

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

February 10, 2014

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Monday, February 10, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. in Room #112, Town Hall with the following members present: L. Pitman, D. DiCenso, J. Denneen, M. Iwanowicz, D. Bruce, J. McDermott, J. Lowre, P. Hilton, T. Williams, S. Lawson, D. Crowley and S. Ahmed. Absent were: J. Burke, C. Lane and A. Healy. Also in attendance were Assistant Town Administrator J. Johnson, Finance Director M. Thompson, Town Accountant J. Cuneo, and Fire Chief T. Bailey.

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

May 5, 2014 Spring Annual Town Meeting/Budgets

Animal Control - speaking to this budget was Assistant Town Administrator J. Johnson. Requested amount of \$66,773, Town Administrator is recommending \$65,350, difference is in expense. He explained that the animal control officer had resigned end of December. He did not realize the job was 24/7 and the position is presently being filled by the previous animal control officer J. Spillane. Mr. Spillane has retired and doesn't want the position full time and he will not be available after May 1. Administration is in the process of trying to fill the position and also looking for alternatives for this budget: 1) Regionalizing (this had been attempted before and didn't work out), 2) splitting the position between two people with additional hours for the part time clerk (presently works 15 hours increase to 19 hours with no benefits) This would allow for coverage in the office 3) four part time animal control officers at a salary of \$12,000 with one officer designated as the head officer and 4) keep position as it is presently. Mr. Johnson spoke to the possibility of needing a Reserve Fund Transfer of approximately \$8900 in the future due to overlapping on the salaries. Previous animal control officer had six weeks vacation coming to him and hours overlapped. Town has recently renovated a kennel for the town's use.

Committee members spoke to the job description needs to list the number of hours and a breakdown of how the hours for this position are spent inside and outside of the office.

J. Johnson will be sitting down with the Town Administrator and looking at all the options. Town needs an animal control officer and he would like to stay within the current budget. Only question would be the increase of hours for the clerk.

Rehabilitations and Improvements to Wading Pool and Spraypad

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Mr. Johnson updated the committee on this project referencing letter dated April 18, 2013 from Design RI on a proposal on this project. Town approved at last Spring's Town Meeting \$144,000 by borrowing for this project with the hope that the Town would receive a grant. Town did not get the grant but needs to move forward on it. They are looking for \$4,000 for the design proposal, this was included in the \$144,000. D. Anderson, Superintendent of Buildings will be reviewing of options with this company.

Library Budget Speaking to this budget was Library Director S. Genovese, Trustees Hunt Bergen and D. Wildnauer

Department request is for \$817,895, Town Administrator's recommendation is for \$759,865. Mr. Genovese spoke to increase in hours approved last Fall is working out well, enabling Library to better manage the meeting space, transition of the additional hours went smoothly. Budget is pretty much level funded with the only change is in the electricity line item which is zeroed out and now being charged under the Building Maintenance Budget. This reduces the percentage of budget requirements from the Board of Library Commissions. Library receives State Aid, Trust Funds and other funds along with donations, gifts and money from the Friends and other trusts.

Committee questioned possibly charging for the use of meeting rooms as there is an expense for using rooms. Mr. Genovese spoke to this had never been done before. They try to make rooms available to everyone. Groups do their own set ups and are pretty self sufficient. and library staff is used only on a limited basis. They just need space and don't require help. Most of the rooms are used by the town boards, boy and girl scouts, school pacs and sewing guild.

Permanent Part Time Line Item has been increased from \$305,809 to \$316,489, which reflects the additional part time person hired in January plus other salary adjustments. This is for 10 clerks. Overtime Line Items is for personnel to handle returns after a long weekend and during the summer. These returns need to be checked in prior to the library opening.

Library Construction – Approximately \$900,000 is left in this account.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Library Budget in the amount of \$759,865, Motion Passed (11-1-0) (D. DiCenso opposed) (12 voting)

Trails

\$650 requested, Town Administrator recommending \$650. J. Johnson spoke to this budget. He spoke to the increase in this budget over previous years due to materials for a trail bridge and a kiosk (adjacent to the Town Hall pedestrian bridge) and supplies for

eagle scouts projects. Eagle scouts provide the labor. They received \$8,000 for the sale of lumber from the Town Forest and this goes into the general fund.

MOTION MADE by D. Crowley, seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Trails Budget in the amount of \$650, Motion Passed, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

Historical – Requested amount is \$625, Town Administrator is recommending \$615, difference is in postage. J. Johnson spoke to this budget.

Committee requested a copy of budget turn backs available, it would be beneficial to the discussions, but don't want a precedent set making people use their money and don't want to penalize for good money management.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. McDermott for Favorable Action on the Historical Budget in the amount of \$615, Motion Passed (11-1-0) (D. Bruce opposed) (12 voting)

Celebrations - \$1500 requested, Town Administrator recommends \$1500. J. Johnson spoke to the budget. This money is to pay the contractor for hanging the seasonal lights. Budget is pretty much level funded.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the Celebration's Budget in the amount of \$1500, Motion Passed (11-0-0) (Unanimous) (11 voting) (D. Bruce absent from vote)

Correspondence

Letter dated February 4, 2014 read and noted from the Norfolk County Agricultural High School regarding meeting February 12 on setting 2014-2015 tuition rates

Reserve Fund Transfers – School Department

Speaking to this request was School Committee Chairman N. Gallivan and School Superintendent L. Lynch. Also in attendance was M. Friscia, Business Manager and School Committee Member M. Breen.

Mrs. Gallivan spoke to this request as a beginning conversation on the installation of a wheel chair lift at the Plimpton School, for a medically compromised student. \$39,600 being requested for the Reserve Fund Transfer, School Department will match the Reserve Fund with \$40,000 from Special Education Tuition-ins. School Committee will take a formal vote at their meeting of February 13, 2014, and will come back to the Finance Committee with an official request. They did not know the procedure for the submission of a Reserve Fund Transfer request.

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It was explained that this student has an individual education plan and has seizures and up to this point they were manageable but is increasing to multiple times in the day, student has an aide with him and going up and down the stairs has become an issue and they have to correct the situation. This student originally did not have a wheel chair. They have talked to D. Anderson, Superintendent of Buildings and Town Administrator M. Boynton. It was originally thought that the work could be done for \$30,000. They were before the Committee to answer questions and provide the Committee with any additional information. They wanted to discuss this with the Finance Committee on the sharing of the cost.

Superintendent Lynch spoke to the work has to be done as it is a civil rights violation. Proposal has been submitted to the Town from O'Brien Construction on February 3, 2014 in the amount of \$79,600. If they wait till the Spring Town Meeting, they will be unable to do the work till the summer of 2014. School Department feels that to move the Career & Education Program to the first floor they would be exposed to behavior issues from students in the Bridge Program on the first floor. They are also exploring moving this program to a larger classroom within the high school. They have looked into other means to adapt the stair case but feel the wheel chair lift is the best solution. They will be meeting with the Capital Budget Committee on this and will keep the Finance Committee informed. Project will have to be bid out, issue is timing. School Department has been trying to mitigate special ed issues through their own budget and sometimes don't have a lot of time to react. Building has to be in compliance. They are saving the town \$265,000 with the purchase of additional special ed vans.

Plimpton School houses on the first floor the Bridge Program (behavior, drug and tutoring), Second floor houses Food Service, Production, extended day program, and robotics.

Committee questioned whether the installation of a regular elevator has been discussed before the Capital Budget Committee and what the future of this building is. Problem with special ed students they are always coming into or leaving the system.

J. Johnson spoke to the elevator being in the five year capital plan, with a cost of approximately \$100,000. This project has to be done, and work will begin next week. When they run out of money, they will have to come in to the Finance Committee. School Department encumbers \$340,000 last year and turned back \$33,000 which became Free Cash.

Committee needs a total cost of project, plumbing, electricity, etc.

School Tours

February 14, 2014 at 8:00 a.m., FinCom will tour the Plimpton and time permitting the High School. Tentative dates for additional tours are March 14, March 28 and April 11, 2014.

Finance Committee Schedule

There are no Finance Committee Meetings scheduled for February 17 (Holiday) and February 20, 2014 due to school vacations. Appointments will be rescheduled.

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MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson to approve the Minutes of February 3, 2014, Motion Passed (8-0-4) (J. Lowre, D.Crowley, T. Williams and D. DiCenso abstained) (12 voting)

FinCom Attendance

Chairman Pitman spoke to the need to improve the attendance at the meetings. If you are unable to attend to notify the secretary.

Adjourn:

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m, Motion Passed, Unanimous (12-0-0) (12 voting)

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Clerk