

Finance Committee Meeting
March 17, 2008
7:30 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room

Present: Chairman, Lee Tarantino; Vice-Chair, Michael Thomas; Pasquale Barletta; Robert Bouchard; Thomas DeLuca; Paul Helmreich; Philip Zawasky; Town Manager, James Purcell

Absent: Jackie Desrochers; Wayne Graf.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to Order at 7:35 pm.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Helmreich to approve the March 5, 2008 Finance Committee minutes with amendments, as discussed. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Bouchard abstaining. **Motion carries.**

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to approve the March 12, 2008 Finance Committee minutes as written. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Thomas abstaining. **Motion carries.**

Mr. Purcell distributed a draft copy of the **Warrant for the Special Town Meeting** to the members of the FinCom. He discussed each Article as follows:

Article 1 – Unpaid Bills - \$1,554 for the School Department (salary expense).

Article 2 – Supplement to the FY '08 Operating Budget –

- Dog Officer – a transfer of funds from the Dog Fund is needed in order to buy down the vacation and time accumulated by the present Dog Officer.
- Tax Title Account – (this may be a separate article) Approx. \$30K is needed for legal expenses (filing fees with land court, etc.). Mr. Purcell said that there are some unused account balances (approx. \$23K) that have been raised for debt purposes that can be applied towards the \$30K. Mr. Purcell also mentioned that there will be a land auction this year.
- Gasoline – add'l. funds are needed because of unstable prices.
- The Board of Health and the Assessors office – because of staff turnover, others filling in; small amounts, may use appropriations transfer in the last 2 months of the fiscal year.
- Legal Account – for litigation and land use issues; enforcement of zoning.
- Snow & Ice Removal
- Worker's Comp Audit Premium – A few thousand is needed.

Mr. Purcell estimated that to cover both Articles 1 and 2 (excluding Snow & Ice), \$65K would be needed from Free Cash.

Mr. Helmreich stated that using the \$65K of Free Cash for all of the other items makes it less likely to use Free Cash to pay for Snow & Ice, and therefore the Snow & Ice charges would need to come off the Recap Sheet.

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Article 3 – Dam Repairs – The Norton Reservoir Dam is deficient, and to fix it, per state order, will cost \$900K. Mr. Purcell said that the Conservation Comm. has submitted an alternate plan and that the state seems receptive. There is \$52K available that was intended for the now defunct dredging project. This Article is requesting a transfer of some or all of this money into a Dam account.

Mr. Helmreich questioned where the rest of the money for the dam repairs will come from and how quickly it will be needed. Mr. Purcell said that the town may have to borrow money to complete the repairs.

Article 4 – Employee Separation Expenses – This article involves approx. \$15K for one employee and the possibility of another employee, presently undetermined. This money will come from Free Cash.

Article 5 – Relocating Town's Communication Equipment – involves removal and installation costs. This money will likely come from Free Cash.

Mr. Purcell said that the deadline for the Warrant to be completed is April 18th.

Communications Department

Mr. Thomas and Mr. DeLuca, as well as Mr. Purcell, attended a Selectmen's Meeting (Executive Session) on March 13, 2008 discussing the Communication's Department and the deployment of Public Safety personnel. Mr. Purcell said that the ultimate goal is for the Communications Department to have 2 people working per shift at *all* times (24/7). He said that this would cost \$25K more per year. He said that having people on staff would also allow for more out-of-house training to occur. The public safety officials will address the FinCom on Wednesday, the 19th.

Sewer Enterprise Fund

(In a previous meeting, Mr. Purcell established that the town would have a net gain of \$87,657 if the Sewer Department switched to an Enterprise Account. He said that this would cause a 72-28 split for schools and general government, respectively, because the \$87,657 credit would go entirely to general government.)

On this date, a follow-up discussion took place. Mr. Helmreich said that although he may not agree with General Government getting the entire \$87,657, he has a greater concern – whether or not there are enough sewer users to finance the Enterprise Fund and the building of sewer systems. He questioned how the Sewer Department will enlist users, stating that there isn't any current group of people who are requesting sewers as there have been in the past (ex – Winnecunnett, Norton Grove).

Mr. Tarantino pointed out that the FinCom also needs to consider the people *not* on sewers, but who are still subsidizing sewers.

Mr. Purcell said the capitalization has to do primarily with capacity and that the town now has quite a bit more capacity. He also said that there are 4 or 5 critical areas of town with high concern over septic tank failures.

Mr. Thomas pointed out that sewers enhance a property's value.

Mr. Tarantino stated that the town can bond based on the fact that once the sewers are done, there will be income from the people who are tying in to the system. He also questioned whether or not the town can sewer outside of the Enterprise Fund.

Mr. DeLuca pointed out that once a sewer pipe is in the ground in front of a resident's house that they will have to pay a betterment charge, even if the house is not hooked up to sewers.

Mr. Barletta stated that the more the town sewers, the less that leeches into the aquifer.

Mr. Tarantino stated that he would like to see the agreements with some of the major properties that are considering sewer (ex -Turtle Crossing) be finalized before the FinCom votes whether or not to support the Enterprise Fund.

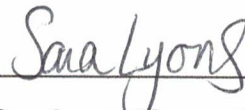
Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2008 at 7:30pm.
Public Safety officials will be present.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Zawasky to adjourn at 9 pm. Second by Mr. Thomas. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Respectfully Submitted by:



Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary