

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
May 1, 1991

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

Others Present: Police Chief Benton Keene, Steve Lombard, Leonard Silvia, and Howard Baker

H. Baker informed the Committee that the Communications Department is withdrawing their request of \$2,277.25 from the Finance Committee Reserve Fund.

Tonight's agenda: review of the Special Town Meeting Articles.

Article 3

Chief Keene discussed the necessity for purchasing automatic pistols for the Police Department and his suggestions for funding the costs of the new weapons. Discussion followed on refurbishing the old weapons and whether or not new weapons were really necessary at this time.

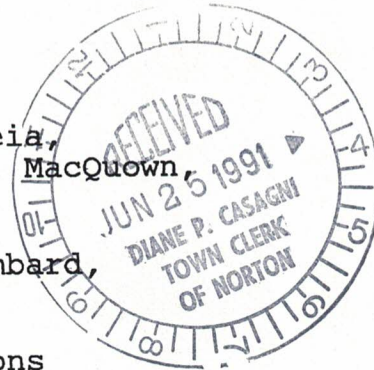
Next, Paul Helmreich called on the Town Manager for his comments on the Special Town Meeting Articles.

S. Lombard stated that he received an alert from the Federal Government noting that FICA taxes on employees not covered by the pension plan may require the Town to pay not only retirement to the county but the Town may also have to pay FICA on the whole salary. He noted that any person earning \$200 is eligible for retirement and that all those years put in will count.

Next, S. Lombard thanked the Committee for recognizing the need for support in the Selectmen's Office by replacing the Grants Compliance Officer position. He went on to describe Anne Shoemaker's responsibilities and the value she brings to that position.

S. Lombard next discussed the Plain Street Project and the Chapter 90 Account. Regarding the Plain Street Project, he stated that the Town has to put up \$5,000 to cover the 25% not covered by Chapter 90. S. Lombard said that the State would probably put back 75% but 25% has to be matched by the Town. P. Helmreich noted that there needs to be an appropriation of \$5,000 for the Plain Street Project.

S. Lombard next discussed the Solid Waste Article on the Warrant (Article 5). He said he does not recommend this article because there is no funding and it is too costly. The cost would be \$200-\$300 to dispose of the materials and \$200-\$300 for the bins to collect the materials. Regarding rubbish collection, he said that presently he is speaking to the contractor to work something



out to give the residents of the Town the best possible price and would ask the contractor about the possibility of recycling certain materials.

Regarding a request for information from the Committee concerning the grading of two firefighter positions, P. Helmreich noted that with restructuring in the Fire Department, two firefighters were promoted to Lieutenant and there is now no Deputy Chief. The salaries for both firefighters were level funded for next year. Questions and discussion followed about contract negotiations and the grading system in the Fire Department.

S. Lombard next reviewed the following articles:

Article 1

S. Lombard noted that \$112,574 is needed to finish the rest of this year's payments to Blue Cross/Blue Shield. He is recommending transfers from the following accounts to cover this amount:

Permanent Debt Account	\$ 57,977.78
Snow Removal Account	\$ 19,500.00
Rubbish Salaries Account	\$ 5,000.00
Rubbish Expense Account	\$ <u>30,122.22</u>
 TOTAL	 \$112,600.00

Article 2 (Water/Sewer Department)

S. Lombard said that he did not know why the \$5,000 for overtime is not coming from contractors.

Article 3 (Police Department)

S. Lombard said he and the Selectmen are in favor of this article.

P. Helmreich thanked Mr. Lombard for coming before the Committee. He then called on Mr. Silvia to discuss the Council on Aging.

Mr. Silvia discussed GATRA payments to the Town and suggested that the funds to pay the driver be put back into the budget and return to the system of the Town paying up front and GATRA reimbursing the Town. He said that under the new system, the driver would be paid directly from GATRA and by going to Taunton would lose her vacation pay as well as her benefits provided by the Town of Norton.

P. Helmreich thanked Mr. Silvia for coming before the Committee.

P. Helmreich next requested the Committee's lawyer, Bob Nugent, to draft a letter to the Town's lawyer concerning the agreement







just announced between the Board of Selectmen and the Police Chief regarding deferred payment of the first year's benefits contract. He stated that his concern is that the new contract only becomes valid with ratification by vote at the Town Meeting. Since there is no money involved this year, except for level funding, does the contract become valid by deferring payments, or does it become valid only when the Town votes for the first year of the salary contract--which this year the Committee requested be level funded. For example, by deferring the first year, does the contract become valid before the salary figure even comes before the Town Meeting floor? Could this set a precedent which could affect other salaries?

A motion was moved, seconded and voted to have Bob Nugent draft a letter to Town counsel for clarification of the deferment for the first year of the Police Chief's benefits contract. In favor: unanimous

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:00 p.m.