**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE**

**FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**Held on Wednesday 23rd November 2016**

Present: Councillor Mrs E Blezard

Councillor B Mayne

Councillor Mrs P Mayne – Vice-Chairman

Councillor R Seal

**29. Welcome and Apologies.**

The Vice-Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members’ apologies for their inability to attend were recorded in the apology book.

**30.** **Members Declarations of Interest.**

Members were reminded of the requirement to make an appropriate declaration at the meeting on any item(s) in which they had an interest.

There were no declarations made.

**31.** **Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.**

There were no items of a confidential nature from which the public and press were required to be excluded.

**32. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 28th September 2016 (Minute Numbers 19-28; Pages 9-12) be received as a true record and the contents contained therein be approved.

(Proposed by Councillor Mrs E. Blezard / Seconded by Councillor B. Mayne)

**33. Budget Review 2016/17**

The Town Clerk presented a budget review up to the end of month six, September 2016. The report broke down the budget into the various cost centres and provided a comparison between budgeted and actual spending and the budget remaining. In each of the areas the Town Clerk indicated where there was to be any under or over spend. It was reported that the budget was currently on track with just over 43% of the annual budget having been spent and 96% of the budgeted income having already been received. The Town Clerk talked through a number of different variations of the outturn for the end of the year, however this was very much dependant on expenditure over the next 6 months. It was reported that there was a reserve for elections of £20,000.00, a reserve for the Woodhouse Community Centre at £10,000.00 and a reserve for the Town Hall at £40,000.00. It was anticipated that if the Council sticks to its budgeted income and expenditure then the general reserve for the end of the year is likely to be in the region of £120,000.00 which is acceptable in lines with our current budget.

RESOLVED that the report be received and the Town Clerk be thanked for her work on the budget review.

**34. Spring Floral Displays 2017**

The Town Clerk circulated a quote from First Impressions, our current hanging basket provider, for spring hanging baskets. The proposal was to provide sixty hanging baskets plus the flowerbeds on Queen Street and the planters on Castleford Road. The total cost for this was £2960.00 which was with budget.

RESOLVED that the contract for Spring Floral Displays be awarded to First Impressions at a cost of £2960.00.

**35. Summer Floral Displays 2017**

A quote was provided by First Impressions for the Summer Hanging Baskets which would include sixty summer hanging baskets, a three-tier memorial, three small flowerbeds, the pitwheel bed, eighteen large planters and twenty small planters, the total cost for this being £6394.00, however, payment received in April would be eligible for a 5% discount, meaning that the cost would be bought down to £6074.30. Members were very pleased with the standard of floral displays that had been supplied in 2016 and gave approval for First Impressions to continue in 2017.

Resolved that the Summer Floral Displays contract be awarded to First Impressions at a cost of £6074.30.

**36. Defibrillator at the Woodhouse Community Centre**

Members discussed the need for a defibrillator at the Woodhouse Community Centre which was in use by sporting groups and also the elderly. It was suggested that costings should be looked into for a defibrillator to be provided inside the building for the use of building users. The cost of this would be around £1,700.00 and it was suggested that this be referred to the budget meeting in the new year. It was reported that there would be ongoing costs with any defibrillator purchased of around £150.00 every four years for a new battery plus £20.00 per year for replacement pads.

RESOLVED that the report be received and considered at a future meeting.

**37. Freeston Prize Presentation**

Members were asked to consider donating a prize to the Freeston Prize Presentation Evening at Freeston Academy. It was reported that contact had been made with Freeston but no reply had been received to date. Councillor Mrs E. Blezard suggested that she should be sent a copy of the email so that she could take it to a governors meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be received and further contact be made with Freeston.

**38. Christmas Celebration**

It was reported that the Christmas Celebration needed an increase in their budget of £50.00 to allow for a donation to the Church towards the heating and lighting costs for putting on the Christmas Celebration event.

RESOLVED that an additional £50.00 be allocated to the Christmas Celebration for 2016.

**39. Photocopiers**

The Town Clerk reported that she had been very dissatisfied with the service provided by our current photocopier supppliers, Arena. It was reported that she had met with Officers from Arena who had offered to make some alterations to the office equipment by removing the two smaller desktop printers which were very rarely used, removing the finisher on the back up photocopier and installing a wireless network card to enable that copier to be used as a printer direct from the computer system. It was reported that there would be no additional changes to the cost per copy however they would require us to sign up for an additional twelve months lease at a cost of £3,316.00. Members were very disappointed with the offer that was put forward as they did not wish to pay an additional year’s lease on a machine which would by that stage be six years old. It was further reported that the cost per copy charges were being increased by 10% per year. This was included in the fine print on the back of the contract however it has the effect over the period of six years of almost doubling the initial cost per copy that was quoted when we took over the contract. There had been a number of faults with the machine recently and the machine had let the office down on a number of key dates, including two Council Agenda days, meaning that the Council Agenda had had to be printed off on the back-up copier, this was twice the price of the regular copier and also didn’t provide the same quality of print. A refund had been offered however this had not been received yet from Arena.

The Town Clerk had been offered a meeting with another company recommended by our current telephone provider and IT provider, a company call Ben Johnson. Ben Johnson had offered the Town Council a new machine on a five-year lease at a lower cost per copy than was being paid through Arena and this would make a saving of £136.35 per quarter. Ben Johnson have agreed that the town Council will be prioritised on Council Agenda days, their average call out time is 3 hours and 42 minutes which is much better than the service being received by Arena. They have offered to relocate the new copier to the upstairs office at any time should we decide to move offices as part of the Town Hall transfer and they also have very good references. They work very well with our existing IT supplier so there would be no problems in any change overs. Members considered the history of the issues that have been ongoing with the current photocopier and agreed that it would be more cost effective to lease a new machine and given the assurances made by Ben Johnson the Committee were happy to move supplier on this occasion provided that there could be some assurances written down that set-out how they would support us in the event that there was a major fault with the machine and how they would support us on Agenda days.

RESOLVED that a new contract be entered into with Ben Johnson Ltd for five years at a lease cost of £863.80 and a cost per copy of £00.04 on colour and £00.0045 on black and white and that this would be subject to an RPI increase once per year.

**40. Town Guide**

The Town Clerk reported that the advertising revenue for the Town Guide had fallen short and there was a need to provide around £900.00 towards the printing costs of the Town Guide. Members discussed the pros and cons of producing a paper copy version of the Town Guide and felt that if advertising came forward then they would go ahead with publication but they did not feel it was appropriate to put £900.00 towards the printing costs when much of the information is already available online and distributed in different ways.

RESOLVED that the Town Guide be put on hold pending further advertising.

**41. Town Hall Sub-Committee**

RESOLVED that a Town Hall Sub-Committee be created and to consider the financial implications of the Town Hall transfer and that the following members be appointed:

Councillor Mrs E. Blezard

Councillor Mrs H.W. Jones

Councillor B. Mayne

Councillor Mrs P. Mayne

Councillor Mrs C.A. Moran, BEM

Councillor B Smith

Councillor A. Wassell

**42. Woodhouse Community Centre – Decorating**

The Town Clerk reported that at the May meeting of the Finance Committee approval was given for decorating to be carried out at the Woodhouse Community Centre in the period after the Christmas break. At that time two quotes had been received and it was agreed that the lowest quote would be approved in consultation with the Chairman. However, at the last meeting the decorating had been put on hold pending further discussions regarding the use of the building. The three quotes had been received and the lowest quote was from Abutilon Property Maintenance who had been put on notice that the work was due to be commenced in January. Members discussed the requirement for decorating and agreed that the contract should be confirmed with the lowest priced contractor.

RESOLVED that Abutilon Property Maintenance be awarded the decorating contract at a cost of £1,280.00.

In the absence of any further business, the Vice-Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.