

Finance Committee Meeting
March 4, 2013
7:30 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room

Present: Chair, Lee Tarantino; Vice-Chair, Michael Flaherty; Peter Carignan (late arrival); Thomas DeLuca; Jackie Desrochers (late arrival); Richard Dorney; Stephen Evans; Paul Helmreich; William Rotondi; Michael Thomas.

Also present: Town Manager, Michael Yunits.

Absent:

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Helmreich to approve the February 27, 2013 Finance Committee minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Rotondi. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Evans and Mr. Thomas abstaining. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

FY14 Budget Proposals as presented by the following departments:

Communications Department:

Ms. Charlene Fisk, Communications Director, reviewed the proposed personnel budget (\$542,596.45) noting that one employee will be out on FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act) for at least 3 months and another employee will be less available because of weekend military service commitments.

This budget would fund 9 full-time positions as well as the addition of 2 part-time positions. There was discussion on the need and description of what the part-timers would be doing. Ms. Fisk explained that the part-timers would cover vacations, etc. She said that they would be per diem – if they don't work, they won't get paid. She also said that they would be paid at the lowest rate without any benefits.

It was noted that Overtime is up \$16K from last year. A discussion on overtime ensued. Ms. Fisk said that there is not a cap on how much overtime one employee can work. She also said that when overtime becomes available, contractually it must be offered to full-time employees first, before offering it to the part-time employees.

When reviewing the Expense portion of the budget, Ms. Fisk pointed out that the Verizon bill is down from \$30K to \$18K because of changes made to the phone system in the recent past. The total proposed Expense budget is \$109,462.

Data Processing:

Ms. Fisk also reviewed this budget. She said that the hope is to be able to replace about 5 computers throughout the town departments per year.

Mr. Thomas requested she provide the FinCom with a list of exactly what computers, monitors, printers, etc. need to be replaced. She said she would get that list to the FinCom.

Ms. Fisk explained that she is trying to centralize the buying of computers and accessories so that every town department has the same types and brands. This way the purchasing of inks and other accessories would be more cost effective as the town would be able to buy in bulk for less expense.

Library:

Ms. Lee Parker, Library Director, and Mr. Brian Stalters, President of the Board of Trustees, were present to discuss the Library's proposed FY14 budget in the amount of \$365,213. Mr. Stalters noted that this amount includes minimal raises for library employees. Mr. DeLuca pointed out that the raises being proposed are 8% raises, and are not "minimal". Mr. Tarantino said that he feels that 8% raises are not realistic and would be unfair to other town employees.

Ms. Parker noted that a \$7K grant was recently received from the Cable Commission. Also she noted that there were 1,100 volunteer hours in FY13. Mr. Stalters said that the employees of the Norton Public Library are 23% underpaid as compared to other libraries in similar towns. He also stated that the library will receive \$12,500 from the state because the library is accredited.

Mr. Yunits pointed out that his recommendation is \$20K less than the request but still is enough for the required minimum to keep accreditation from the state.

Mr. Bob Berg, Treasurer of the Board, spoke about the library's Supplemental Budget. This budget is in the amount of \$104,515 and is solely funded through the Balfour endowment (\$55K), library fines (about \$9K), and The Friends of the Library fundraising. He explained that this Supplemental budget is strictly for materials, utilities, etc.

Fire Department:

Chief Schleicher presented the Fire Department proposed FY14 budget. He stated that the Chartley fire station remains unmanned with the exception of predicted bad weather (such as the blizzard and hurricanes). The Chief stated that the budget is level-service with a contractual 2% raise, and that the Expenses are level-funded.

He stated that the Ambulance Fund currently has a balance of \$570,005.42 that is uncommitted at this point. Chief Schleicher explained that the FY14 proposed budget includes 2 positions that would be paid from the Ambulance Fund (not including equipment) for half the year.

Emergency Medical:

Chief Schleicher pointed out that this budget is level-funded with the exception of an added line item - TPC/Special Events. It was explained that when the TPC holds its event in Norton it gifts the town a sum of money which goes into a 'Town Hall' account and is often used for municipal repairs. This account is also used to purchase supplies for the TPC event (epi-pens, bicycles, radio equipment, etc.).

Mr. Tarantino said that he did not like using the TPC funds for other things such as municipal repairs. He feels that the funds should be used to support the TPC event as well as other town community events (Founder's Day, etc.).

Chief Schleicher explained that **Emergency Management/Planning** received \$8K in FY13 and anticipates about \$7K for FY14.

Police Department:

Chief Clark presented the proposed FY14 budget to the FinCom, noting a staffing decrease. He also said that in the near future, in light of the increase in school shootings, the department would like to see a School Resource Officer placed in the budget.

Chief Clark noted that the total difference from last year's budget to this year's request is an increase of \$140,864 (\$133,540 for personnel and \$7,324 for Expenses).

He explained that the salaries have gone up because of contractual increases and that Expenses have been level-funded with the exception of contractual expenses.

Inspections Department:

Mr. Yunits presented the FY14 proposed budget with Personal Service at \$147,710 and Expenses at \$14,795.

Mr. DeLuca questioned the exact consistency of \$3,200 for line item Outside Inspection Coverage over the past few years. Mr. Yunits said he would find out and get that information back to the FinCom. It was noted that it could possibly be from an outside contract.

Dog Officer:

Mr. Yunits presented the FY14 proposed budget with Personal Service at \$47,600 and Expenses at \$8,865. He explained that the Salary portion of the budget is up to include a part-time position. This part-time position would be for vacation/sick time coverage. Also, this would cause the over-time costs to decrease.

III. Other Business

Mr. Tarantino informed the FinCom that he received a letter in the mail from Norfolk Agricultural High School in regards to a possible out-of-district placement assessment for \$22K+. Mr. Tarantino said that he would like to ask the School Department for more information on this matter.

Also received was a report from the South Eastern Regional School District, who will be coming before the FinCom on March 20th to present their budget and assessment.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2013 at 7:30 pm.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to adjourn at 9:35 pm. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: Unanimous.
Motion carries.

Documents Referenced: Minutes of February 27, 2013
FY14 Proposed budgets of: Communication, Data Processing, Library, Police,
Fire, Emergency Management, Inspections, Dog Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:

Lee Tarantino, Finance Committee Chair

Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary