in favour.

Cllr Carter signed the file copy of the minutes.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

5.1 Alpha Finance Report of Income and Expenditure to date:

The Town Clerk/RFO provided the Alpha Report of Income and Expenditure to date along with an income and expenditure excel spreadsheet and the details were noted. She also advised on highlighted transfers to EMRs at the year end.

The Town Clerk/RFO advised that Chairs of committees could refer to the reports in advance of their meetings, and she was more than happy to provide any further information or advice on the budgets if needed.

Following the Town Clerk/RFO's recommendation a transfer of £400 from Budget 2318 to Budget 1125 for the purchase of office equipment **was agreed**.

A copy of the Income and Expenditure Reports would be attached to the file copy of these minutes.

5.2 Bank balances and bank reconciliations to date:

The Town Clerk/RFO provided an HSBC printed copy of the bank balances to date, which was noted and a copy attached to the file copy of these minutes. The Town Clerk/RFO noted that all the reconciliations were complete and up to date.

5.3 Ear Marked Reserves:

The Town Clerk/RFO provided a report on the EMR to date.

It was agreed to re-name EMR 345 Soap Box Race to Community Events.

5.3 Investments:

It was noted that the HSBC- Money Market fixed deposit of £258,068.24 matures on 11th February 2021 and the funds would be paid into the HSBC Current account and not reinvested as the interest rate remains at 0.01%.

Cllr Jones provided information on Shawbrook Bank which had a good rate of interest for savings and accounts suitable for Town & Parish Councils.

It was agreed for the Town Clerk/RFO to pursue and report back to the next meeting.

5.4 Barclays Bank:

The Town Clerk reported that she had contacted Barclays to arrange an appointment with the Business Manager, but they are not currently holding face to face meetings due to Covid-19 and there were no other options at this time.

5.5 Grant Applications: (£1,000 left in Budget for 2020/2021)

5.5.1 Disability Advice Service - £500

5.511221 Cllr Carter proposed to recommend approval to Full Council to grant £500 from Budget 1201, which was seconded by Cllr Garrett with all in favour.

5.5.2 Alde and Blyth Community Radio - £1,000

5.521221 Cllr Carter proposed to decline this application, which was seconded by Cllr Garrett with all in favour.

5.5.3 Fram Litter Pickers Group- £532.95

5.531221 Cllr Carter proposed to approve the purchase of 10 litter picker sticks and 10 handi-hoop bag openers at a cost not exceeding £250 +vat to be donated to the Group with the proviso that they remain the property of the Town Council, which was seconded by Cllr Garrett with all in favour.

5.6 Investment Strategy – Annual Review – deferred from last meeting

The document was reviewed and agreed and would be put forward to Full Council for approval.

5.7 Asset Register:

Response from SCC regarding public liability and street lighting -Town Clerk/RFO report circulated and passed to Rights of Way, Highways and Lighting Committee for Risk Assessment. Noted

5.8 Outstanding invoice – LCPAS:

It was noted that despite numerous reminders the amount remains unpaid.

5.10 Internal Audit and End of Year Accounts:

5411221 Cllr Carter proposed to recommend approval to Full Council to accept the cost of £560 for Rialtas (Alpha) to assist with the end of year accounts, which was seconded by Cllr Jones with all in favour.

The cost of £423 for SALC to carry out the end of year Internal Audit was noted.

It was agreed for the Town Clerk to obtain two further quotations for the Internal Audit which would be considered at the next meeting. The Town Clerk would contact other Suffolk Clerks for their view of SALC's Internal Audit process and options on other Internal Auditors.

7. Financial Regulations and Committee's Terms of Reference:

7111221 Cllr Carter proposed to recommend approval to Full Council to amend Financial Regulation 10.5 with an increase of authority of committees' expenditure from £300 to £500 per item for work or materials for work carried out in their area of responsibility and within their overall budget. Expenditure of sums greater than £500 shall be approved by Full Council. Also to amend Committees' terms of Reference to reflect the change, which was seconded by Cllr Garrett with all in favour.

8. Code of Conduct:

To consider new Code of Conduct LGA version: <https://www.local.gov.uk/local-government-association-model-councillor-code-conduct-2020-0>

The Town Clerk/RFO noted that SALC are awaiting notes for guidance under development by LGA, final 'adoption' by NALC and hopefully a Suffolk-wide agreement across all the principal authorities as with the present one.

Cllr Wraight noted that the new Code of Conduct could be adopted in full or in part to suit. The LGA had committed to reviewing the new Code of Conduct annually.

It was agreed to consider this further at the next meeting.

9. Town Council Office:

No business

10. Correspondence:

None.

A resolution to exclude the press and public will be passed by virtue of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 (2) for item 6 because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

No public present.

11. Employment Matters:

11.1 Deputy Town Clerk/Interim Staff Appraisal:

The Town Clerk/RFO, Cllr Wraight and Cllr Carter would carry out the appraisal and report back to the next meeting.

11.2 To consider forming an HR sub-committee:

It was agreed to form an HR Sub-committee with the Town Clerk/RFO attending meetings in an advisory capacity with the Deputy Town Clerk taking the minutes and clerking the meeting. Committee membership was agreed - Cllr Kitching, Cllr Wraight and Cllr Carter.

11.3 Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and Manual Handling:

The Town Clerk/RFO advised on the Annual Staff reviews which had been completed and assessed.

It was noted that the actions arising had been addressed and completed.

11.4 Annual review of contracts and salaries:

Cllr Collins and Cllr Carter had carried out a review of staff contracts and it was agreed that there were no changes for the current year. The salaries for all staff had been reviewed and also agreed.

It was agreed that a written framework for salaries would be established and followed going forward.

12. Action Plan:

Updates:

Investment Strategy reviewed – next review due January 2022.

13. Matters of report or items for next agenda:

Annual Insurance renewal – Due 1st June – Year 3 of 3 with Zurich

14. Date of next meeting:

Thursday 11th March 2021 at 7.00pm

Meeting closed at 21.22