

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes**

**April 7, 2008**

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Monday, April 7, 2008 at 7:30 p.m in the Finance Committee Room, Town Hall with the following members present: T. Jalkut, L. Donovan, M. Hickey, S. Kelliher, J. Muti, T. Bowen, C. Lane, J. Stadler M. Gallivan, S. Connell, S. Rose, R. Knobel, Also in attendance was Town Administrator M. Boynton and Finance Director M. Good

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

#### **Capital Budget**

Speaking to the Capital Budget Articles was the Chairman R. Connolly, Committee Members C. Lane, W. Abbott and M. Cominsky. Department heads present were Assistant Fire Chief M. Laracy, Police Chief R. Stillman, Sewer & Water Superintendent R. Mattson, Supt. of Building Maintenance D. Conley, Town Engineer M. Walker, Supt. of Parks, Recreation Director J. Cole, and P. Krusko, Information Systems Director.

#### **Article 8 – Water Department**

\$225,00 out of Water Retained Earnings for Well Investigation of #2 and #3, Roof Replacement at Washington Well No. 5, to prevent leaking and damage to equipment. and Instrumental Control Modernization at High Street Tanks.

Balance in Water Retained earnings is \$650,000

#### **Article 9 – Sewer Department**

\$214,000 out of Sewer Retained Earnings for Pine Street Sewer, this is a dropped manhole, creating an influx of odors on Towle Road which came down from the Preserve. New line will be installed from Whiting to Washington Street. R. Mattson confident that this will take care of the matter. 4 wheel drive ½ ton pick-up, used for sewer maintenance and format scanner that will be used to scan plans that are 80 to 90 years old providing back-up archives, and create a digital file for large plans.

Balance in Sewer Retained Earnings is \$685,000.

#### **Article 13 – Capital Infrastructure Improvements**

\$13,600 for aquatic plant control, \$50,000 for Blackburn Hall improvements for use by the Recreation Department, \$40,000 for improvements to Center and South Pools. This will help reduce significant water lost in the Central Wading Pool and South Walpole Pool.

Highway Department - \$20,000 for Opticom System Maintenance (tree removal) and \$45,000 for LED Lighting for street lights and replacement of all traffic lights at intersections throughout the town, more energy efficient.

Parks Department - \$20,000 tree removal, required due to insufficient amount of money in Parks Department Budget, work needs to be done on an annual basis. Budget has money for emergency funds. \$20,000 for fence work around recreation facilities. \$45,000 for Bird Fountain area, this will repoint the masonry work on the structure on the Town Common across from Post Office, presently in total disrepair. It is the C. S. Bird Memorial and has not been in operation for a couple of decades. Bacevich Family came forward and donated \$5,000 towards the restoration in honor of their son, killed in Iraq. Many donations have been received and a company has come forward to volunteer to do all the work at no cost to the Town. Town has spent \$100,000 the last couple of years for the other two Commons and need to update this one. \$30,000 for field improvement upgrades throughout the town. Town did a study last year in the amount of \$35,000 to study the fields and report is due out in May and Capital Budget felt that the money should be appropriated now and do the work during the summer. Some of the work will be done in house and with outside contractors.

Engineering – \$158,795 for replacement of culvert at Washington St. and Adrienne Rd. This project will be funded from money left over from other projects.

Building Maintenance –\$50,000 for completion of Town Hall project i.e. floors, taking out air conditioning units and blocking up the spaces, \$15,000 for the East Walpole Community Center for minor renovations, and \$25,000 for painting system wide.

Schools – \$20,000 for Bird Middle School ceiling tile fixtures and \$20,000 for Johnson Middle School sky-lights, leakage is coming through, causing damage to the school.

#### **Article 14 – Capital Equipment Purchase**

Finance Department - \$17,500 for an actuarial study on future benefits to come up with a value of cost of retired employees insurance costs. This has to be done every two years. In future years it might be added under the Annual Audit Budget. Town 62% funded on pension liability.

MIS Department - \$185,000 upgrade WAN infrastructure, Phase 3, installation of fiber optics for Central Fire and Police, South Walpole, Marathon House and Public Library. This completes all the Town's buildings. Verizon FIOS should be ready in about 60

days. \$35,00 to replace Town Hall File and GIS Servers, and \$6,000 for replacement of computers at the Library.

Fire Department - \$450,000 new Class A fire engine, replacing Engine 2. Originally thought to replace Engine 1. \$40,000 for alteration of 1999E-On Engine #5, and \$9,000 for Main Server – Domain Controller Software Committee questioned possibly joining other towns on this software, not feasible as the software has to be actually programmed. and \$42,000 for ambulance reporting software.

Police - \$30,000 replacement of Chief's vehicle, \$33,000 replacement of oldest marked vehicle, \$12,000 for all terrain vehicle with trailer and \$6,900 for four defibrillators, this will put them in all the cruisers.

Recreation - \$12,000 for two pool vacuums.

Vehicle Maintenance \$130,000 for replacement of dump truck with sander, \$120,000 for backhoe, \$40,000 replacement of Ford pick up, \$30,000 to recycle Town Administrator's vehicle(to the Assistant Town Administrator), \$25,000 for replacement of Ford pick-up (animal control). On question from the Committee, some of the vehicles are taken home by the department heads. .

Parks Department – \$20,000 for turf utility vehicle for grooming artificial turf utility vehicles, \$15,000 hydro seed spray tank, and \$10,000 to upgrade various equipment at various playgrounds. There have been many changes to safety rules and regulations since they were installed initially. Town does annual maintenance and safety inspections on the playgrounds.

School Department – \$150,000 for technology, \$100,000 for text books. Superintendent wants to put technology on a four year cycle and replace equipment that needs to be replaced and upgraded.

### **#15 – Streets & Sidewalk Improvements**

\$11,856 (Chapter 90) various street and sidewalk improvements, \$25,000 catch basin repairs and \$25,000 crack seal roadways.

### **Article 16 – Building Upgrades**

\$275,000 for Bird Gym and Main Building Roof.

### **Article 17 – Street Improvements Borrowing**

\$200,000 various streets.

Total requests to Capital Budget Committee was 4,745,981, Town Administrator recommended \$3,071,751, Capital Budget is recommending \$3,066,651

**Article 13 – Capital Infrastructure Improvements**

**MOTION MADE** by S. Connell, Seconded by J. Stadler for Favorable Action on Article 13 in the amount of \$572,395 to be funded in the amount of \$413,600 from Free Cash and \$158,795 from various balances in previous articles, Motion Approved, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

Committee took a straw vote on the removal of Aquatic Plant Control in the amount of \$13,600 from this article, did not pass.

**Article 14 – Capital Equipment Purchase**

Committee took a straw vote for the removal of the FY09 OPEB Audit from this article in the amount of \$17,500, passing favorably.

**MOTION MADE** by S. Rose, Seconded by S. Connell to remove the amount of \$17,500 (FY09 OPEB Audit) from Article 14 and include in the Town Report/Audit Budget, balance of \$1,500,900, Motion Approved, Unanimous (12-0-0)

**MOTION MADE** by S. Rose, Seconded by S. Connell to fund Article 14 in the amount of \$42,000 transferred from Ambulance Fund and \$1,458,900 from Free Cash, Motion Approved, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

**Article 15 – Street and Sidewalk Improvements**

**MOTION MADE** by R. Knobel, Seconded by L. Donovan for Favorable Action on Article 15 in the amount of \$61,856, to be funded in the amount of \$50,000 from Free Cash, and \$11,856 from Chapter 90 Funds, Motion Approved, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

**Article 16 – Building Upgrades**

**MOTION MADE** by S. Connell, Seconded by J. Stadler for Favorable Action on Article 16 in the amount of \$275,000 by borrowing, Motion Approved, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

**Article 17 – Street Improvements**

**MOTION MADE** by S. Connell, Seconded by J. Stadler for Favorable Action on Article 17 in the amount of \$200,000 by borrowing, Motion Approved, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

### **Articles 35-40 Street Acceptances**

Town Engineer M. Walker spoke to these articles. The following streets are up for consideration: Beethoven Ave., Mozart Drive, Chopin Court, Haydn Lane and two Bach Court. Planning Board will be voting these at their meeting of April 17, 2008 and Board of Selectmen hearings will be April 22, 2008. To date the only bond that has been released is Article 39, Bach Court Extension. There is an issue on this development of land being conveyed to Conservation, this hasn't happened yet.

**MOTION MADE** by R. Knobel, Seconded by S. Rose for Recommendation at Town Meeting on Articles 35 – 40, Motion Approved, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

### **Article 41 – Utility Easement/Mylod Street**

Small infrastructure improvements on Mylod Street. Town Engineer is satisfied with this.

**MOTION MADE** by S. Connell, Seconded by S. Rose for Favorable Action on Article 41, Motion Approved, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

### **Article 42 – Utility Easement/Coney Street**

This work hasn't begun on Coney Street, between Sandra Road and Route 1, area is being widening, one half a lane width has to be removed to put in sidewalk.

**MOTION MADE** by S. Connell, Seconded by S. Rose for Favorable Action on Article 42, Motion Approved, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

Pond Discussion – Committee discussed the merits of spending money on aquatic plant control for the ponds. Problem is fighting nature to try to stop them, should the ponds just be allowed to fill in. Some members felt that it is not a Capital Budget item (requested under Article 13), it should be in a budget.

### **Article 6 – Budgets**

Committee reviewed the proposed budgets and put holds for further discussion on the following budgets: Reserve Fund, Economic Development, DPW Building Maintenance, Town Report & Annual Audit, Police Department, Schools, DPW Snow and Ice, DPW Street Lighting, Recreation, Unemployment Compensation and Employee Fringe Benefits.

**Reserve Fund** – S. Rose, putting money into from unemployment, to the reserve fund. Town Administrator feels departments provide best estimate on their budgets and stay within them. Michael impressed that we can have just \$150,000 in the Reserve Fund

Some members felt happy with small amount. Don't want it to become a slush fund. Need to keep budgets consistent.

**Economic Development** – proposed is a full time person, original proposal was –0- Town Administrator feels important to be full time, as part time hasn't work. Selectmen want economic development, Originally full time position, economy hurt. Different views on where we are going, downtown, If it is not funded, economic development won't happen. Concerns were expressed with adding personnel. Important to work with committee. Board of Selectmen are the policy setters, but important that the position work with the EDC Committee. Hopefully position will develop tax revenue, and work to obtain grants

**Building Maintenance** – up 7.5% to use for audit, pays bills for heat and lights. Won't be able to do any projects. Have to spend major money to fix problems

**Town Report/Annual Audit**, - Town Administrator will create another line item for actuarial review and recommends these funds be taken from Free Cash. J. Stadtler offered to work with the Finance Director on this review.

**MOTION MADE** by R. Knobel, Seconded S. Connell to increase Town Report/Annual Audit Budget by \$17,500 funded from Free Cash, (\$56,500) (10-2-0) (J. Stadtler, S. Rose opposed)

### **Police**

**MOTION MADE** R. Knobel 16,224 for a by Part time clerk, (professional salaries) support police officers, free up police work, Seconded J. Stadtler, (9-3-0) (C.Lane, S. Kelliher, T. Bowen opposed).

Discussion - Members expressed concern with funding this position by cutting street lights and to adding additional staff at this time. Police Department hasn't expanded their staff in 25 years, population has increased 30%. Position is for 18 hours, no benefits and part of a five year plan. Town Administrator spoke to due to difficult economic challenges, he didn't add personnel this year, this will be the only position being added. There are many needs in many departments and he is unsure how this will free up police officers to get out on the streets.

Schools – Gap in funding in the amount of \$134,000 still exists but the School Department is hopeful that they can close this gap.

Snow & Ice – R. Knobel does not like underfunding this budget, budget has been routinely under funded for years.

Street Lighting – Town Administrator anticipating increases on this budget, only way to reduce the budget is to eliminate street lights, traffic control lights are included in this budget.

Recreation – Administration is looking into department being more self sufficient, difficult to increase fees in tight times, they need to do something with the rates, but don't want to force residents out of programs. They are looking into what programs are losing money and need to keep control of costs of personnel. They are going to check what requirements are for lifeguard at a condominium complex. Pools costs are hurting other programs.

Unemployment – reduce this budget by \$16,224 (position in Police Department). Town Administrator is not comfortable with taking this money out due to many unknowns, he is concerned with what is happening at State level. He does not recommend taking the money out of Unemployment for the audit.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Stadtler Seconded by S. Rose to reduce the Unemployment Budget by \$16,224, Motion Approved (11-1-0) (T. Bowen opposed) (12 voting

Town Administrator will update changes and prepare motions for Article 6 and 14.

**MOTION MADE** by S. Connell, J. Stadtler to approve the budgets as amended (\$63,586,986) Motion Approved, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

### **Minutes**

**MOTION MADE** by R. Knobel, Seconded by S. Kelliher to approve the Minutes of February 28, 2008, Motion Approved, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

**MOTION MADE** by R. Knobel, Seconded by S. Kelliher to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 p.m., Motion Approved, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril  
Secretary .

