

Finance Committee Meeting
March 19, 2014
7:00 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room

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NORTON TOWN CLERK

2015 APR 16 P 1:11

Present: Chair, Michael Flaherty; Thomas DeLuca; Richard Dorney; Stephen Evans; Michael Fiore; Paul Helmreich; William Rotondi; Michael Thomas.

Also present: Town Manager, Michael Yunits.

Absent: Vice-chair, Peter Carignan; Jackie Desrochers; Lee Tarantino.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Helmreich to approve the March 12, 2014 Finance Committee minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. Fiore. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Rotondi abstaining. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

FY15 Proposed Budgets:

Parks and Recreation #630 – Ms. Sheri Cohen, Chair of Parks and Recreation, Ms. Laura Bamford, Treasurer, and Commission member Jennifer Hoffman, addressed the FinCom, requesting the funding of \$11,700 for a new part-time position for a Director of the Commission. Mr. Yunits' recommendation is for \$7,200. Presently the entire board consists of volunteers.

Ms. Hoffman gave an overview of the work that the Commission has done in the past 5 years, along with a handout. Ms. Cohen explained that she is asking for the addition of this position because it is far too much work and time, and it is taking away from her own family. She also said that she simply doesn't have the time as she is re-entering the workforce. Ms. Bamford stated that the Commission has had to turn away outside vendors wanting to bring programs to town, because there isn't anyone available to implement the programs. This part-time employee would be responsible for the day-to-day communication and operations of the Commission, the finances, running community events, as well as many other duties.

Town Clerk #161 – Ms. Danielle Sicard, Town Clerk, noted that in this proposed budget there is a 1% raise for the Town Clerk and a step raise included for the assistant. The total amount for Salaries is \$40,914.80, for Salaries – Elected Official is \$61,697.79, and for Charges and Expenditures is \$4,740.

Election and Registration #162 – The total amount requested is \$29,073. Ms. Sicard explained that any differences in requested amounts between this and previous years, is due to how many elections are occurring that particular year.

Norton Public Schools #300 – Dr. Joseph Baeta, Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. Barry Nectow, Director of Operations and Finance, addressed the FinCom regarding the FY15 requested budget. The amount requested for Personal Service is \$19,010,413 and the total for Charges and Expenditures is \$6,039,688, for an overall total of \$25,050,101.

Dr. Baeta started by saying that there are 2 areas of importance that are reflected in this budget – A School Resource Officer, and Technology. He also noted that the increase in Chapter 70 funds for FY15 is only \$60K.

Special Education - Dr. Baeta said that he would like to keep as many students in district as possible (as opposed to out-of-district placements). He said that presently there are 52 out-of-district placements.

Full-Day Kindergarten – The request for funding this program is \$250K for FY15. This amount would be much less in following years because the town would then receive state aid for the program. Dr. Baeta said that he would like to see this program in place so that the opportunity of full-day kindergarten would be available to all students, not just students who can afford to pay the tuition and get picked in the lottery. He said that he feels that adding full-day kindergarten is part of an economic plan to challenge the choice of the Charter School and to keep students in town. Mr. DeLuca asked why the funding was included in the budget as well as in a warrant article. Dr. Baeta that it was because the warrant was closing and he wasn't sure it would be part of the budget proposal and he wanted to make sure it was included somewhere. He said he would anticipate it would be removed from the warrant.

Revolving Funds – Mr. Nectow explained that the School's Revolving Funds come from the schools' fee-based programs. He said that the amount for yearly revolving funds is \$1,282,881 and the Circuit Breaker amount is \$1,102,443. Mr. Nectow said that these accounts, along with grants, are used to fund the School Department's yearly budget. He said that about 5% of the budget is from the fee-based programs.

When asked, Dr. Baeta said that if he had to choose one to fund, he would choose Full-Day Kindergarten over a Technology Director. He also informed the FinCom that he has added 80 spots available for a School Choice Program as a way to bring in funds. Dr. Baeta said that, as the budget stands now, user fees will continue for the upcoming school year.

Bristol County Agricultural High School #308 – Mr. Yunits informed the FinCom that there have yet to be any information in regards to assessments made available to the town, so the assessment stands at \$32,623.

Annual Town Meeting Articles:

Feasibility Study (NMS Roof) – Mr. Nectow explained that this Capital request is to replace the roof of the Norton Middle School. He said that the reason for replacement is that there are multiple leaks. Damage to rugs and walls is occurring. He said that the roof has various coverings and heights. Mr. Nectow explained that assistance has been applied for through the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Association). The first step would be the Feasibility Study for \$100K.

Full-Day Kindergarten – Mr. Yunits said that he would rather see this article pulled from the warrant by the School Committee and have it be funded through the budget. Dr. Baeta said that he would discuss this with the School Committee. He also said that he would continue to crunch numbers to find a way to make the funding of full-day kindergarten work within the budget.

III. Old Business

Old business was not discussed at this meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2014 at 7:00 pm.

Adjournment

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

Documents Referenced:

Minutes of March 12, 2014
FY15 Budget proposals for departments: #161,162,300,308,630
Annual town Meeting Warrant draft

Respectfully Submitted by:


Michael Flaherty, Finance Committee Chair


Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary

4/2/14
Date Approved