

## Finance Committee Meeting

April 13, 2009

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; Lee Tarantino; Philip Zawasky; Town Manager, James Purcell.

**Absent:** Lynn Regan.

#### Call to Order

Meeting was called to Order at 7:35 pm.

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NORTON TOWN CLERK

#### I. Approval of Minutes

**Motion** was made by Mr. Tarantino to approve the April 8, 2009 Finance Committee minutes as written.

Second by Mr. Zawasky. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Bouchard and Ms. Desrochers abstaining. **Motion carries.**

#### II. New Business

**A. Mr. James Dinsel, Director of Veteran's Services and Council on Aging**, addressed the Finance Committee regarding the proposed FY10 budgets for both the Veteran's Department as well as the Department for the Council on Aging. He discussed a \$25-30K shortfall in the present FY09 budget due to increasing costs of prescription drugs and medical insurance, for which the town provides reimbursement to veterans. Mr. Dinsel also said that he does not anticipate any conferences in FY10, which has a budget line of \$900 for conferences. Mr. Purcell said that he would like to see at least some of that money stay in the budget because he feels that it is important that Mr. Dinsel attend any conferences that may arise because he is new to the position.

**B. Ms. Charlene Fisk, Communications Supervisor**, addressed the Finance Committee regarding the proposed FY10 budget for the Communications Department. She stated that the proposed budget includes increases in the salary line because of contractual obligations as well as her own recent appointment to the position of Communications Supervisor, which included a pay raise. Ms. Fisk noted that 2 part-time dispatchers resigned in FY09 and will not be replaced, but one full-time dispatcher has been hired and she is seeking 3 additional full-time dispatcher positions to be added to the budget. She said that if these 3 people were to be hired it would bring the department to 8 dispatchers, which would allow for 2 people to be working each shift. Ms. Fisk pointed out that there is also an additional \$10K being requested in the Telephone-Communications line item for FY10 because of the move towards replacing analog phones with digital. Mr. Purcell stated that the initial changeover would have this additional cost but in the long-term will save the town up to \$10K per year. Ms. Fisk also stated that contract negotiations have not yet been settled, so there is a possibility of a change in some budget lines.

**C. Chief Brian M. Clark, Police Chief**, addressed the Finance Committee regarding the proposed FY10 budget for the Police Department. Chief Clark said that the department has 26 officers, 1 administrative assistant, and a .25 records clerk. He said that the department presently has 2 less officers because of retirements. He explained that 83% of the time there are only 3 officers on the road. In reviewing the budget Chief Clark stated that the proposed budget has a \$51,440 net decrease from FY09. He also said that the budget reflects a contractual 2% increase in salaries as well as health benefits at 75/25 for FY10 and 80/20 for FY11. The salaries portion of the budget includes funding for 1 of the 2 open police officer positions, as well as the Chief's position and 26 officers.

**D. Chief Richard J. Gomes, Fire Chief**, addressed the Finance Committee regarding the proposed FY10 budgets for Emergency Management, the Fire Department, and the Emergency Medical Department as follows:

- *Emergency Management* – Chief Gomes reviewed this small budget noting that he is requesting an extra \$1K more than what was budgeted for FY09, for a total of \$6,250. He mentioned that the town shouldn't be asking the Deputy Director to be paying for seminars and conferences out of his own pocket, so \$250 has been budgeted for that line item.
- *Fire Department* – Chief Gomes said that since employment contracts have yet to be settled he based this budget on other town departments' contract conditions and salaries. He said that a level-funded budget necessitates a cut of \$97,629. As a result, all call fire fighter positions would be cut, there would be a reduction of overtime, and training would be cut by 33%, among other line items. Chief Gomes said that the impact of these cuts in the budget would be the closing of the Chartley Fire Station.
- *Emergency Medical* – Chief Gomes noted that this proposed budget is level-funded, but some of the amounts in the individual line items have been changed from FY09.

Chief Gomes reviewed the Simultaneous Emergencies spreadsheet for calendar year 2008, noting that there were 471, up again from the previous year. He noted that each year the amount of simultaneous emergencies increases. Chief Gomes also noted that more Mutual Aid will be needed in FY10 and less will be available because surrounding towns have the same economic concerns as Norton.

### **III. Announcements**

Mr. Purcell notified the FinCom that the FY08 audit will be presented on Thursday night, April 16<sup>th</sup> at the Selectmen's Meeting.

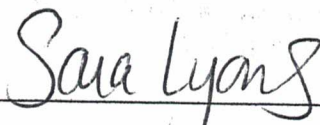
### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for April 15, 2009 at 7:30pm. Zoning articles will be discussed.

### **Adjournment**

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

Respectfully Submitted by:



Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary