

**Finance Committee Meeting**  
**April 30, 2014**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room**

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2015 APR 16 P 1:17

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

Also present: Town Manager, Michael Yunits.

**Absent:** Chair, Michael Flaherty; Jackie Desrochers; Michael Thomas.

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm.

**I. Approval of Minutes**

**Motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to approve the April 23, 2014 Finance Committee minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Dorney. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Tarantino abstaining. **Motion carries.**

**II. New Business**

**Special Town Meeting Article 2 – FY14 Operating Budget Supplements:**

Includes the following:

- \$850 for Data Processing
- \$160K Snow and Ice Removal
- \$10K Street Lighting
- \$5,400 Board of Health transition
- \$15K Veteran's Benefits

The total amount for this article is \$191,250.

**Motion** was made by Mr. Tarantino to recommend Article 2 in the amount of \$191,250. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Dorney abstaining. **Motion carries.**

**Annual Report of the Finance Committee Draft:**

The members reviewed the draft written by Mr. Carignan. Mr. Helmreich suggested the revision of a minor grammatical error, then members agreed the draft was well written and suitable for submission.

**III. Old Business**

**FY15 Proposed School Department Budget #300:**

**Motion** was made by Mr. Helmreich to reconsider budget #300. Seconded by Mr. Fiore. Vote: 7 members in favor, with Mr. DeLuca opposed. **Motion carries.**

Mr. Helmreich referred to Monday night's School Committee meeting, at which many members of the FinCom were present. He said that there is about \$400K in Free Cash and that if \$150K was transferred to the School budget it could save 2 staff positions from being cut as well as provide most of the funding needed for supplies and materials. He recognized the risk of cutting the Free Cash in half but said that he feels that it's worth it.

**Motion** was made by Mr. Helmreich to add \$150K from Free Cash to budget #300 (School Department). Seconded by Mr. Dorney.

Discussion: Mr. DeLuca reiterated that using Free Cash for reoccurring expenses is not fiscally responsible.

Mr. Yunits said that the anticipated amounts for the fall's Free Cash are not available yet.

Dr. Baeta, Superintendent of Schools, said that the anticipated staffing cuts would take place in grades 1-4, making larger class sizes.

Mr. Ralph Stephanelli, resident, provided a handout with requests/questions for the FinCom. He asked that they be included in the record of the meeting (see attached). Mr. Stephanelli requested a breakdown for all costs associated with a free full-day kindergarten program, student population projection for the next 10 years and the impact of full-day kindergarten as well as the need for a Director of Technology. He said that he is raising these questions in light of the comments made about the need for an override.

Dr. Baeta said that he is prepared to make the 9.3 cuts to staff if needed. He said that he anticipates that not filling the positions vacated from retirements will lower that number.

Dr. Baeta also reminded the FinCom that layoffs will mean a large increase in Unemployment costs, which would start immediately on June 26th.

Mr. Bob Kimball, Selectman, urged the FinCom not to support Mr. Helmreich's motion. He noted that the town's debt is higher and that the future is uncertain.

Mr. Rotondi pointed out that no other town department has been made to cut positions, and that because of this, he will support the addition of Free Cash to the School budget.

Mr. Yunits said that a few years ago the town side made a lot of cuts, and he went on to review the positions on the town side of the budget that had been cut and are still lacking. He also noted that Norton is in the top 10% for a drop in school-age population.

Mr. Fiore said that he is conflicted in this decision. He said that the town recently received a AA+ bond rating because of its strong, stable cash levels. He said that this would be jeopardized if Free Cash levels dropped. He said that supporting the motion wouldn't be prudent.

Dr. Baeta said that he does not want this discussion to turn into a "Schools vs. Town Government" debate. He asked that Mr. Helmreich withdraw his motion.

Mr. Helmreich said that he would not withdraw the motion.

**Motion** was made by Mr. Tarantino to move to the vote. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.** Vote on motion to add \$150K of Free Cash to the Schools budget: Mr. Evans, Mr. Rotondi, and Mr. Helmreich in favor; Mr. Tarantino, Mr. DeLuca, Mr. Dorney, and Mr. Fiore opposed; Mr. Carignan abstained. **MOTION FAILS.**

#### Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2014 at 6:00 pm, prior to Town Meeting.

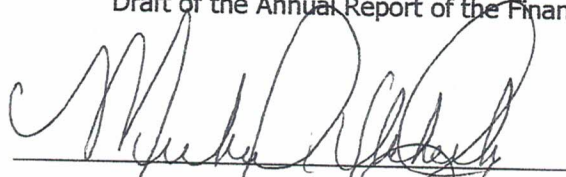
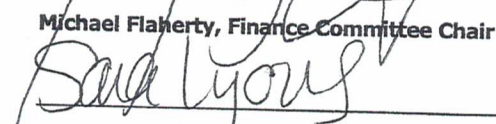
#### Adjournment

**Motion** was made by Mr. DeLuca to adjourn at 8:00 pm. Seconded by Mr. Dorney. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

#### **Documents Referenced:**

Minutes of April 23, 2014  
Annual Town Meeting Warrant  
Special town Meeting Warrant  
Budget #300 – School Department  
Draft of the Annual Report of the Finance Committee

Respectfully Submitted by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Flaherty, Finance Committee Chair  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary

5/12/14  
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Date Approved