

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

October 6, 2016

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, October 6, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room, Walpole Public Library, School Street with the following members present: D. Bruce, K. Guyette, J. Burke, E. Barmakian, T. Bowen, J. Denneen, A. Healy, S. Lawson, J. Leith, R. Mariani, R. Nottebart, P. Stasiukevicius, M. Trudell and J. Vaillancourt. Member missing was P. Hinton. Also in attendance was Town Administrator J. Johnson, Finance Director M. Thompson, Finance Director.

October 17, 2017 Fall Annual Town Meeting

Article 5 – Council on Aging Costs

Discussion

\$5,790,000 for costs of architectural design, constructing, equipping and furnishing a new COA building, including the cost of a project manager and other related costs. Proposed funding is from \$150,000 from Board of Assessors Overlay Account, \$1,590,000 from Free Cash, \$550,000 from Debt Budget, and \$3,500,000 from Borrowing. Proposed borrowing would be for 17 years at \$300,000 for principal and interest. In addition, Friends of Walpole Elders are asked to raise funds and the Town will be applying for a Grant. Town Administrator is confident that we will receive the Community Development Grant and raising the money. It is great to do the building without an Override. Article is only for authorization. Total building cost is 7.4 million

Members expressed concerns with moving forward with a project where we can't count on the money. There are a lot of unknowns. Town Administrator spoke to this article is only for the authorization. Proposed number includes an amount for inflation and other items have been factored in. Due to the Old Town Hall/Police Station not being handicap accessible, it cannot be used presently for a senior center. It would need a lot of renovations.

Members expressed concerns with the senior center not being located downtown vs the proposed location of South Street. It is also being looked into the possible use of the present police station as a community center that would also be available to other departments and the community. Use of this facility could be done in conjunction with the library for meetings, etc. and would be near restaurants, pools, playground and adjacent to the fire station in an emergency.

Old Town Hall is a historical structure and not allowed to do anything to the exterior.

Senior Center project has not yet gone out to bid. When the police and fire station were bid, they came in higher than anticipated. Police Station is smaller at South Street than originally planned.

FinCom comments: Present COA facility has a lot of privacy issues. There is the need to know how many of the senior citizens reside at New Pond. Old Town Hall is a disaster and shouldn't be considered. Many studies have been done and the seniors need their own facility and Town needs to find a way to do it, input is needed from the community and concerns expressed with attempting to do fundraising to fund the building. Town Administrator spoke to if the Town doesn't receive the Grant and the money from fundraising, will have to come back to Town Meeting. He does not feel that the Town will sell the old town hall, it will still have to be maintained. Members spoke to the problem with adding new buildings then maintaining the old one. At the cost of 7.4 million a lot of work could be done to renovate it. If it isn't maintained it falls into disrepair and maintenance costs increase every year, even if the building is mothballed. If we don't sell it, it will have to be used. It becomes an eyesore in the center of town; this should have been addressed previously. Building presently doesn't have the capabilities for a senior center, but you could do a lot of renovations with the money. If renovated it could be a beautiful facility.

FinCom has a tough job, problem with all the numbers. People are in favor of a senior center, but like to see some plans for the old town hall. If recreation goes there, what do we do with Blackburn. Information is before the committee for a senior center and now is the time to act. Selectmen are going to put a committee together to see what options are available for the building. Seniors deserve to have a new building on South Street. Funding renovations for the old town hall is a discussion for another time.

Seniors speaking spoke to the Town spending thousands on an architect to design a building and it is already too small. We are building a facility that is too small. Facility shouldn't be a two story building, should be one floor.

Senior Center should become a source of community pride. Library is the only place available for use for the community. Seniors need dignity later in life. Town needs to finally do it, there is always something else to spend the money on. Anticipated there will be at 299 – 300% increase in usage in a new building.

Residents spoke to the Town hired a professional to assess the buildings, present police station is not logistically going to work. Some spoke to foolhardy to renovate the police station/old town hall, senior population will explode in 20 years. To renovate the building it would cost dearly to bring it up to code. Center should be built now, some spoke to the need to keep the facility on one floor.

FinCom Members spoke to applauding what the Town Administrator has done, present police station not feasible, parking problems. Need is critical now. Interest rates are low, have to trust in the people in charge, present plan is very nice, functional with sufficient space. There is the need to go forward, buildings should have been updated decades ago.

FinCom Members felt it is a struggle with the financial aspect, there are no bids available, only estimates. Town has spent money on the Maguire report, and there is concern with trusting their numbers. Difficult to count on fundraising and receiving Grans. We should have all the money in hand prior to voting. Uneasy with source of funding.

MOTION MADE by M. Trudell, Seconded by S. Lawson for Reconsideration of Article 5, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting)

MOTION MADE by M. Trudell, Seconded by S. Lawson that the Town appropriates \$5,790,000 to pay costs of architectural design and constructing, originally equipping and furnishing a new Council on Aging building, along with any and all work associated with and appurtenance thereto, including the cost of a project manager and other related costs: and that to meet this appropriation the sum of \$150,000 shall be transferred from the Board of Assessors Overlay Account; the sum of \$1,590,000 shall be transferred from Free Cash, the sum of \$550,000 shall be transferred from the Fiscal Year 2017 Debt Budget line item of the FY2017 Operating budget appropriated under Article 6 of the Spring 2016 Annual Town Meeting, and the Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen is authorized to borrow the sum of \$3,500,000 pursuant to MGL Chapter 44, section 7(3) or any other enabling authority and to issue bonds or notes of the Town therefor, and further that the Board of Selectmen shall be authorized to apply for, accept and expend all funds received as gift or state of federal grants associated with the project and to take any other action necessary or convenient to carry out this project. Any premium received by the Town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by the Town for this project, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount. Vote: 7-7-0, (J. Leith, R. Mariani, K. Guyette, R. Nottebart, T. Bowen, E. Barmakian and J. Vaillancourt opposed) (14 voting)

Discussion – Committee enter a discussion that a 7-7-0 vote is a no vote and who has the right to make the vote for reconsideration. Mr. Johnson checked with Town Counsel and the opinion was that anyone can make the vote for reconsideration. Town Administrator will work with Town Counsel on a new motion. Mr. Bruce spoke to only allowing reconsideration with a full committee present at the October 13, 2016 meeting. He would like to see the Committee go to Town Meeting with a vote.

Article 3 – Police Station Building Costs.

Bids received on September 25 and project is \$1,420,000 more than previous funds appropriated (\$9,000,000) This is due to cost of radio communications, security, wiring site contingency funds, computer network and furniture. Requested funding in the amount of \$1,420,000 is from Free Cash.

Committee commented that project is 15% above what the taxpayers approved. Town Administrator spoke to the contingency funds, if not used, would be turned back. He feels this money is needed due to site being a superfund site.

Police Office J. Zanghetti spoke to the radio communications are to update the infrastructure improvements to various sites in town. They benefit the Police Department, but include the costs to move/repair/replace equipment for the Fire, DPW, Emergency Management, Administration and School Departments. One company will build the entire communication system. They will try to move ahead of the project once they receive the money. There were questions on including other departments in this article for their share of the project. Chief Carmichael felt it is necessary to do this as the police is the hub of the town, radio communications are extremely important.

MOTION MADE by D. Bruce, Seconded by S. Lawson for Reconsideration of Article 3, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by R. Mariani, Seconded by S. Lawson that the Town transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$1,420,000 to pay costs of architectural design and constructing, originally equipping and furnishing a new Police Station, along with any and all work and costs incidental and related thereto including costs of project management and other incidental and related costs, as well as demolition of any existing building or structure and other necessary site improvements; and further that the Board of Selectmen shall be authorized to apply for, accept and expend all funds received as gifts or state or federal grants associated with the project and to take any other action necessary or convenient to carry out this project. Any premium received by the Town upon the sale of any bonds or notes approved by the Town for this project, less any such premium applied to the payment of the costs of issuance of such bonds or notes, may be applied to the payment of costs approved by this vote in accordance with Chapter 44, Section 20 of the General Laws, thereby reducing the amount authorized to be borrowed to pay such costs by a like amount, Motion Passed (13-1-0) (J. Vaillancourt in opposition) (14 voting)

Article 4 – Fire Station Costs

Town Administrator spoke to the bids for the fire station have been received and his office is in the processing of reviewing them. Information should be available next Tuesday and Town Administrator will provide it to the Committee

Finance Committee Public Hearing

Public Hearing on the October 17, 2016 Fall Annual Town Meeting articles and budgets is scheduled for Thursday, October 13, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Public Library. P. Stasiukevicius, T. Bowen and E. Barmakian will be unable to attend.

Article 2 – Supplemental Budgets

Committee had previously voted to fund this article in the amount of \$195,000 from Free Cash, funding should be Taxation.

MOTION MADE by M. Trudell, Seconded by J. Burke for Reconsideration of Article 2, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by J. Leith, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on Article 2 in the amount of \$195,000 to be funded from Taxation, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Association of Town Finance Committees Annual Meeting

Annual meeting will be held on Saturday, October 15, 2016 at the Devens Common Center. As the Committee is no longer a member of this association, any member interested in going will have to pay for it themselves to attend. Committee will revisit joining this association next year at budget time.

Minutes

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by R. Nottebart to approve the September 19, 2016 Minutes, Motion Approved (13-0-1) (D. Bruce abstained) (14 voting)

September 12, 2016 – Held

Secondary School Buildings Informational Meeting- October 24, 2016

Joint meeting with the School Committee, Permanent Building Committee, Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee will be held on Monday, October 24, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. with the architect on the secondary school buildings. Location to be decided upon.

Minority Report at Town Meeting

Chairman Bruce requested that if any of the Finance Committee members were going to present a Minority Report at Town Meeting that he be advised prior to the meeting.

Adjourn:

MOTIN MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m., Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril, Clerk