



TOWN OF NORTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

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MAR 12 1996

NORTON TOWN CLERK

Minutes of the Meeting March 4, 1996

CALL TO ORDER: 7:30 p.m. by Chair, Michael Fiore.

Roll Call: Michael Fiore, Chair; Michael Thomas, Vice-Chair; James Barrett, Thomas Deluca, Jackie Desrochers, Cornelius Linehan (7:40 p.m.), Christine Meyer (7:42 p.m.), Jack Nicolas, Jonathan Rowe, and Donna Summerfield. **Absent:** Paul Helmreich.

MINUTES

Nicolas made a motion to approve the Minutes of February 5, 1996 with correction. Seconded by Thomas. Under "special town meeting warrant" there is a typo stating "the selectmen many change" instead of "may change". Vote with correction: unanimous.

Nicolas made a motion to approve the Minutes of February 21, 1996, with correction. Seconded by Desrochers. Page 2 - "Nicolas made a motion" not "mad a motion". Vote with correction: there were not enough members present at the time to approve the minutes. Nicolas withdrew his motion. Tabled until March 11, 1996. (These minutes should have been dated February 26, 1996).

NEW BUSINESS

Special Town Meeting Warrant

Article 2: approximate cost will be \$5,000. There is money in the highway budget to fund this purchase.

Articles 3&4: The water and sewer department want to leave these articles on but the selectmen will not be supporting them.

Article 5: Lindberg hopes to have a preliminary number as of Wednesday, March 13, 1996. The chairman requested a letter be sent to the collector/treasurer inviting her to come before the board and explain her ideas for borrowing money to fund upcoming town projects. The town manager described how the State works their reimbursement programs for school construction projects.

Nicolas made a motion to take Article 2 off-the-table; seconded by Deluca. Vote: unanimous. Nicolas made a motion to accept Article 2 and that the sum of money not to exceed \$7,500; seconded by Deluca. Nicolas amended his motion to have no number attached. Seconded by Linehan. Nicolas removed his motion, Deluca removed his second. Linehan made a motion, seconded by Desrochers to TABLE Article 2 until they can get a dollar figure. Vote: 9 in favor and 1 opposed (Nicolas).

The chairman requested to have the water/sewer department come to the next meeting and explain their motivations for Articles 3 & 4.

Nicolas made a motion, seconded by Linehan, to take Articles 3 & 4 off-the-table. Vote: unanimous. Some of the committee members feel this special meeting is for the school and for items that need immediate action. Nicolas made a motion to accept Article 3. The water/sewer department wants to get a standard monitoring system installed in the new (Barrowsville fire station) facility. The committee discussed whether these two articles should be on the special warrant. Nicolas withdrew his motion. Thomas made a motion to TABLE Articles 3 & 4 until such time that they hear the water/sewer departments explanation for their articles. Seconded by Nicolas. Vote: 9 in favor and 1 opposed (Nicolas).

Town Manager's Budget for FY '97

The town manager gave a brief overview of each department request.

Selectmen: secretary's salary increase of 5%.

Town Manager: includes a \$120 increase in expenses to cover car telephone costs; salary line is up \$4,000 for the 1 1/2 people in his office - this includes a 5% increase for each person and a 5% increase for the town manager.

Accounting Department: change in salary is two-fold (2 salary increases and a position upgrade) - the town accountant is getting a 5% increase in salary and the account clerk is getting a position upgrade to senior account clerk. The assistant town accountant is included for a 5% increase in salary as well. Under expenses is an increase for outside training.

Assessor: the increase is for proposed outside revaluation services. ACON Appraisal Consultants of New England is the company we are currently using and we use their software as well.

Treasurer/Collector: there is a difference in the way the bank is charging us for banking services. We think it will bring our costs down.

Legal Services: They are charging a \$50,000 flat fee - all services inclusive. We do not have any other cases using separate counsel at this time. We would still need to add appx. \$7,000-8,000

additional to keep statutes updated, and for arbitrations etc. We do not call in counsel for labor negotiations per course unless the unions are bringing in counsel.

Data Processing: still waiting for a number on that but represents an increase in expense for new features they have been added to the financial accounting system as well as licensing fees and supplies and maintenance.

Planning Board: they have flat lined salary but are adding \$1,500 to expense side for the hiring of a recording secretary. The town planner is in the A union.

Police Department: they have put in funding for a new position; annualize funds for another position and reflects a pay raise. There is a substantial increase in the overtime in the police department budget.

Fire Department: they get a pay increase this year. Lindberg does not recommend the chief's funding for 4 half-year positions to make the equivalent of 1 new body to open the Chartley fire station. The ventilation system will come under capital improvements.

School: based on the Governor's budget proposal, the school budget will probably come in around \$12,339,000.

Inspection Department: under expenses - mileage reimbursement increase and a small item for customized software, also membership costs for certification.

Sealer of Weights and Measures: this budget has gone up considerably. There is approximately four weeks worth of work now that the town owns weights and can do our own inspections. The sealer keeps a list of turnover. Nicolas suggested the sealer come before the board to make a presentation.

Rubbish: Spending will be less than appropriation but revenue will be less also. They have had about 400 new customers join the program but this still leaves them far short of the break even number needed. Increasing the fixed fee side has been discussed at length by the solid waste advisory committee.

Sanitary Landfill: the department request includes two different items -- landfill closure testing money (\$2,000 is not enough) because there are a lot of things that need to get done that haven't been done in order to get the grant money. The DEP has suggested we test for gas migration under the ground. They think there may be some migrating going on- this is not a threat to anyone's health or a safety risk. The testing would cost \$8,500. This testing does not have to be done in order to apply for our grant funds so the town manager suggests we think about doing this after we have our grant money tucked away.

Library: there is a 15% increase in their budget. The budget does not reflect any new State mandates although it does contemplate a full time position and a substantial adjustment to an employee's salary because she has 2 master's degrees and is paid below market value.

Sewer: the town manager explained our situation with Mansfield and our agreement with them for use of their water treatment plant. We are in long term negotiations with them because they want us to pay a greater amount of money than we have been paying in the past.

Human Services: this budget includes a secretarial assistant for the human resources director at 25-30 hours per week.

Memorial and Vets: this budget has increased by \$500. The committee would like to have them come to a meeting to discuss their request.

Public Health Nurse: the cost of inoculations has increased, also, there is an anticipated raise in salary for the nurse.

NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA

Monday, March 11, 1996

- Water/Sewer Department
- Sealer of Weights and Measures
- Possible Veterans and SWAC

ADJOURNMENT

Thomas made a motion, seconded by Barrett, to adjourn. Vote: unanimous. Meeting adjourned at appx. 10:30 p.m.

Patricia C. Mello

Patricia C. Mello
Recording Secretary