

**Finance Committee Meeting**  
**September 24, 2008**  
**7:30 PM**  
**Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room**

**Present:** Chairman, Michael Thomas; Vice-Chair, Wayne Graf; Pasquale Barletta; Robert Bouchard; Thomas DeLuca; Jackie Desrochers; Paul Helmreich; Cheryl McFaun; Lynn Regan; Lee Tarantino; Philip Zawasky; Town Manager, James Purcell.  
The Board of Selectmen was also in attendance.

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to Order at 7:30 pm.

**I. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes were not reviewed at this meeting.

**II. Old Business**

- *Article 7* – changing the Town Clerk's position from elected to appointed

Mary Steele, Chairman of the Norton Board of Selectmen, addressed the FinCom regarding Article 7 on the Town Meeting Warrant. She said that the Board of Selectmen voted 4-to-1 to support the change of the Town Clerk's position from an elected position to an appointed one. She said that she feels it is very important to have this change in place for when Diane Casagni, the present Town Clerk, retires/leaves. Ms. Steele said that she feels that there is no reason not to make the change now and that it is better to do it now and have it in place than have to rush to change it if Ms. Casagni suddenly left and a new person held the position. Ms. Steele said that she feels that the Town Clerk should be held accountable by the Town Manager. She said that a job of the Board of Selectmen is to inform the townspeople of something that they feel could be made better. She feels this change is just that.

Mr. Thomas expressed his concern with the position of Town Clerk, who is the overseer of elections, being appointed, not elected.

Mr. Tarantino said that he feels the better time for this change would be when Ms. Casagni leaves/retires.

Mr. Stephen Gradie, Selectman, said that the Selectmen's support of this Article has nothing to do with Ms. Casagni's performance. He noted that the Town Clerk's office is the only town office that does *not* report to the Town Manager.

Mr. DeLuca stated his support of the change. He also discussed that the Clerk's office consists of 3 part-time employees, working a total of 72 hours, all receiving health benefits, which is costly to the town.

Mr. Helmreich expressed his support for the warrant article. He discussed the need to attract the best candidate for the job (when the time comes), and if the position is an elected position then the candidate has to be a resident, limiting the pool of applicants.

Mr. Thomas expressed his opposition of the change, saying that the ultimate check-and-balance is the voters.

**Motion** was made by Mr. Bouchard to recommend Article 7. Second by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: 7 in favor, and Mr. Barletta, Mr. Graf, Mr. Tarantino, and Mr. Thomas opposed. **Motion carries.**

- Mr. Purcell briefly reviewed a few of the Warrant Articles as such: Article 15 – Trench safety – Mr. Purcell said that this is required by the state to be in place by January 2009. He said he plans to name Keith Silver of the Highway Dept. and Brian Butler, Building Inspector, as the 2 overseers of Trench Safety. Article 14 – Zoning – the Planning Board has decided to go forward with Alternative #2.
- Mr. Purcell said that he would not have a certified Free Cash amount in time for Town Meeting on October 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Mr. Purcell reviewed a Funding Worksheet with the FinCom, pointing out that the levy capacity is \$67,008. He said there is an unpaid bill in the amount of \$47.20, and total Operating Budget

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supplements in the amount of \$35,759, as well as the need for a 5-year lease-purchase of a four-season multi-purpose vehicle. He said that these 3 things would reach the amount of levy capacity.

### **III. New Business**

#### *Article 6 - Library*

- Mr. Herb Ellison, President of the Board of Directors for the Library, addressed the FinCom regarding Article 6, in which the Library is seeking \$134K from the Stabilization Account to be placed into the Library's Operating Budget. Mr. Ellison said that the Library's Operating Budget took a cut of \$157K, which also caused the Library to lose an additional \$28K in state aid. He said that because of these cuts the Library will lose their certification in February. Mr. Ellison said that \$134K is being sought, which would allow the Library to apply for a waiver, as well as allowing the Library to increase it's hours back up and hire more people. He said they would also get a pro-rated amount in state aid, and be allowed to maintain their inter-library loan abilities.
- Ms. Donna Summerfield, member of the Library board, requested that the FinCom write a letter stating the town's fiscal situation for the Library to include with the paperwork for the request of a state waiver.
- October 17<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for the Library to request a waiver, but in January the Library members need to appear before the state library board to discuss the loss of certification in February.

*Article 2 – separation expenses –* **Motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to take no action on Article 2. Second by Mr. Graf. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

*Article 3 – supplement of operating budget –* **Motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to recommend Article 3 in the amount of \$35,759. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

*Article 4 –* **Motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to recommend Article 4 in the amount of \$31,200. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Mr. Helmreich suggested using this money to supplement the Library's budget, and use the existing Capital Improvements money to make this first payment for the 4-season vehicle lease. **Motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to remove his previous Motion. **Motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to recommend Article 4 in the amount of \$0. Second by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Zawasky abstaining. **Motion carries.**

*Article 5 –* **Motion** was made by Mr. Helmreich to take no action on Article 5. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

*Article 6 – Library –* **Motion** was made by Mr. Helmreich to recommend the raising and appropriating of \$31,200 for the Library's operating budget. Second by Ms. Desrochers. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Zawasky abstaining. **Motion carries.**

*Article 11 – Water tower –* Mr. Purcell said that the land swap would probably not be passed through legislation because there would be a loss of conservation land. He said that the Water/Sewer board just voted last night (9/23) to swap different parcels of land and that he will discuss this further with the FinCom at Monday night's meeting.

Mr. Helmreich expressed his concern for the emergent need to take the water tower down, as expressed by Mr. Knapp at a previous meeting.

Mr. Thomas said that it is imperative that Mr. Purcell commission a report for a structural engineer to examine the situation, which Mr. Purcell said he would be doing ASAP.

Mr. Purcell said that the land swap could take as long as February to occur.

**Motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to take no action on Article 11. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

*Article 14* – **Motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to take no action on Article 14. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

*Article 15* – **Motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to take no action on Article 15. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

*Article 16* – **Motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to take no action on Article 16. Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

**Next Meeting**

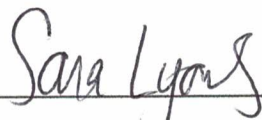
The next meeting is scheduled for September 28, 2008 at 7:30pm.

The FinCom will discuss the Planning Board's report, content for the town's web site, as well as FinCom liaisons for town committees.

**Adjournment**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Zawasky to adjourn at 9:25 pm. Second by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

  
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Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary

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