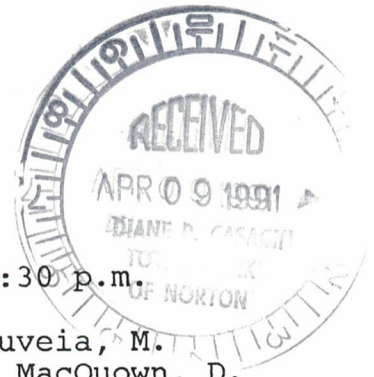


FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
February 4, 1991



The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Present: M. Brown, J. Desrochers, K. Eagan, W. Gouveia, M. Hackett, E. Hamilton, P. Helmreich, B. Kimball, C. MacQuown, D. Ward

Others Present: S. Lombard, Town Manager; MacDonald, O'Leary, Superintendent, P. Cheranska, Business Manager, Southeast Regional School; Ms. Myers, Chair, Norton School Committee, M. Splaine, Superintendent

P. Helmreich read into record letter from Committee commending D. Scott and thanking her for her many years of valuable service to the Committee.

P. Helmreich discussed tonight's hearing from 3 major groups regarding their draft budgets. He emphasized this is a first round, bare bones, draft budget from Town Manager and Norton School Committee--minimum needed to run the Town.

B. Kimball moved that minutes of December 3, 1990 meeting be accepted. D. Ward seconded. Unanimous

S.E. Regional Budget

O'Leary presented handout of draft budget and discussed costs and revenues. Anticipated cost of \$800,00 at 7 1/2% on principal for 5-year bond.

P. Cheranska discussed where revenues come from, state aid, and bond issue.

O'Leary continued to discuss budget stating that 6 of 9 communities are needed to pass S.E. Regional budget. Discussed breakdown of level funding (increases and decreases), replacement of buses, why assessments are up and down. Noted that it costs about \$550 per student to attend S.E. Regional and that this cost is low in comparison to other regional schools.

Discussion followed. Committee asked questions regarding where state aid is coming from, what year of contract S.E. is in, how many Norton students are denied admission, guidance salary increase.

K. Eagan noted that Norton's assessment increased 11% and asked for clarification.

O'Leary, in response to questions from Committee noted that nine communities are needed to pass bond issue and the cost to Norton

for the bond issue is \$12, 459.

Town Manager

P. Helmreich next called on Steve Lombard to discuss Town of Norton draft budget.

S. Lombard noted that Blue Cross/Blue Shield is \$135,000 short. Total revenue available for Fy '91-92 is approximately \$16,799,310 or \$16,920, 949 depending on how Blue Cross/Blue Shield shortfall is funded.

S. Lombard next discussed the following budget assumptions: Tax Levy, \$9,329,000 or 2 1/2% higher than tax levy of '90-91. Added growth, \$191,564. Local receipts estimated at \$1,600,000, down approximately \$70,000 from last year--needed \$375,000 last year to balance the budget--\$660,890 left; State aid level funded, \$5,441,992. Lombard noted that Governor Weld wants to decrease State aid by 10% this year. Hicks Fund, \$40,000, Dog Fund, \$10,000, and Ambulance receipts, \$17,700. State and local charges level funded to last year, \$166,599. FY '91 budget appropriated in May of 1990, \$18,005,651. FY'92 revenues = \$16.9M approximately; shortfall of \$1,084,000.

S. Lombard noted that the Town and School will share equally the shortfall. He also noted that the Town is \$1,865,000 over budget.

S. Lombard stated that the Town needs override for rubbish budget and an additional \$200,000 for compensation due to possible layoffs. Stated that he will ask the Selectmen to put on the ballot at a Special Town Meeting an override of 2 1/2 for rubbish collection and an override question for debt exclusion.

Discussion followed on debt exclusion, budget cuts, override implications, and why Town is where it is today.

P. Helmreich next turned floor over to Ms. Myers, Chairman of the School Committee.

Ms. Myers reiterated to Committee that this is a first draft budget, trying to keep as minimal as possible while keeping services.

Ms. Myers pointed out to Committee that draft budget proposes \$10,112,273 spent for the operating budget, an increase of \$488,631 over FY '91, a 5% increase. She stated that budget provides for no new programs and no new personnel. Salary increases, \$416,714 or 85% of 1991 recommended increase. Special needs tuition increase, \$65,600. She noted that salary and special needs tuition are the only increases recommended for FY '92.

Ms. Myers stated that remainder of school budget is 0 increase. She also noted where costs are fixed--transportation, salaries, utilities, tuition, and contract services.

Discussion followed on teacher salaries and contracts, insurance costs, transportation costs.

P. Helmreich thanked Ms. Myers and stated that Committee will discuss budget more collectively and get back to her on March 18 for another go around.

S. Lombard next discussed in detail further breakdown of draft Town budget handout for Fy '91-92.

Further questions followed on Town Manager's budget regarding budget override and Special Town Meeting for Blue Cross/Blue Shield shortfall.

Other Business

P. Helmreich noted that Committee needs to decide how they want to proceed--what the starting point is--in discussing Town and School draft budgets. He stated that Committee needs agreement early on in order to give early input to the three groups.

Committee agreed to discuss Town of Norton school budget on Wednesday, February 6.

P. Helmreich noted that the Committee received a letter from the Building Inspector requesting to come before the Committee to discuss his budget.

Committee agreed that P. Helmreich should send letter to all department heads notifying them of the opportunity to come before Committee to discuss their budget.

P. Helmreich next discussed the health insurance costs issue. B. Kimball motioned, M. Brown seconded, and J. Desrochers, K. Eagan, W. Gouveia, M. Hackett, E. Hamilton, P. Helmreich, C. MacQuown, and D. Ward VOTED:

That Chair of Committee find proper wording to put an article on a warrant at the next Town Meeting to authorize State Representative Travis to file some remedy to lower cost of health insurance to the Town.

B. Kimball reminded the Chair that it had been previously agreed that the Finance Committee should sponsor an article on Town Meeting warrant that all proposed capital expenditures in excess of \$5,000 must be sent to the Capital Improvements Committee for review.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:30 p.m.