

**Finance Committee Meeting**  
**April 14, 2008**  
**7:30 PM**  
**Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room**

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

**Absent:** Wayne Graf.

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to Order at 7:40 pm.

**I. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes were not reviewed at this meeting.

**II. New Business**

**Norton Public Library –**

Members of the Norton Public Library Board of Directors, as well as Library employees, addressed the FinCom regarding the recently proposed budget cut for FY '09.

Mr. Herb Ellison, of the Board, gave a brief history of the Library. He went on to discuss the budget of the Library, providing handouts. He said that for the past 3 years 83% of the Library's budget was funded by the town. The other 17% came from State Aid, the Balfour Fund, and library fines. Mr. Ellison said that \$448,214 is the minimum amount that is needed for appropriation by the town to allow the Library to keep its state certification. Mr. Ellison reviewed a handout that explained *how* a library becomes certified and what happens when a library is *not* certified, one of which is the loss of State Aid (for Norton \$28K). He explained that there is a "loophole" – if the percentage of cuts taken by the Library is within 5% of what other town departments are taking, then the Library can retain its certification. Mr. Ellison also discussed the possibility of taking more from the Balfour Fund to offset the loss of the \$28K in State Aid.

Ms. Elaine Jackson, Head Librarian, addressed the FinCom, explaining what the SAILS Network is and what it provides for library cardholders. She said that there are presently 12,470 cardholders of the Norton Public Library. She went on to list the implications of the Library becoming decertified, including the following:

- loss of reciprocal borrowing
- loss of \$28K in State Aid
- open 20 fewer hours per week
- 5 staff members cut
- no sick/vacation time for employees
- custodian hours cut 1/2
- 15% cut in pay for remaining employees
- 100 fewer story times
- 12 fewer children's music classes
- 12 fewer book discussions
- no adult summer reading program
- no children's summer reading program
- no Arts in the Park

Mr. Tarantino requested a written budget, outlining where exactly the cuts would come from. Donna Summerfield, a library board member, said that they presently have very tentative feelings about what specific line items the cuts will come from. She said that they are considering a 20% decrease in employee pay for some (whom have volunteered).

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A discussion was had about the use of the Balfour Fund and how it may be used. It was stated that it could not be used for salaries.

Ms. Dinah O'Brien, resident of Norton and Director of Community Resources and Public Libraries in the town of Plymouth, said that there is a 3-year recovery for library re-certification.

Mr. Helmreich pointed out that the Public Safety departments need to be protected. He also stated that if the Sewer Enterprise Fund doesn't materialize, then an additional \$117K would need to be cut from the budget. Mr. Helmreich said that the town has avoided this situation for the last 2 years by putting \$1M from Free Cash in the budget, and that this year that Free Cash is not available. He also said that the percentage of State Aid has decreased because the State has determined that the town of Norton is able to pay more, based on census, etc.

Mr. Ellison said that if the cut to Library funding was not as severe as proposed, then the Library could possibly get a waiver from the State and not lose their certification.

Mr. Tarantino said that the FinCom had received several letters of support for the Library. He also said that the FinCom has not yet made any decisions as they are still hearing from various town departments.

Mr. DeLuca pointed out that contracts are currently in negotiations and that a 2% cut in Health Insurance coverage would fund the Library.

#### **Budget Line Items –**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Thomas to recommend account #114-510 (Town Moderator-personal service) in the amount of \$0. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Thomas to recommend account #122-511 (Board of Selectmen-other personal service) in the amount of \$45,604. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Thomas to recommend account #123-510 (Town Manager-personal service) in the amount of \$162,606. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Thomas to recommend account #123-570 (Town Manager-other charges and expenses) in the amount of \$6,800. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

**Motion** made by Mr. Thomas to re-open for consideration account #131-570. Second by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Thomas to recommend account #131-570 (Finance Committee-other charges and expenditures) in the amount of \$3,160. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

There was discussion on increasing Town Accountant's salary from \$67,500 to \$72,500, as well as re-titling the position to "Finance Director". Mr. Thomas requested current salaries info. from Mr. Purcell before taking a vote on this item. Mr. Purcell said that he would provide this information. The FinCom decided to wait to vote on this item.

**Motion** was made by Mr. Thomas to recommend account #147-511 (Treasurer/Collector-personal service) in the amount of \$189,681. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**



Mr. Tarantino requested that Mr. Purcell provide the FinCom with salary histories in the future. Upon Mr. Barletta's request, Mr. Purcell said that he would find out what is bound for the Assessor's office; there is a \$400 request for Bookbinding.

**Motion** was made by Mr. Thomas to recommend account #158-570 (Tax Title Foreclosure-general expenses) in the amount of \$40,000. Second by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Mr. Purcell said that the Town Clerk will come to the FinCom to discuss the cuts to her department's budget. A discussion about the hours worked in the Town Clerk's office followed.

**Motion** was made by Mr. Thomas to recommend account #171-510 (Conservation Commission-personal service) in the amount of \$90,515. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Thomas to recommend account #171-570 (Conservation Commission-other charges and expenditures) in the amount of \$3,165. Second by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Thomas to recommend account #175-510 (Planning Board-personal service) in the amount of \$86,098. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Thomas to recommend account #175-570 (Planning Board-other charges and expenditures) in the amount of \$3,550. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

#### **Next Meeting**

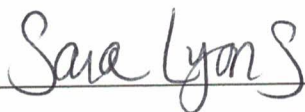
The next meeting is scheduled for April 16, 2008 at 7:30pm.

The Board of Health will be in attendance at the Monday, April 21<sup>st</sup> meeting.

#### **Adjournment**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Zawasky to adjourn at 10:10 pm. Second by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Respectfully Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_



Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary