

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

April 3, 2017

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Monday, April 3, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in Room #112, Town Hall with the following members present: D. Bruce, J. Burke, E. Barmakian, T. Bowen, J. Denneen, A. Healy, P. Hinton, S. Lawson, J. Leith, R. Mariani, R. Nottebart, P. Stasiukevicius, M. Trudell, and J. Vaillancourt. Also in attendance was Town Administrator J. Johnson, Finance Director M. Thompson, Town Accountant J. Cuneo, and Fire Chief T. Bailey. Also in attendance was School Superintendent L. Lynch, Assistant Superintendent J. Kenney, School Committee Chairman N. Gallivan, School Committee Members and residents of the community.

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

Election of Finance Committee – Vice Chairman

K. Guyette has stepped down as Vice Chairman and submitted his resignation from the Finance Committee to the Town Moderator T. Brady and Finance Committee Chairman D. Bruce. Vacancy now exists on the Committee and the Moderator is looking to fill the position.

Chairman asked for anyone interested in serving as Vice-Chairman. M. Trudell offered to fill the position.

MOTION MADE by T. Bowen, Seconded by S. Lawson to elect M. Trudell as the Finance Committee Vice-Chairman, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Town Administrator

Town Administrator updated the Budget recommendations as of March 31, 2017. Additional money has become available due to increase in Health Insurance and Tri-County enrollment dropping. Committee had questions on Prison Mitigation monies, This will be Certified Free Cash next year. Town Administrator anticipates receiving it in August.

Reserve Fund

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Reconsideration of the Reserve Fund Budget, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Reserve Fund Budget in the amount of \$267,081, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

DPW Building Maintenance

MOTION MADE by J. Burke, Seconded by S. Lawson for Reconsideration of the Building Maintenance Budget, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by M. Trudell, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on the DPW Building Maintenance Budget in the amount of \$2,113,557, (\$5,000 High School Maintenance, \$5,000 Other Equipment Line Item), Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Police Department

\$10,000 being requested for Overtime for the Police Department. This is supplemental monies for the expenses incurred for the department with the increase in the number of parades, and road race events.

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by M. Trudell for Favorable Action on the Police Department Budget in the amount of \$5,224,508, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Fire Department

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Reconsideration of the Fire Budget, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by M. Trudell, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Fire Department Budget in the amount of \$3,778,943, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Tri-County

MOTION MADE by J. Leith, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on the Tri-County Budget in the amount of \$710,000, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Norfolk County Agricultural School

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on the Norfolk County Agricultural School Budget in the amount of \$46,000, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Employee Fringe Benefits

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on the Employee Fringe Benefits Budget in the amount of \$10,720,888, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Employee Retirement Assessment

This budget had been put on hold due to Committee members having questions on the \$300,000 requested for the OPEB line item. Town Administrator spoke to this is the amount that the Town can afford at this time. Town is not required to put any money aside for it, but it is an unfunded liability facing the Town in the future. Town's Auditors and Bond Counsel are pleased that we are doing this. It helps the Town's ratings. He spoke to making another contribution to OPEB at the Fall Town Meeting if Free Cash is available. Town has been putting money into this account for 8 years.

Town Administrator is looking into increasing the percentage that retirees pay for senior supplements. (presently 50%) This has been brought before the Board of Selectmen, but no decision has been made. This will come before the Board of Selectmen after the election.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Employee Retirement Assessment Budget in the amount of \$4,850,407 (13-0-1) (13 voting) (J. Burke abstained) (14 voting)

School Budget

Discussion was open up on the School Budget. Town Administrator is recommending \$70,000 be placed in the School Budget to reduce the cost of FDK for the School Year 2017-2018. This represents 10% of the overall cost to eliminate the fees charged for this program. This will be revisited next year to determine if the Town can afford additional appropriations. This is a step in the right direction. The \$70,000 will reduce the amount paid now by about \$400. Superintendent Lynch spoke to this being helpful in reducing costs over a period of time, they hope to continue to work with Representatives, Senators and Governor to receive more state aid and be further helpful in their goals. Foundation Budget could be helpful with State Aid. This transition process, could take over ten years to full fund. Any members having questions, mail them to the Superintendent.

Committee members spoke to this being a long time coming and is needed for the 15% that don't have the opportunity to attend. This transition gets costs phased in. Committee had questions on whether the \$400 reduction in tuition will encourage more people to be interested. There are costs savings with more participants and savings in other parts of the program. Walpole charges one of the highest in the State for Full Day Kindergarten. 79% of the communities in the State don't charge for full day kindergarten. Some committee members like it being transitioned. There are many benefits to full day kindergarten. Most people are in favor even if they have to pay. Discussion is needed on what we can and can't afford. This is also represents an alternative to day care. What are

the actual costs and associated costs with ½ day kindergarten It is difficult to understand the true costs. School Superintendent spoke to children need all types of services and a lot of costs go into it.

Chairman Bruce will ask the Moderator to write a letter to the members of the State Legislature regarding the Foundation Budget and to speak to it at Town Meeting.

Full Day Kindergarten began with private schools offering it, then the Towns began to offer it with a tuition charge. Town started a pilot group. Special needs students are mixed in. These students are not charged for it.

MOTION MADE by J. Vaillancourt, Seconded by P. Hinton to move the question, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by J. Vaillancourt, Seconded by P. Hinton for Favorable Action on the WPS School Budget in the amount of 42,696,773, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

FY2018 Budgets

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by P. Hinton for Favorable Action on the FY2018 Department Budgets, in the amount of \$86,195,419, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Break out and funding of the budgets will be done prior to Town Meeting.

Articles

Article 5 – Water Enterprise Fund

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Reconsideration of Article 5, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) (Unanimous)

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on Article 5, in the amount of \$6,549,715, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Article 6 – Sewer Enterprise Fund

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by J. Denneen for Reconsiderations of Article 6, Sewer Enterprise Fund, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by J. Burke for Favorable Action on Article 6 in the amount of \$5,482,297, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Articles 7 – 11- Union Contracts

Town Administrator spoke to two of the contracts are pending, two are pending and he does not feel that one of the contracts will be ready for Town Meeting. An updates would have to be provided in an Executive Session. Summary of the contracts has to be presented to the Representative Town Meeting Members seven days prior to a vote. Unions are aware of a cut off date.

MOTION MADE by T. Bowen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Recommendation at Town Meeting on Articles 7 – 11, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Article 31 – Special Conditions

Planning Board's Public Hearing is scheduled for April 6, 2017 and should vote at that time.

MOTION MADE by T. Bowen, Seconded by M. Trudell for Recommendation at Town Meeting on Article 31, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Article 32 – Walking Easement

Conservation Commission voted 6-0-0 in favor of abandoning the easement as it was felt it does not hold a purpose nor is connected to the Town's trail system. There was some question whether this was part of the Planning Board's decision and whether it would need to be released by the Planning Board. What conditions, if any, were on the decision.

Town Administrator will check with Town Counsel on this. R. Nottebart will check this out with the Planning Board.

MOTION MADE by T. Bowen, Seconded by P. Hinton for Recommendation at Town Meeting, Motion Passed, (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Appreciation

J. Leith extended his appreciation to the Chairman for the job he has done in conducting the meetings.

Adjourn:

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson to adjourn the meeting at 8:15, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Clerk