

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

March 26, 2015

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, March 26, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Finance Committee Room, Town Hall with the following members present: J. Burke, J. Denneen, C. Lane, M. Iwanowicz J. McDermott, D. Crowley, A. Ragosta, A. Healy,,D. Bruce, M. Trudell, J. Lowre, A. Walsh, 7:40 p.m. S.Lawson. absent Pat Hinton, T. Williams, Also in attendance was Town Administrator J. Johnson. Fire Chief T. Bailey, Police Chief R. Stillman, Deputy Chief J. Carmichael, Finance Director M. Thompson, Town Accountant J. Cuneo

7:00 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman D. Bruce. Called to order

May 4, 2015 Spring Annual Town Meeting

Library Budget – Speaking to this budget were Library Director S. Genovese, Trustees R. Damish and D. Wildnauer.

Library Updates – Director spoke to they are now open additional hours with the additional funding they received and it is working well. There is a large increase in usage of meetings rooms. When the Town’s population reaches 25,000, they will be required to be open 59 hours, currently they are open 56 hours. Anticipates that it will happen another three years, and they would like to have a plan in place on handling it. Committee questioned whether this was another unfunded mandate. It was explained that if the Town doesn’t comply they will lose a percentage of state aid, and possibly certification. Library would be required to have an additional person, and they would hope it would be a part time, non-benefit position. State aid is based on usage. Usage has stayed strong. There are no issues with the new building, only minor leakage. They have a full time custodian who attempts to fix any problems, then advises the Building Maintenance Department. The DPW has kept the parking and sidewalks clear. They previously had a volunteer from the Senior Tax Program, but don’t have one now. They have kids from the League School that come with supervisors and they offer training to them. No volunteers are allowed behind the desk. Electricity costs are included in the Building Maintenance Budget.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the Library Budget in the amount of \$789,979, Motion Passed (12-0-0) (12 voting) Unanimous

Article 29 – PEG Access and Cable Related Fund

Speaking to this article was the Town Administrator, J. Johnson. Town to adopt MGL, Chapter 44, Section 53F3/4 for the purpose of establishing a separate revenue account to deposit cable license proceeds. DOR has determined that these revenues are fees and are required to be reported in the General Fund. Town has a balance of \$826,862 in the PEG Access Fund and the Town has to adopt this section in order to utilize the cable funds collected or the funds would have to go into the General Fund. They anticipate using the funds to purchase equipment, repurposing of a small section at the High School. Salaries would be included. Report on the account will have to go into the Annual Report Money comes from the assessment on the monthly cable bill. They would provide more community programs, interaction with schools and a local access station. Selectmen would be required to have more oversight. They would not be required to go before Town Meeting. This is just the beginning, article leads to a lot of questions. The adoption of this article is being recommend by the Town's auditors. Agreement is that funds go back to the Community. Intention of the money is to provide quality programs for the Community. This is users money, not taxpayers money. Town Counsel and Auditors want the Town to adopt. Specific agreement would require it to go to programs

7:40 p.m. – Committee Member S. Lawson

S. Lawson spoke to the problems with cable television in the past have been the result of the gross mismanagement over a number of years. Two groups merged, couldn't get anything done due to personalities involved.

D. Bruce spoke to needing additional information and feedback. J. Johnson will provide the committee with the legal opinion, but he is hesitant to release the agreement till it is signed.

Action held on this article till March 30, 2015 meeting.

Article 22 – Police Contract

Chief Stillman spoke to this article – Contract covers the period of July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017. The cost to the Town in the first year of the contract is \$0, FY2016 it is \$90,000 to the Walpole Police Department Budget (actual projected amount is \$85,104), cost for year 3 is projected to be \$89,824, and the final third of the education incentives is projected to cost \$49,768.

Major items are pulling out of civil service, health insurance contribution, education incentive being phased in, and paperless payroll.

With the transitioning from 70/30 to 60/40 with the health insurance contribution the Town will be saving \$2,058.61 for employees who enroll in the family plan and \$783.88

for employees who enroll in the individual plan each year., Town will not be bound by the promotional and hiring requirements of civil service. Chief explained that the last civil service list only received three names. It is a hindrance to hiring people, restricted to only the top three test scores. Officers that came in under civil service will remain in civil service. Grievances are not used under civil service, better to go to arbitration. Town would hire a vendor to do the testing for hiring and promotions. Chief Stillman will speak to the educational benefit at Town Meeting. Officers receive bonuses with associates, bachelors and masters degrees. It does count towards retirement and is received twice a year. It is not used for overtime funds. This is similar to Quinn Bill. Fire Department is not civil service. This allows the Town to choose how the process goes.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on Article 22 in the amount of \$90,000 from Taxation, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Article 23 – Rescind Civil Service

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on Article 23 to rescind Civil Service laws for regular or permanent police force for the Town of Walpole, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Ponds Budget

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the Pond's Budget in the amount of \$1500, Motion Passed, (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Town Administrator's Update

Town Administrator is recommending an additional \$200,000 for the schools, target number is \$39,940,000 and he is waiting receipt of state numbers, by law he is required to present a balanced budget.

Article 22 – Snow and Ice Deficit

Final bills haven't been received. Held

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Recommendation at Town Meeting, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 vote) Unanimous

Capital Budget Articles

Article 13 – Infrastructure Improvements

\$24,360 for minor repairs to the brick work and fire escape. Fire escape will be taken off and work will be done with in house labor. Next year, improvements to Blackburn will be discussed. Improvements to the Fire Department will probably be taken up in the Fall, need to look at costs for repairs until there is a new facility built.

Article 13 – Infrastructure Improvements

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by M. Trudell for Reconsideration of Article 13, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by J. McDermott, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on Article 13 in the amount of \$235,360 from Free Cash, Motion Passed (11-0-2) (J. Lowre, D. Crowley abstained) (13 voting)

Article 14 – Capital Equipment Purchase

Discussion ensued on the purchase of vehicles, Committee members spoke to vehicles are not replaced till needed, Town gets the maximum use for their vehicles. The fleet management system is a good system, if they don't need to be replaced they are not. Fire Department command vehicle has over 40,000 miles. Purchase of an additional motorcycle for the Police Department was discussed, department presently has two, they are requesting an additional one for \$27,000. Deputy Chief Carmichael spoke to the Citizen survey that was done last year and it was recommended that the Police Department have more traffic control, and more visibility, motorcycles work well for this. Bikes can get in places that police vehicles can't, they deal with high crash areas and school zones. They are very effective over a patrol vehicle. Department presently has two trained officers and two that could supplement with third bike. Motorcycle operators write more tickets and life expectancy of bike is five years. Committee questioned the replacement of the unmarked vehicle but it was noted that the Vehicle Maintenance Department is sinking more money into repairs for this vehicle.

Trackless Tractor purchase of two, (\$300,000) was discussed in depth, felt it was important to have purchase the second tractor. Tractors serve many purposes, they are not used exclusively for snow.

MOTION MADE by A. Ragosta, Seconded by J. Burke to remove the \$27,000 for motorcycle, Motion Defeated (2-8-3) (A. Ragosta, J. Burke in favor, C. Lane, J. Lowre and D. Crowley abstained) (2-8-3) (13 voting)

MOTION MADE by A. Ragosta, Seconded by J. Denneen for discussion to remove one of the trackless tractor (\$150,000) Motion Defeated (1-9-2) (A. Ragosta in favor, J. Lowre and D. Crowley abstained) (13 voting)

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by M. Trudell for Reconsideration of Article 14, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by J. McDermott, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on Article 14 in the amount of \$936,640 from Free Cash, Motion Passed (10-1-2) (A. Ragosta opposed, J. Lowre, D. Crowley abstained) (13 voting)

Article 15 – Streets and Sidewalks

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by M. Trudell for Reconsideration of Article 15, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on Article 15 in the amount of \$1,796,887 from Free Cash, Chapter 90 Funds, and SATM 2014 Road Borrowing, Motion Passed (11-0-2) (J. Lowre, D. Crowley abstained) (13 voting)

Adjourn

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson to adjourn at 9:00 p.m., Motion Passed, (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Clerk