

Finance Committee Meeting
April 16, 2014
7:00 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room

RECEIVED
NORTON TOWN CLERK
2015 APR 16 P 1:17

Present: Chair, Michael Flaherty; Vice-Chair, Peter Carignan; Thomas DeLuca; Richard Dorney; Stephen Evans; Michael Fiore; Paul Helmreich; Lee Tarantino.

Also present: Town Manager, Michael Yunits.

Absent: Jackie Desrochers; William Rotondi; Michael Thomas.

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 April 9, 2014 Finance Committee minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Evans and Mr. Tarantino abstaining. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

Mr. Tarantino requested a report of all Reserve Fund balances to be provided every 30-60 days to all FinCom members.

III. Old Business

Water/Sewer Articles – W/S Superintendent, Bernie Marshall, addressed the Finance Committee regarding Article 5 and 6 on the Annual Town Meeting warrant as follows:

Article 6 – Wells/Water Treatment Plant – Mr. Marshall said that this article would address the problems with Wells 4, 5, and 6. The removal rate would be 99% for iron, and 96% for manganese. He said that, once blended with Wells 1 and 2, the iron and manganese removal would be 85%. He also said that his hope is that this would lower the need for hydrant flushing to only once per year.

Mr. Helmreich pointed out that this same type of article was rejected by the FinCom previously because of a lack of concrete numbers, and asked why circumstances are different now. Mr. Marshall said that he feels confident that the study (with projected costs) is accurate. Mr. Tarantino said that he feels uncomfortable with this and that he would rather see the project proceed in steps. Mr. Yunits said that they presently have a 25% design plan and that is what the projected costs are based on. He said that design will not be finalized until the funding amount is determined and then they will know what they are able to do. Mr. Marshall said the project would be bonded through the Water Department for 20 years and that construction would begin in 2016.

Article 5 – Town Center Sewer Project (with Wheaton College) – Mr. Marshall explained that \$2.7M will cover the entire project and will initially be paid by Sewer Enterprise and then be paid by sewer users. He also stated that connection fees and usage costs from Wheaton College would fund the project. He said it does not presently include the Yelle School or High School, but that it is the long-range plan. Mr. Marshall said that negotiations are still ongoing with Wheaton. Regarding manpower, Mr. Marshall said that present personnel will be able to handle it. He said that if this project goes over then they would use Water surplus funds and/or borrow from their bond.

Mr. Yunits explained that this project needs approval at this town meeting in order to get SRF funding for October, and if that doesn't happen then it could be taken off the list.

FY15 Town Proposed Department Budgets:

Library #610 –

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend budget #610-570 (Library) in the amount of \$360K. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Discussion: Mr. Yunits said that he met with representatives of the Library and all are satisfied with the reductions, and that it will not affect any services. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Tarantino abstaining. **Motion carries.**

Southeastern Regional School #306 –

Mr. Yunits noted that the amount indicated is the final number for FY15.

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend budget #306 (Southeastern Regional School) in the amount of \$1,240,944. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Bristol County Agricultural School #308 –

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend budget #308-560 (Bristol County Agricultural School) in the amount of \$32,623. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

State Assessments #820 –

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend budget #820-560 (State Assessments) in the amount of \$2,186,215. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

County Assessments #830 –

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend budget #830-560 (County Assessments) in the amount of \$225,174. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

School Department #300 –

Dr. Baeta, Superintendent, was present to discuss the FY15 proposed budget. Mr. Yunits explained that he is trying to hold onto some Free Cash but it will go from originally using \$500K of Free Cash to using \$600K. He said that this would leave about \$300K to bring over to next year. He also said that nothing would be going into the Capital Fund at this time. Mr. DeLuca expressed his concern.

Dr. Baeta mentioned that the Unemployment line in the budget would increase a lot if the School Budget was cut. He said he would not increase user fees for students, but would have to cut staff.

Dr. Baeta also said that the free Full-Day Kindergarten program that was proposed would not happen. Mr. Helmreich expressed his deep regret for the loss of this program. Discussion was had on the impact that is felt from losing kindergarten students to the Charter School because they offer free full-day kindergarten. Dr. Baeta said that he could get more information on this if the FinCom wanted.

Dr. Baeta said that the cuts would not impact the addition of the School Resource Officer. He said that this is a top priority.

Police Department #210 and Fire Department #220 –

Mr. Yunits explained that Chief Clark had made an error when calculating salaries for FY15. The new recommendation is \$1,959,053. He said that the difference would come from Fire Department wages.

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to reconsider budget #210-510. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor.

Motion carries.

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend budget #210-510 in the amount of \$2,488,172. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to reconsider budget #220-510. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor.

Motion carries.

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend budget #220-510 in the amount of \$2,843,398. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

Article 5 – Town Center Sewer Project (See above for discussion) –

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend Article 5 as written. Seconded by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: 7 members in favor, with Mr. Evans opposed. **Motion carries.**

Article 6 – Wells/Water Treatment Plant (See above for discussion) –

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend Article 6 as written. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: 6 members in favor, with Mr. Evans and Mr. Fiore opposed. **Motion carries.**

Article 7 – Middle School Roof –

This article is in place in case the project gets chosen by the MSBA in June. This is the reason it needed to be on the May warrant. The article amount is \$100K.

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to recommend Article 7 in the amount of \$100K. Seconded by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Article 10 – Revolving Funds –

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to reconsider Article 10 – Revolving Funds. Seconded by Mr. Carignan. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend Article 10 as amended, adding the establishment of the Council on Aging Revolving Fund. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Article 15 – Capital Improvements Fund -

Motion was made by Mr. Helmreich to recommend Article 15 in the amount of \$0. Seconded by Mr. Carignan. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Motion was made by Mr. Carignan to reconsider Article 15. Seconded by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Motion was made by Mr. Helmreich to recommend NO ACTION for Article 15. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Article 20 – Stabilization Fund –

Motion was made by Mr. Helmreich to recommend NO ACTION for Article 20. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

Article 1 – Unpaid Bills –

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend Article 1 in the amount of \$300.58. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Article 3 – Establishment of a Stabilization Fund for Southeastern Regional VoTech School -

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend NO ACTION for Article 3. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Discussion: Mr. Helmreich said that he would rather vote to "not recommend" than "no action". **Mr. Tarantino withdrew the motion.**

Motion was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend Article 3 as written. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All opposed. **Motion FAILS.**

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2014 at 7:00 pm. The Public Hearing on the budget will be held at 7:45 that same night.

Adjournment

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

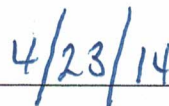
Documents Referenced:

Minutes of April 9, 2014
Draft of Annual Town Meeting warrant
Draft of Special Town Meeting warrant
Budget #210 – revised
Budget #220 – revised

Respectfully Submitted by:


Michael Flaherty, Finance Committee Chair


Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary


4/23/14

Date Approved