

**Finance Committee Meeting**  
**May 18, 2011**  
**7:30 PM**  
**Municipal Center – Selectmen’s Conference Room**

**Present:** Chair, Thomas DeLuca; Vice-Chair, Paul Helmreich; Robert Camp; Jackie Desrochers; Michael Flaherty; Brett Franklin; Michael Thomas.  
Also present: Town Manager, Michael Yunits.

**Absent:** William Rotondi; Lee Tarantino; Wayne Graf.

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.

**I. Approval of Minutes**

**Motion** was made by Ms. Desrochers to approve the May 9, 2011 Finance Committee minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Franklin, Mr. Flaherty, and Mr. Camp abstaining.

**Motion carries.**

**II. New Business**

**Special Town Meeting Article 1 –**

Mr. Kevin O’Neil, Chair of the School Building Committee, and Mr. Greg Smolley of JCJ Architecture, addressed the FinCom regarding the upcoming vote on the High School renovation project.

Mr. O’Neil provided the FinCom with a handout that details the project, including floor plans. He said that it would be distributed at the June 6<sup>th</sup> Special Town Meeting.

Mr. Smolley gave a brief presentation, similar to what will be done at Town Meeting, addressing the existing conditions of the high school and what would be done if the project were to pass. He said that Norton high School has been classified as a category 4 by the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority), which means it is most in need of updates. Mr. Smolley went on to explain that the project would include a renovation of the existing building as well as a 2-story addition. The cost of the project would be \$34M, 64.42% of which would be reimbursed to the town. He explained that the reimbursement would happen periodically throughout the project (within 30 days), which keeps bonding to a minimum. Mr. Smolley explained that currently the building has many code violations that will soon be required to be updated, even if the renovation project does not happen. These violations include many ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) violations, Title 9, as well as a non code-compliant HVAC system. He noted that if the HVAC system were to be updated, it would save the town approximately \$45K annually in operational costs.

Mr. Camp, referring to a spreadsheet outlining the costs to taxpayers, noted that taxpayers would actually be paying for 22 years, not 20. Mr. O’Neil explained that the first 2 years fund a bridge loan and that the amount per taxpayer is much less for those 2 years. He also noted that the spreadsheet shows very conservative numbers. Mr. Camp suggested showing the numbers in another way so that taxpayers do not think anything is trying to be added on.

Mr. Thomas asked what would be the implications if the project didn’t pass with voters and nothing was done. Mr. Smolley said that the total cost of addressing only the code issues, with no addition, would cost the town \$26M, and that this would include *no* reimbursement from the state. He also explained that, if the project is voted down, there is a grace period to try again and then after that the town goes to the bottom of the MSBA list.

Mr. Yunits pointed out that the funds for these building projects come from state sales tax, so essentially money residents have paid to the state would be coming back to their town.

Mr. Camp questioned what would happen when the budget is overrun. Mr. Smolley explained that the project's budget is reconciled between 2 cost estimators, as well as JCJ Architecture and Pinck & Co. (the project manager). He noted that there is also a \$1.2M contingency built into the project's budget.

Mr. O'Neil informed the FinCom that the MSBA's scheduled board meeting on May 25<sup>th</sup>, at which the project numbers were to be made firm in a legal contract, has been put off until Wednesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> because the board could not get a quorum for that day. He said that there is a conference call scheduled for Friday between the MSBA and himself, as well as Mr. Helmreich, Mr. DeLuca, and others. He is hopefully that there will be decision made during this call that would provide something in writing from the MSBA in time for the June 6<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting. Mr. DeLuca expressed that if there wasn't a legally binding document in time for Town Meeting, he would be hesitant to vote to recommend this article. Mr. Thomas suggested the possibility of someone moving to recess Town Meeting right after it begins on Monday, June 6<sup>th</sup> and then reconvening on Wednesday June 8<sup>th</sup>, when the town hopefully would have a signed document from the MSBA.

#### **Reserve Fund Transfers –**

Finance Committee – A transfer is requested to cover printing costs, higher than expected, and additional clerical services needed because of The Charter Review Committee.

**Motion** was made by Ms. Desrochers to transfer \$1K from the FinCom Reserve fund to the Finance Committee account. Seconded by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Town Clerk – A transfer is requested to cover an unexpected retirement.

**Motion** was made by Mr. Helmreich to transfer \$1,700 from the FinCom Reserve fund to the Town Clerk account. Seconded by Mr. Camp. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Legal Services – A transfer of \$40,875 is requested to make up for a shortfall. Mr. Helmreich said that he would rather fund this in October. Mr. Yunits said that \$25K would cover the current outstanding bills. Mr. DeLuca suggested that Mr. Yunits revise the request to \$25K and re-submit it at the next FinCom meeting on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **III. Old Business**

#### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for May 25, 2011 at 7:30pm. Special Town Meeting Article 2, the High School track and bleachers, will be discussed.

#### **Adjournment**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Flaherty to adjourn at 8:40 pm. Seconded by Mr. Thomas. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

**Documents Referenced:** High School renovation project handout  
Reserve Fund transfer requests  
Tax Impact spreadsheet

Respectfully Submitted by:

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**Tom DeLuca, Finance Committee Chair**

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**Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary**