

**Finance Committee Meeting
September 10, 2007
Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room**

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NORTON TOWN CLERK

Present: Chairman, Lee Tarantino; Vice-Chair, Michael Thomas; Thomas DeLuca; Jackie Desrochers; Wayne Graf; Paul Helmreich; Philip Zawasky; Town Manager, James Purcell.

Absent: Pasquale Barletta, Robert Bouchard

Call to Order

Meeting was called to Order at 7:35 pm.

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to approve the July 11, 2007 Finance Committee minutes as written. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to approve the August 29, 2007 Finance Committee minutes as written. Second by Mr. Zawasky with the request that the spelling of his name be corrected. With that correction, vote: all in favor, with Mr. Tarantino and Mr. Zawasky abstaining. **Motion carries.**

II. Reorganization of Finance Committee Positions

Motion made by Mr. Thomas to nominate Mr. Tarantino for the position of Chairman of the Finance Committee. Second by Mr. Zawasky. **Motion carries.** Without any further nominations, **Motion** was made by Mr. Thomas to close nominations. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries. Mr. Helmreich called for a vote to appoint Mr. Tarantino as Chairman of the Norton Finance Committee. Vote: Unanimous.**

Motion made by Mr. Tarantino to nominate Mr. Thomas for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee. Second by Mr. Graf. **Motion carries.** Without any further nominations, **Motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to close nominations. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries. Mr. Helmreich called for a vote to appoint Mr. Thomas as Vice-Chairman of the Norton Finance Committee. Vote: Unanimous.**

III. Old Business

A. Yelle School -

Mr. Purcell said that there is a need for an additional \$52K, over the \$75K already transferred, to complete the Yelle school repairs. Dr. Ansay, Superintendent of Schools, sent an email explaining how the \$52K will be covered. \$30K will come from the balance of the 2003 Capital Improvement monies; there will be a \$10K credit given by the contractor because they are responsible for the problems that were caused by the asbestos being released; and the remaining \$12K will come from the Schools Facilities Rental Account.

Mr. Purcell said that whether the Debt Exclusion vote passes or not, the 2009 operating budget will be a challenge.

B. Bonds -

Mr. Purcell said that the bonds will be offered for sale on September 19th, the day after the Debt Exclusion vote. The vote will have an impact on the town's rating. There is \$5,850,000 that will be offered in bonds. Mr. Purcell said he recently had an hour-long conference call with Standard & Poors and they skipped a lot of the standard questions because they know from past experience that Norton pays close attention to detail regarding the finances of the town. This is one of the measures on a communities bond rating.

IV. New Business

1. Motion made by Mr. DeLuca to transfer \$1,538 from the Reserve Account to the Elections/Selectmen Account to pay for postage, supplies, and clerical services. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Mr. Helmreich pointed out that the cost for holding the election will be a separate transfer request.

2. Mr. Tarantino said that the \$226.00 annual Finance Committee association dues are coming due.

Motion made by Mr. DeLuca to approve funding for the dues. Second by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion Carries.**

Mr. Purcell said that the Town Manager's office will make a voucher for this.

3. Motion made by Mr. Thomas to allow the Chair and Vice-Chair of the FinCom to sign and pay bills and payroll. Second by Ms. Desrochers. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

4. Mr. Tarantino received a letter from the YMCA regarding the Tri-centennial celebration to be held in 2011. The letter was requesting volunteers, but was unclear as to whether specifically a FinCom representative was wanted, or simply a town offices representative. Mr. Tarantino will call the YMCA to find out more information and will discuss this at the next FinCom meeting.

5. Mr. Purcell said that the Treasurer/Collector's office received a letter from Massachusetts School Buildings stating that Norton missed an opportunity to get reimbursed for a limited category of legal fees for prior grant projects. The deadline was June 19th to apply, and the State received no response, so no claim can be made. Mr. Purcell said that there is nothing showing that the office received the April 20th letter, only the June 22nd letter stating that the town can no longer make a claim. However, Mr. Purcell said that the legal fees for the Middle School project were reimbursed almost in their entirety.

This possible reimbursement the letter was referring to was for the \$8,819 in legal fees that incurred after the last day of the fourth year of the project, 78% of which was eligible for reimbursement, therefore making this a \$6,878 item.

Mr. Purcell assured the Finance Committee that no one ever received a letter of notification.

V. Town Warrant Articles, as reported by Mr. Purcell, Town Manager

Mr. Purcell stated that the first draft of the warrant was completed today; therefore he does not have a copy for everyone tonight.

Article 1 – This article is regarding a couple of small, unpaid bills.

Article 2 – Capital Improvements – The highway department has made a request for a brush hog, which is a \$110K item. This is not affordable as a cash or borrow transaction, but possibly as a lease purchase.

The Fire Department is requesting an air compressor to fill air packs. The present one is not performing well at all and is requiring more electricity, which is an expense, to fill the packs.

There are also four Fire Department vehicles being retired that will not pass inspection. Funding is requested to replace these vehicles.

Article 3 – Operating Budget Supplements – Mr. Purcell suggested having an Executive session to discuss manpower in the Communications Department. He said it would be a discussion of the Deployment of Public Safety personnel.

Article 4 – Yelle School Repairs – This article is regarding transferring \$75K back in to the Reserve fund.

Article 5 – Completion of CWRMP – This is a request from the Water Department to complete the town's mandated Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan. The funding source of this is the Water Surplus account. The amount is yet to be determined.

Article 6 – Transfer Shpack/ALI Funds for Trains – There are 2 articles with cash balances that can be used – one has a balance of approx. \$14K, and the other \$30K. The \$14K should be enough for Shpack and can be left as is. It is felt that the \$30K is not needed for ALI and therefore is being requested that it be transferred to a stand-alone Train fund.

Article 7 – This article may be removed from the warrant. Mr. Purcell stated that it is more appropriate for the annual town meeting in the spring. The article is regarding setting up a Detail Account for paying personnel from the Fire and Police departments, a few times a year, for details. The details would cover such occasions as the TPC and major functions at Wheaton College.

Articles 8 and 9 – A request to transfer \$40K from the Reservoir Dredging Project to the Lake Winnecunnet Project for weed management. Mr. Purcell stated that the cost to excavate the material from the bottom of the reservoir is more costly than the value of the material.

Article 10 – Discontinue portion of Maple Street – Mr. Purcell said that this article might not be ready for this Town Meeting. Mr. Purcell stated that the planning work of this project is done, but legal work is not. This is a request to abandon and discontinue as a public right of way, the portion of Maple Street from South Shore Mill Works to its end point.

Mr. Tarantino asked if it is possible to sell the Maple St. property.

Mr. Purcell said that the town does not have the title to the property; it's just a right of way.

Article 11 – By-Law Amendment: Fiscal Town Report – Mr. Purcell said that it is not possible to have the Town Report ready 60 or 90 days after the close of the fiscal year. He said this is largely attributable to volunteer groups. If the report is to be accurate, it takes longer than what the bylaws call for, therefore it is being requested that the time period be extended.

Article 12 – New By-Law: Illicit discharges to the municipal storm drain system – Mr. Purcell said that the Storm Water Management bylaws are very complex and haven't had the benefit of a lot of public discussion. Mr. Purcell said with this on the warrant it may start discussion and then may be additional studies and some action this spring.

Mr. Purcell said that in upcoming meetings he would be discussing a fairly radical proposal for health insurance. He will be requesting quotes from medical insurance companies. Mr. Purcell plans to start discussions on this matter after Town Meeting.

VI. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 12, 2007 at 7:30pm. The Committee plans to meet every Monday and Wednesday nights until Town Meeting on October 15th.

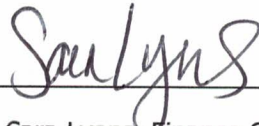
Mr. Purcell said, for the next meeting, he would try to get someone from the Water Department to talk about their articles, as well as Heather Graf to discuss Article 6, regarding the trains.

Mr. Tarantino extended his thanks to Mr. Thomas for accepting the position of Vice-Chair. Mr. Tarantino said he would be absent from meetings for October 1st on until Town Meeting. He said that Mr. Helmreich would lead the meetings in the interim.

VII. Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Zawasky to adjourn at 8:40pm. Second by Mr. Graf. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Respectfully Submitted by:



Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary