

Finance Committee Meeting
March 30, 2011
7:30 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room

Present: Chair, Thomas DeLuca; Vice-Chair, Paul Helmreich; Robert Camp; Jackie Desrochers; Brett Franklin; Michael Thomas; Lee Tarantino; Wayne Graf.

Also present: Town Manager, Michael Yunits.

Absent: Michael Flaherty; William Rotondi.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Graf to approve the March 25, 2011 Finance Committee minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Vote: All in favor, with Ms. Desrochers and Mr. Thomas abstaining. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

Highway Department Budget (acct. #420) –

Mr. Keith Silver, Highway Superintendent, addressed the FinCom regarding the Highway budget for FY12. He noted that the total budget is \$12K less than FY11's budget, although the Expenses portion of the budget has actually increased. Mr. Silver said that the salary line has decreased because an employee has retired and the replacement has been hired at a lesser salary.

Mr. Tarantino inquired whether, when a retirement pay-out is to be made, the pay-out can be put in as a separate line item so it is not lumped in with the rest of the salaries.

Mr. Tarantino asked whether it was legal for the town to be plowing, repairing, etc., private ways. He questioned whether it was opening up the town to possible legal being taken against it. He wondered whether if the town plows once they are then liable to do so again. Mr. Yunits said that it is often done for safety reasons such as fire engine access. Mr. Helmreich said that in some cases, when the private way is a public thoroughfare, then the town is legally responsible for the care of it. Mr. Silver noted that the state only allows each town to spend up to \$4K per year on the care of private ways. Mr. Tarantino said that he would like to hear more information and answers to his questions before voting on private way budget items.

Water/Sewer Department (acct. #450) –

Mr. Duane Knapp, Water Superintendent, addressed the FinCom regarding the proposed FY12 budget. The total budget request is \$943,041.40. Mr. Knapp noted that Sewer receipts amount to \$789,566.49. Mr. Tarantino questioned why there is such a fluctuation in costs for wastewater treatment. Mr. Knapp explained that anytime the plant in Mansfield has a repair, etc., Norton is billed for 16% of the cost.

Communications Department (acct. #290) –

Ms. Charlene Fisk, Communications Supervisor, addressed the FinCom regarding the proposed FY12 budget. She stated the total budget amounts to \$489,447, which consists of \$374,431 in Salaries and \$115,016 in Expenses.

Police Department (acct. #210) –

Chief Brian Clark addressed the FinCom regarding the proposed FY12 Police budget, providing a handout. He stated that the FY12 budget would be a total increase of \$41,850 over FY11. He reviewed the budget in detail noting that the Salary request for FY12 is \$68,533 over FY11 mostly due to the return of an officer who had been deployed on military duty. He also pointed out that the requested Overtime amount has decreased by \$26,983. Chief Clark said that the Expense portion of the budget has increased by \$2,234.

The total amounts being requested for FY12 are \$2,196,110 for Personnel Services, and \$176,770 for Expenses, for a total budget of \$2,372,880.

Fire/ Emergency Departments – Chief Richard Gomes addressed the FinCom regarding his 3 budgets as follows:

Emergency Planning (acct. #240) – Chief Gomes stated that the FY12 budget request is a level-funded request at \$6,250. He also noted that the department has already been approved for a \$5K grant for FY12. Mr. Tarantino pointed out that \$3,750 of the \$6,250 has not been expended in the past 3 years. He suggested that this may be an area in

which the FinCom may want to make reductions for FY12. Chief Gomes said that he feels that reductions in this budget would send the message that if a department doesn't spend-out its budget one year then the town will reduce its appropriations for the following year. Mr. Tarantino explained that the FinCom needs to look for areas in which to reduce the overall budget for FY12 and that this may be a budget to consider.

Fire Department (acct. #220) – Chief Gomes explained that there are incredibly high expenses because of sick leave, resignations, military leaves of absence, and on-the-job injuries. He said that it is an aging department that will continue to have such expenses. He noted that the total salary line is down because of his impending retirement. Chief Gomes stated that the total proposed FY12 budget for Personnel Services is \$2,597,354 and for Expenses is \$158,450.

Emergency Medical Services (acct. #230) – Chief Gomes explained that the proposed FY12 budget is level-funded at \$80K.

III. Old Business

SERPED (acct. #176) –

Mr. Yunits informed the FinCom that the SERPED number went up from \$2,914 to \$3,074.08.

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to reconsider Account #176. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Motion was made by Mr. Helmreich to recommend \$3,075 for Account #176. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Discussion was had, but a vote was not taken. **Motion lost.**

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 4, 2011 at 7:30pm.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Helmreich to adjourn at 9:15 pm. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Documents Referenced: FY 12 proposed budgets for General Government
Mr. Knapp's Sewer handout
Police Department budget handout

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tom DeLuca, Finance Committee Chair

Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary