

**TOWN OF NORTON
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Meeting
February 25, 2002

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NORTON TOWN CLERK

CALL TO ORDER: 7:30 p.m. by Chair, Paul Helmreich

Present: Donald Brown, Jacqueline Desrochers, Michael Fiore, William Gouveia, Paul Helmreich, John Luti, Sr., Donna Summerfield, Michael Thomas, and Philip Zawasky.

MINUTES

There were no minutes to review.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mr. Helmreich welcomed the two newest members to the Board, Messrs. Luti and Zawasky.

It was noted the main business of this meeting would be to review revenues and try to schedule a meeting with the School Committee quickly.

It was discussed there is a need to appoint someone to the Capital Improvements Committee and interest has been noted from Mr. Brown. Mr. Luti stated he would be interested also. Both names were in nomination and after voting it was voted Mr. Brown would be the new member on the Capital Improvements Committee (Vote: 6-3).

FY03 BUDGET SUMMARY

Mr. McCabe summarized information given to Committee. Some of the information he explained was as follows:

Tax Levy-\$175,000 additional levy capacity and Local Receipts with level-funding with exception of a self-help grant. He said this category of revenue is down and this will be fine-tuned.

Mr. McCabe said free-cash shows zero (deficit). He said school building assistance money not yet received and Governor has been invited to meet with Board of Selectmen regarding this issue.

The Hicks Fund is steady with no change.

Ambulance receipts - somewhat conservative over past couple of years. \$500,000 revenue approaching in this fund during next year.

Overlay Surplus: Mr. McCabe said the Assessors were asked to tell us what will be surplus; probably about \$75,000.

Cherry Sheet on state aid figure playing a dominant role. He said the Chairman of the House Ways and Means told Mr. McCabe to not rely on Governor's projection but prepare for a 10% cut.

Mr. Helmreich spoke of free cash and said if no free cash then nothing to use in May; possibly free cash in October. There is no money to replenish capital improvements.

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Mr. Fiore asked about reimbursement for veteran's benefits. Mr. McCabe responded there were problems with 75% shown on Cherry Sheet; not submitted on time by Veteran's Agent—in range of \$80,000. Mr. McCabe said he believed Norton is owed about \$38,000 more (cumulative over four years) and he is currently pursuing this from State.

Mr. Gouveia said he could not imagine this would be level-funded. Mr. Helmreich said he thought Cherry Sheet would be level-funded and said one of main reasons is it is an election year. Mr. Helmreich said if Cherry Street arrives in June they would try to put a budget together then. Mr. Gouveia said Rep. Lepper said a contingency plan may be needed. Discussion ensued.

Mr. McCabe said he could not comment on school budget yet; put possibly he could the end of March. Budget up about \$890,000.

Mr. McCabe spoke of Health Benefits and a three-tier pharmacy plan and to increase self-insurance pool to reduce by four percentage points, saving about \$70,000.

Mr. Fiore said he would rather cut more now. He reviewed last year's budget and said \$7M is budget they can control out of \$34M budget from last year's budget.

Mr. McCabe said he made as many cuts as possible without cutting personnel. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Helmreich reiterated it would be necessary to meet with the School Committee as soon as possible.

Discussion ensued on school budget and Cherry Sheet.

Mr. Fiore suggested for this year it would be wise to hold-off on voting on entire budget. Mr. Helmreich stated they may need to review accounts 2-3 times this year as data arrives in.

Mr. Gouveia suggested that possibly Rep. Copolla could come in and Committee could get a feel from him on how things are going and other matter is to meet with School Committee regarding concern with budget.

Mr. Helmreich said by April they will have a better idea on school funding. His recommendation was to: 1) meet with School Committee and 2) start talking about each item with Mr. McCabe. Mr. Helmreich said they could try to arrange to have School Committee meet with them this Wednesday evening or next Wednesday evening. The Committee agreed they could meet at the School Committee's venue or their own.

Mr. McCabe noted a typo on balance on capital improvements - it should read \$1.6M balance.

RECESS

At 8:37 p.m. a short recess was called. Meeting reconvened at 8:47 p.m.

FY03 BUDGET ITEMS DISCUSSED:

Mr. Helmreich wanted to reiterate this was only the "first-round" at looking at these items.

MODERATOR

MOTION was made by Ms. Summerfield to change "Moderator and Other Charges" to zero. Second by Mr. Fiore. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

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SELECTMEN

Mr. McCabe spoke of giving his office administrator a 3% pay raise to bring her to \$31,817. He will move Planning Board dept. secretary as of July between Planning Board and Board of Selectmen to assist with the considerable amount of paperwork the Board of Selectmen's office generates. Half her salary is in Selectmen's budget and half in Planning Board's budget.

Mr. McCabe said he eliminated substitute secretary as it did not work out (no one applied and then the hiring freeze took place).

Mr. McCabe said he included a 3% raise for the Board of Selectmen recording secretary.

Mr. Helmreich suggested to Committee at this moment they budget zero for these people to put all on same playing field.

MOTION was made by Mr. Fiore to level-fund office administrator and recording secretary and increase longevity and include new part-time person (\$47,119). Second by Ms. Summerfield. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

SELECTMEN (Expenses)

Several Committee members suggested not all Board of Selectmen members need to attend conferences.

MOTION was made by Mr. Gouveia to approve the sum of \$6,975 for "other charges". Second by Mr. Fiore. Vote: Unanimous, except for Mr. Luti who abstained. MOTION CARRIES.

TOWN MANAGER

Mr. McCabe said he added a 3% increase to his Assistant for a salary of \$37,500.

MOTION WAS MADE BY Ms. Summerfield to approve the Town Manager's Salary account of \$120,725. Second by Mr. Thomas. Vote: Unanimous, except for Mr. Brown abstaining. MOTION CARRIES.

TOWN MANAGER (expenses)

MOTION was made by Mr. Gouveia to approve the Town Manager's expenses in the amount of \$8,120 reducing Jackson property and seminars (total \$128,845). Second by Mr. Thomas. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

MOTION was made by Mr. Thomas for clerical rate to revert back to \$10.92 per hour and rescind previous vote. Second by Mr. Fiore. Vote: Unanimous, except for Mr. Luti who abstained. MOTION CARRIES.

FINANCE COMMITTEE (expenses)

MOTION was made by Mr. Thomas to approve the amount of \$3,065. Second by Mr. Fiore. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

RESERVE FUND

MOTION was made by Mr. Fiore to make amount \$100,000. Second by Ms. Summerfield. Discussion ensued. Discussion ensued. No action was taken on this Motion as Mr. Fiore withdrew his Motion.

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MOTION was made by Mr. Thomas to make amount \$150,000 for the Reserve Fund. Second by Mr. Fiore. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

ACCOUNTING

Mr. McCabe asked if this item could be held until Wednesday evening's meeting.

ASSESSORS

MOTION was made by Mr. Thomas to approve personal services in the amount of \$103,652. Second by Mr. Fiore.

Discussion: Mr. Helmreich noted there was a typo on page 30. Mr. McCabe stated this should read \$103,652; not \$102,652.

Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

Mr. Brown noted pages 29 and 30 numbers do not match. Mr. McCabe stated this amount should be \$18,300.

ASSESSORS (Expenses)

MOTION was made by Mr. Gouveia that the Committee recommend \$14,300 for Assessors expenses to eliminate laptop and reduce \$3500 to \$1500.

Discussion: Mr. Thomas made a "Friendly Amendment" to amend this amount to \$14,100 based on level-funding. Mr. Gouveia accepted this as a "Friendly Amendment" (to \$14,100). Total for \$117,752.00

Second by Ms. Summerfield. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

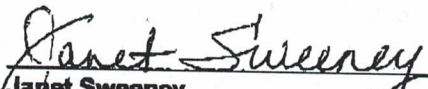
NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, February 27, 2002, at 7:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION was made by Mr. Fiore to adjourn at 10:00 p.m. Second by Thomas. Vote: Unanimous. MOTION CARRIES.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Janet Sweeney

Substitute Recording Secretary for the Finance Committee