

Finance Committee Meeting

May 20, 2009

7:30 PM

Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room

*****Public Hearing*****

NORTON TOWN CLERK

APR 09 2010

RECEIVED

Present: Chairman, Michael Thomas; Vice-Chair, Wayne Graf; Pasquale Barletta; Thomas DeLuca; Jackie Desrochers; Paul Helmreich; Cheryl McFaun; Lee Tarantino; Philip Zawasky.

Absent: Robert Bouchard; Lynn Regan.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm.

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Graf to approve the May 18, 2009 Finance Committee minutes as written. Second by Ms. Desrochers. Vote: All in favor, with Ms. McFaun abstaining. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

7:40 – Public Hearing Convened

Mr. Thomas opened the Public Hearing by summarizing the financial state of the town for FY10. He said that this is the most dire situation that he has ever seen as a FinCom member. He stated that one-third of the \$48M budget comes from Local Aid which is yet to be determined by the state. He said that the Finance Committee wants a budget for FY10 in place by the end of FY09. Mr. Thomas said that the Governor's proposal for FY10 is \$15,845,421, the House's proposal (including a sales tax increase) is \$16,026,603, and the Senate Ways & Means proposal (without a tax increase) is \$15,052,176. He said that the levy limit has increased but is offset by a decrease in the New Growth projection.

Mr. Thomas went on to explain that the implication of all of this is that a level-services budget is not possible for FY10, and even a level-funded budget isn't likely. Some other implications of the cuts are the closing of the Chartley Fire Station and the elimination of all call firefighters, as well as the \$746K cut in the School department. Mr. Thomas acknowledged the efforts of the Town Manager, fellow members of the Finance Committee, the Selectmen, and the school committee.

Mr. Helmreich said that in order to merely maintain, for FY10, the level of services that the town had in FY09, the town would need an additional \$1,124,932. So, in essence, a level-funded budget for FY10 is in fact a cut of \$1,124,932.

Mr. Thomas opened the meeting up to questions/comments from the public.

Mr. William Gouveia pointed out that if the budget part of the town meeting warrant is going to be put off to a later date in June, it should possibly be scheduled for the 3rd week in June in the case that a substantial debate occurs on the budget. He feels that a budget debate in the last week of June could be cutting it too close to the beginning of the next fiscal year. Mr. Thomas said that he would relay this concern to the Town Manager. Mr. Gouveia also expressed his concern over the negotiations of union contracts of town employees. He questioned giving raises to offset the increased share employees will be paying for health benefits so as to stay revenue neutral. He pointed out that a large part of the private sector are taking pay and benefits cuts.

After Mr. Thomas asked for any further questions from the public, a **motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to close the Public Hearing. Seconded by Ms. Desrochers. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

7:55 – Public Hearing closed

7:55 - The Finance Committee broke for a recess.

8:30 – The meeting reconvened.

The Recreation Department addressed the FinCom regarding FY10. Mr. Donald McNeil, Ms. Danielle Sicard, and Rosemary Dolan, from the Recreation Commission, spoke specifically about the opening, closing, and operation of the Everett Leonard Park pool. They are requesting \$9,695 for the operational budget for the pool. They have funds to open the pool, but will not do so if they do not have funds to close the pool at the end of the summer, which would fall under the FY10 budget. Ms. Sicard went on explain that one fiscal year opens the pool and the next fiscal year pays to close it. This past year the recreational program was funded by a one-time private donation, and there is not any money left to use for FY10. Ms. Sicard said that this \$9K+ request would fund the operations and maintenance of the pool, but does not allow for anything unexpected. She said it would close the pool this fall, maintain the pool and facilities, and open the pool next summer. Mr. McNeil said that the recreation commission is considering funding the pool by charging a fee.

III. Other Business/Communication

The Library provided the FinCom with a summary of services that the SAILS Library network provided for the Norton Public Library in the past 12 months.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for May 27, 2009 at 7:30pm.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Zawasky to adjourn at 8:50 pm. Second by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: Unanimous. Motion carries.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Sara Lyons

Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary