

**Finance Committee Meeting**

**May 27, 2009**

**7:30 PM**

**Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room**

**NORTON TOWN CLERK**

**SEP 25 2009**

**RECEIVED**

**Present:** Chairman, Michael Thomas; Vice-Chair, Wayne Graf; Pasquale Barletta; Thomas DeLuca; Jackie Desrochers; Paul Helmreich; Cheryl McFaun; Lynn Regan; Lee Tarantino; Town Manager, James Purcell.

**Absent:** Robert Bouchard; Philip Zawasky.

**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 20, 2009 Finance Committee minutes as written. Seconded by Ms. Desrochers. Vote: All in favor, with Ms. Regan abstaining. **Motion carries.**

**II. New Business**

**Senate Local Aid** – Mr. Purcell stated that the charge portion of Local Aid for FY10 is set at \$2,373,733 and will not change. He reviewed a handout with the breakdown of the town's Estimated Operating Revenues and Expenditures, based on Senate proposed numbers. He pointed out that the New Growth amount has increased due to the revaluation of town properties. He mentioned that this number is up due to old growth in town that is now being picked up, not because there is a current increase in construction. Mr. Purcell stated that the Local Aid amount is \$15,284,326, which is the Senate proposed number of \$15,304,166 minus the Library funds the town will not receive. Mr. Purcell said that he anticipates that any budgetary surpluses will absorb any local receipts shortfalls.

Mr. Helmreich said that last week the FinCom agreed to using \$15,500,000 as a base number for Local Aid from which to base the town's budget. He said that he still agrees that number.

Mr. DeLuca said that he feels uncomfortable with using non-recurring funds, such as Free cash and New Growth, for funding the budget.

Mr. Helmreich agreed with Mr. DeLuca but also said that when the town is in dire straights that it needs to use what it has even if it comes from non-recurring funds.

Mr. Thomas said that legally that town needs a balanced budget by the fall, but would like one by the end of FY09. He asked each FinCom member to reflect on how the cuts needing to be made will be diminishing town services to an unacceptable level.

**8:20 – Meeting recessed.**

**8:30 – Meeting reconvened.**

**Finance Committee Recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting –**

Mr. Thomas reviewed the recommendations already made in previous meetings. He noted some revisions in Article 11 (Water budget - will say "no action"), Article 12 (omission of some wording), Article 14 (Budget), Article 15 (Stabilization fund), and Article 19 (LED signs, to be discussed later in meeting). Mr. Purcell said that now that the Water dept.'s contracts have been negotiated and tentatively agreed upon, the Water dept.'s numbers should become available very soon.

**Finance Committee Recommendations for the Special Town Meeting –**

**Article 2 - Motion** was made by Mr. Helmreich to move 'no action' on the Special Town Meeting Article 2, pending receipt of further information. Seconded by Mr. Graf. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

**Article 4 –** Mr. Purcell recommended \$10K from the Water Surplus account to fund a study of the Water Department. Mr. Helmreich questioned whether this study could wait until the October Town Meeting,



therefore giving everyone more time to acquire more information. Mr. Purcell said that he agrees with this suggestion.

**Motion** was made by Mr. Helmreich to take no action on the Special Town Meeting Article 4. Seconded by Ms. Desrochers. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

#### **Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article 19 –**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Helmreich to reconsider Article 19. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: 7 members in favor, Mr. Graf and Mr. Barletta opposed. **Motion carries.**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Helmreich to recommend Article 19. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Discussion followed. Mr. DeLuca said that he doesn't care for pictures on the signs and that he doesn't agree with limiting the background color to just black, but that the rest of the specifications comply with the sign manufacturer's standards. Mr. Barletta stated that he believes that the Planning Board should not restrict the background color of the sign to only black, that it would be restricting someone's personal taste. Mr. Thomas agreed with the previous comments on both background color and static pictures. Mr. Graf also said he felt the article is too restrictive. Mr. Purcell said that there have been complaints about the Kenwood Automotive LED sign. He said that the business has since made changes and there have not been additional complaints. Mr. Tarantino said he feels that the town has the responsibility and the right to regulate these signs for incoming and present businesses in town. Mr. Thomas said that, to his knowledge, there have not been any studies that have shown that these LED signs are distracting to drivers. Mr. DeLuca pointed out that the more LED signs there are in town, the better the ability to spread/post an Amber Alert if ever needed. Ms. Regan said she feels that specification #4 on the article is ambiguous, that states that the message on the sign needs to be specific to the items/services that the business is selling/providing. She questioned whether or not a gift store, for example, could display "Happy Mother's Day" on its sign. Vote: Mr. Helmreich, Mr. Tarantino, Mr. DeLuca, and Ms. Desrochers in favor. Mr. Thomas, Mr. Graf, Mr. Barletta, Ms. Regan, and Ms. McFaun opposed. **Motion fails. This article will not be recommended at Town Meeting.**

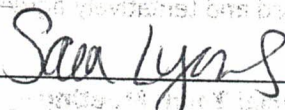
#### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2009 at 7:30pm.

#### **Adjournment**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Barletta to adjourn at 9:20 pm. Seconded by Mr. Tarantino. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Respectfully Submitted by:



Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary