

Finance Committee Meeting
April 6, 2011
7:30 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room

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

Also present: Town Manager, Michael Yunits.

Absent: Jackie Desrochers.

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 April 4, 2011 Finance Committee minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Tarantino abstaining. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

School Articles - Mr. Yunits informed the Finance Committee that the 4 School renovation articles that are on the Special Town Meeting warrant have been combined into 2 articles. He explained that the High School renovation and the sewer articles have become one, and the bleachers and the track articles have become one article.

Conservation Commission budget (Account #171) –

Ms. Jennifer Carlino addressed the FinCom regarding the Conservation Commission FY12 proposed budget for \$89,011. She noted that it is a level-funded budget including no contractual raises. Ms. Carlino explained that the \$8K for Professional Services is for dam inspections required by The Office of Dam Safety.

Ms. Carlino said that the Conservation Commission will be requesting \$212K from the Capital Improvements Committee for bank improvements.

Mr. Tarantino questioned what the impact would be if the dams were taken out altogether. Ms. Carlino said there would be a lot of studies and permits involved and that she would look further into it.

Mr. Leon Dumont, Health Agent, addressed the FinCom regarding the FY12 proposed budgets for the Board of Health and the Public Nurse as follows:

Board of Health (Account #510) – Mr. Dumont explained that the proposed budget includes a request for the hours of the Assistant Health Agent to increase from 17 hours to 20, therefore the Salary line has increased over FY11. Mr. DeLuca pointed out that putting the Assistant Health Agent at 20 hours would make her eligible for health benefits, which is very costly to the town. However, Mr. DeLuca stated that it would cost the town \$2,184 more per year to increase the Assistant's hours to only 19, and this would also avoid making the position eligible for health benefits.

Mr. Tarantino suggested that the town charge a fee for inspections. Mr. Dumont said that he would look into this as a possibility.

Public Health Nurse (Account #522) – Mr. Dumont pointed out that he requested the Public Health Nurse's hours be increased from 24 to 30 hours. He said this was due to the town's increased population, therefore increasing the need for home visits. Mr. DeLuca pointed out that the increase would be an additional \$8K. Mr. Thomas questioned why the town is responsible for home visits, as opposed to insurance or Mass Health being responsible.

Mr. Dumont explained that this budget needs the full funding of \$4K for Immunizations because the state is no longer giving cities and towns as many flu vaccines therefore the town needs to purchase more. Mr. Tarantino suggested setting up a revolving fund for this.

School Department budget (Account #300) –

Dr. Patricia Ansay, Superintendent of Schools, presented the FinCom with the School Department's FY12 proposed budget, providing a budget book with detailed information. She explained that the proposed budget total is \$23,104,882 which is a 4.15% increase over FY11. She pointed out that for years funding being spent on Regular Education has been decreasing and funds being spent on Special Education has been increasing. Dr. Ansay said this is largely due to State mandates for Special Education that are mostly unfunded. She explained that the town must legally fund mandated Special Educational services and therefore Regular Education services have to be cut by as much.

Dr. Ansay said that there is approximately \$500K in fees for out-of-district placements. A discussion was had on the high costs of out-of-district placements, private schools, and collaborative schools. Ms. Jeanne Sullivan, Director of Special Education, explained the differences in services as well as cost of each. She said that 20% of the total enrollment in Norton schools are Special Education students. Mr. Tarantino asked whether the health insurance of students placed in residential schools could be billed for the non-educational time the students are there, for example when the student receives counseling services. Mrs. Sullivan said that she would look into that. Mr. Tom Golotta, School Committee member, said that enrollment for the Charter School has gone up for FY12, therefore that assessment will be higher.

Mr. Helmreich said that he would like to see an Impact Statement from Dr. Ansay that would outline what the effect would be on the schools if the School Department was not given the 4.15% they are requesting.

Dr. Ansay said that a technologies director was laid off and in his/her place another individual will be hired as a business manager. That position will be doing the job of the technologies director as well as financial and facilities management – for the same salary.

Dr. Ansay said that she would provide the FinCom with an Expense-Per-Pupil spreadsheet, as provided on the Department of Education website, for all Norton students.

Payment of Bills/Authorized signatures – Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to allow Mr. DeLuca, Mr. Helmreich, and Mr. Yunits as authorized signers for payment of all Norton Finance Committee bills and payroll. Seconded by Mr. Graf. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

III. Old Business

Chapter 90 funds– Mr. Yunits handed out a copy of a letter from the Office of the Governor informing the town of its Chapter 90 total. **Motion** was made by Mr. Helmreich to recommend Article 2 of the Spring Annual Town Meeting warrant in the amount of \$558,041. Seconded by Mr. Graf. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2011 at 7:30pm.

On April 12th, there will be a joint meeting of the Finance Committee, Selectmen, and the School Building Committee at 6:30 pm at the Norton High School library.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to adjourn at 9:10 pm. Seconded by Mr. Tarantino. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Documents Referenced: Minutes of April 4, 2011
FY12 budget books
School Department budget books
Letter of Chapter 90 funding
Payment of bills signature sheet

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tom DeLuca, Finance Committee Chair

Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary