

**Finance Committee Meeting
September 26, 2011
7:30 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen’s Conference Room**

Present: Chair, Paul Helmreich; Vice-Chair, Lee Tarantino; Robert Camp (late arrival); Thomas DeLuca; Michael Flaherty; William Rotondi.
Also present: Town Manager, Michael Yunits.

Absent: Jackie Desrochers; Michael Thomas; Wayne Graf.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm.

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to approve the September 14, 2011 Finance Committee minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Camp and Mr. Flaherty abstaining. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

Article 14 - Capital Plan Amendments –

Mr. Yunits reviewed the FY12 Capital Projects list (Article 14) as follows:

- 1 – Dam Repairs – The total cost of the dam repair is \$328,005. The Dam Repairs Account will contribute \$54,405.59 to this total cost. The balance would be \$273,599.41. It was decided to round this to \$273, 600.
 - 2 – Police Vehicle - \$31K for a Dodge Charger to replace a vehicle that was hit by a drunk driver.
 - 3 – Ambulance - \$83K for the 3rd and final payment. This would come from the Ambulance Reserve fund.
 - 4 – W/S - \$10K for a grinder pump replacement, and \$9,400 for a utility truck w/crane.
- The total amount, including the \$83K from the Ambulance fund, would be \$461,405.59.

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to recommend Article 14 in the amount of \$461,405.59. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Article 13 – Capital Improvements Funding –

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to reconsider Article 13. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to change the amount of \$750K to \$769,400 to be transferred to the Capital Improvements Account for Article 13. Seconded by Mr. Tarantino. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Article 18 – By-law Amendment for Funeral Leave, AND Longevity Pay –

This article would add to the existing by-law the words “Additional time (up to five [5] additional days) may be granted upon request to and the discretion of the Town Manager”. These 5 days would be in addition to the 3 days the by-law currently gives an employee for funeral leave.

This article would also give the same level of longevity pay to non-union employees, at the rate that SENA-A union employees are currently receiving. Mr. Yunits said there are currently 7 employees who would be affected by this if it were to be voted in.

Mr. Tarantino said that he does not agree with this part of the article and feels that the town should be getting rid of these kinds of benefits, not increasing them.

Mr. DeLuca said that he would like a run-down on what the town pays for all longevity each year. He said he thinks that the townspeople should have this information before voting on this article.

Mr. Tarantino said that he would like to see a “scorecard” of sorts for each department which would outline all pay, including all extras like this, and that way the FinCom could take a comprehensive look at what’s being paid out as a whole.

Mr. Helmreich agreed, saying he would like to see more equity among the contracts in town.

Mr. Tarantino said he'd like to see the article withdrawn until the spring town meeting, that way providing time to gather more information on the subject.

A vote was not taken on this article.

Articles 21, 22, and 23 – Charter Review –

Mr. Tarantino, as Chair of the Charter Review Committee (CRC), addressed the FinCom regarding these 3 articles.

He started with what the committee has been doing and stated that they have been meeting since June 2010. He provided the FinCom with a copy of the existing charter along with the CRC's recommended updates/changes. He also provided a copy of the wording of the 3 warrant articles.

Article 21 – General Changes to the Charter, all but W/S and Town Clerk –

Mr. Tarantino gave an overview of some of the more significant changes that are being proposed, such as: the change is contract negotiations, the process of the removal of the town manager, eligibility for elected office, and the creation of the Capital Improvements Committee. He noted that a lot of what the CRC did was to bring the charter in line with the new Open Meeting Laws.

Motion was made by Mr. Deluca to recommend Article 21. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: All in favor.

Motion carries.

Article 22 – W/S Commission –

Mr. Tarantino explained that the CRC is proposing that the commission positions be changed from elected to appointed, as well as the board going from a 3-member board to a 5-member. He explained how changing the positions from elected to appointed would likely attract a larger and more qualified pool of candidates because these candidates would not have to run for office, something that many people do not care for.

Motion was made by Mr. Deluca to recommend Article 22. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: All in favor.

Motion carries.

Article 23 – Town Clerk –

Mr. Tarantino explained that the CRC is proposing that the position of Town Clerk go from elected to appointed (by the town manager). He went on to say that the town clerk's position is now a very different job because laws are changing – both Open Meeting laws and election laws – and the job is becoming highly technical and specialized.

Motion was made by Mr. Deluca to recommend Article 23. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: All in favor.

Motion carries.

Mr. Tarantino explained that the CRC felt that the proposed changes should be broken into 3 separate articles because if everything was put in one article and the townspeople didn't like only one part of it, the entire charter would be voted down because of that one part. This way, if, for example, the townspeople did not agree with just the town clerk changes, the W/S commission changes and the general changes could still go through.

Mr. DeLuca stated that 12 years ago that is exactly what happened and all changes were voted down.

III. Other Business/Announcements

Mr. Helmreich informed the FinCom that both Attleboro and Pembroke have reinstated reciprocal borrow privileges for Norton Public Library.

Mr. Helmreich informed the committee that Dr. Ansary has notified him that the truck the School Department was given is not usable for the purpose they need it for – snow plowing. Mr. Flaherty stated that a request for a truck was not mentioned at the Capital Improvements Committee.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for September 28, 2011 at 7:30pm.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to adjourn at 9:00 pm. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: Unanimous.
Motion carries.

Documents Referenced: Minutes of September 14, 2011
Fall Town Meeting warrant
Capital Budget Amendment sheet
Town Charter, with proposed revisions

Respectfully Submitted by:

Paul Helmreich, Finance Committee Chair

Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary