

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

April 5, 2010

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee of the Finance Committee was held on Monday, April 5, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the Finance Committee Room, Town Hall with the following members present: T. Jalkut, C. Lane, L. Donovan, M. Kent, R. Knobel, S. Connell, M. Boragine, M. Gallivan, L. Pitman, D. Burke, P. Stasiukevicius, T. Bowen, J. Stadtler. Also Town Administrator M. Boynton, Finance Director M. Good, and Assistant Town Administrator J. Johnson. Department Heads present were M. Walker, Town Engineer, R.O'Brien, DPW Director, Police Chief R. Stillman, Fire Chief T. Bailey, D. Anderson, Superintendent of Buildings and Police Sergeant F. Leland.

7:30 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman T. Jalkut.

May 3, 2010 Spring Annual Town Meeting

Capital Budget Committee Members. R. Connolly, Chairman, C. Lane (FinCom Representative) W. Abbott, and M. Comisky

Article 11 – Capital Improvement Program – Total requests received were \$776,000, Town Administrator is recommending \$25,000 for Hazardous Tree Removal, \$25,000 for fence and guardrails at Stone Field, \$20,000 irrigation improvements for town fields, \$48,000 for playing fields at Fisher School, \$25,000 emergency lighting at Bird Middle School, \$25,000 emergency boiler repairs for a total of \$168,000. Capital Budget Committee went along with the Town Administrators recommendations with the addition of \$15,000 for system wide painting. Total recommended from Capital Budget is \$183,000.

FinCom questioned the need for the irrigation system at the high school, It was explained that money was appropriated last year, this is a second phase and don't want to have to dig up the field twice. The need for fence and guardrail at Stone Field was discussed and not including in their recommendation the Fisher School Gym floor replacement, this was considered by many of the members extremely hazardous and a liability issue. This is a longtime problem that has to be fixed right, problem begins under the flooring, temporary fixes won't work.

MOTION MADE by C. Lane, Seconded by S. Connell for Favorable Action on Article 11 in the amount of \$183,000 from Free Cash, Motion Approved, (10-3-0) (L. Donovan, T. Bowen, M. Boragine opposed) (13 voting)

Article 12 – Capital Equipment Purchase

Total requests received was \$269,000. Town Administrator is recommending \$5,000 for portable radio replacements, \$5,000 for mobile radio upgrades, \$35,000 for firefighter turnout gear (second year) \$20,000 for police transition equipment, \$15,000 for Cobbs Pond Dam Report/Inspection, \$14,000 O & M Manual, \$25,000 for replacement of truck #213, and \$150,000 for school computers. Capital Budget Committee did not recommend the portable radios (\$5,000) or mobile radio upgrades (\$5,000) but did recommend an additional \$13,000 for mobile computers for two cruisers. Total Capital Budget Committee request of \$272,000.

MOTION MADE by C. Lane, Seconded by S. Connell for Favorable Action on Article 12 in the amount of \$272,000 from Free Cash, Motion Approved, (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Article 13 Street and Sidewalk Repairs

Total requests received was \$182,186, Town Administrator is recommending \$56,926, \$25,000 for catch basin repairs, \$20,000 crack seal roadways and \$11,926 for Chapter 90 contingency. Capital Budget went along with Town Administrator's recommendations.

MOTION MADE by C. Lane, Seconded by J. Stadtler for Favorable Action on Article 13 in the amount of \$56,926 to be funded in the amount of \$45,000 from Free Cash and \$11,926 from Chapter 90 funds, Motion Approved, Unanimous (13-0-0) (13 voting)

Article 14 – Street Improvements

Total request was for \$200,000 for East Street. Town Administrator is recommending this. Roadway is in bad need of repairs, potholes, portion of East Street to be done is from Main Street to Old Post Road.

MOTION MADE by C. Lane, Seconded by J. Stadtler for Article 14 in the amount of \$200,000 by borrowing, Motion Approved, Unanimous (13-0-0) (13 voting)

Article 18 – Water Borrowing

\$750,000 for rehabbing the Delaney Water Treatment Plant, this is the second year of three year program.

MOTION MADE by C. Lane, Seconded by D. Burke for Favorable Action on Article 18 in the amount of \$750,000 by borrowing, Motion Approved, Unanimous (13-0-0) (13 voting)

Article 19 – Bird Middle School Roof

Amount requested is \$400,000, Town Administrator is recommending \$400,000 by borrowing.

MOTION MADE by C. Lane, Seconded by S. Connell for Favorable Action in the amount of \$400,000 by Borrowing, Motion Approved, Unanimous (13-0-0) (13 voting)

Article 23 – Public Safety Facility

Capital Budget Committee hasn't taken a vote on this article. Consensus was that the Committee feels the need for a new facility, but hasn't voted. Comments from the Capital Budget Members present was that it should go through the process and on to the voters, some members had an issue of the location on Robbins Road and it not being a joint facility. Other members spoke to what to do with the present library and police station, and would like to see a plan for these buildings and consolidation of buildings.

Town Administrator spoke to the need for a senior center, it is known what the municipal needs are. There would be need to renovate this building if a Senior Center is built, there had been talk about moving School Administration to library, but there is no mechanism in place to do this. There would be about 21 million in municipal needs. (police, fire, senior center and renovations), They are aware that they need to address the present library, it lacks parking, is not handicap accessible and is not suitable for municipal needs without extensive money being spent. There is no way of putting police station in the old library, option is to sell or use for community housing. There is grant money available for housing and community development. Questions are what to do with current police station. Building needs to be gutted, can't sell as it is on the historic registry, lacks adequate parking Stone Field is not suitable for a building, Town is also in need of fields, and not in position to build new ones. Fire Station has to be centrally located, this is not a requirement of a police facility.

Article 11 – Discussion resumed on the Fisher School Gym floor.

MOTION MADE by R. Knobel, Seconded by J. Stadtler for Reconsideration of Article 11, Motion Approved (12-1-0) (T. Jalkut opposed) (13 voting)

Town Administrator spoke to not being in favor of borrowing to do the gym floor replacement at the Fisher School, if Committee recommends it, he would like to see it taken from Free Cash.

MOTION MADE by M. Boragine, Seconded by M. Kent to appropriate \$80,000 for the Fisher School Gym Floor replacement, to be funded from Borrowing, Motion Withdrawn

Discussion – Committee members questioned whether this would be the next project if it wasn't done now, what is the utilization of school gym during school periods. It has a use beyond voting. Gym is no longer rented out due to the condition of the floor. Town

invites the public in for voting, floor is not in good condition, kids play there, it is not safe, a known liability issue. This could be funded within the levy limit, borrowing will add to the debt levy. Town Administrator spoke to a limited amount of money to be spread around. He does not recommend borrowing the \$80,000 to do the floor. FinCom Members spoke to this project being like this for 10 years, School Department has not made a recommendation on it.

MOTION MADE by M. Boragine, Seconded by C. Lane for Favorable Action to fund Fisher School floor line item in Article 11, with \$80,000 from Free Cash. This motion was amended by Larry Pitman to use \$25,000 from fence & guardrail @ Stone field line item and \$55,000 from Free Cash to fund Fisher School gymnasium floor. The total for Article 11 was \$238,000. Motion Approved (10-3-0) (C.Lane, L. Donovan, T. Jalkut opposed) (13 voting)

Article 23 – Discussion Continued – Committee discussed many residents against Robbins Road site, they want a combined facility. Town Administrator - never going to get to a point to get a consensus on where to be located and type of facility. It is a good time to do it now, borrowing rates and construction rates are down. If located at Robbins Road, area would be safer as there is a police station. Police cars are not generally at the station they are out in the field. Town Meeting and the voters should decide.

MOTION MADE by R. Knobel, Seconded by M. Kent for Favorable Action on Article 23 in the amount of \$8,500,000 by Borrowing, Motion Approved (11-1-1) (T. Bowen opposed, M. Boragine abstained) (13 voting)

Articles 24, 25 – BioTech Articles - FinCom members attended the Planning Board Public Hearings. Planning Board did not take any action, these are Board of Selectmen sponsored articles and they had some questions that they wanted referred to Town Counsel and Board of Health.

Town Administrator spoke to the issue of the Union Contracts, he met with all municipal unions last week clerical and custodians have agreed in schools. With 2 year extensions, all school contracts are the same. Municipal contracts have to be approved by town meeting. In effort to deal with this, need to have contracts by May Town Meeting, need to know the facts up front, School Department has set up the framework. Unions are meeting this week. FinCom has expressed concerns on two additional year extensions, not sure how to get around this. Town Administrator would like to dedicate any money savings back to those particular departments, and make adjustments in the fall. By then, it would be known, the true health insurance costs. There is a big savings for the town to go to rate savers. Municipal side is boxed in.

Committee questioned possibly letting the School Department handle their own insurance. Town Administrator is apprehensive to turn over this cost to the schools.

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They also discussed the need for closer coordination for negotiations, shouldn't find out the facts afterwards. Doesn't make sense in this environment to give out raises. Problem

occurred with Town Administrator's budget message, allowing for 3% cost of living raises with no changes in health insurance. The voices of the Finance Committee were heard and compromises made. Town Administrator doesn't feel the unions will give anymore. He is sensitive to what the FinCom wants. How does the Committee feel on going along with the same as the schools. FinCom members spoke to problems with the school contracts, not enough concessions given. Consensus of FinCom was that if the municipal unions go along with rate saver plan, they should receive the same general increases as given by the School Department.

MOTION MADE by R. Knobel, Seconded by T. Bowen to accept the minutes of the March 25, 2010 meeting, Motion Approved (12-0-1) (J. Stadtler abstained) (13 voting)

Adjourn. 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Clerk