

Finance Committee Meeting
March 1, 2017
7:00 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen’s Conference Room

Present: Chair, Michael Fiore; Vice-Chair, Richard Dorney; Peter Carignan; Thomas DeLuca; Walter Eykel; Michael Flaherty; Paul Helmreich; William Rotondi; Amy Sawyer.
Town Manager, Michael Yunits, was not present at this meeting.

Absent: Stephen Evans; Lee Tarantino.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Carignan to approve the October 5, 2016 Finance Committee minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: All in favor, with Ms. Sawyer abstaining. **Motion carries.**

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to approve the February 27, 2017 Finance Committee minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor, with Mr. Carignan and Ms. Sawyer abstaining. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

Proposed FY18 Budget Reviews:

#630 – Recreation

Ms. Bonnie Yezukevich, Parks and Recreation Coordinator, provided the FinCom with a handout outlining the events and programs that the department provides for the community of Norton. She noted that presently the department has only herself as a paid (part-time) employee and the rest of the commission are volunteers. Ms. Yezukevich noted that the budget sheet that the FinCom had been provided only includes the continuation of the part-time position but that the commission is actually requesting a full-time position for FY18 at a salary of \$45K. Ms. Jennifer Hoffman, Commission Member, informed the FinCom that the commission has voted that, if the full-time position is not included in the FY18 budget, they will disband. She said that the Commission feels strongly that the department will not be able to grow, or even sustain, without this full-time position. Mr. Helmreich expressed that he is in favor of funding this position and he recognized all the extra non-paid time that goes into the position.

Charges and Expenditures is level- funded at \$11K.

#141 – Assessors

Ms. Denise Ellis, Assessor, informed the FinCom that this budget proposal is a level-service that includes step increases as well as the 2% salary increase. She also noted that in the Charge and Expenditures budget the Office Supplies line increased from \$600 to \$2K for toner supplies. Ms. Ellis also explained that the Seminar and Conferences line increased by \$4K because the employees of the department need to retain certification. She also noted that Dues and Memberships is up in order to pay for membership to the MLS (Multiple Listing Service).

#147 – Treasurer/Collector

Ms. Catherine VanDyne, Treasurer/Collector, explained that the increases in Personnel Services include steps and the 2% increase. She also explained that Charges and Expenditures is up because the ACA (Affordable Care Act) was filed.

#158 – Tax Title Foreclosure

Ms. VanDyne stated that this budget request has increased to \$45K. She also informed the FinCom that the town received \$280,750 net from auction, which went into Free Cash.

#711 – Maturing Debt

This budget total is \$1,728,963.

#750 – Interest

This budget dropped almost \$60K from last year to \$546,149.

#910 – Employee Benefits

Ms. VanDyne explained that this budget of \$10,581,305 which includes \$460K for Medicare, reflects a 6% increase. She noted that if the town hadn't moved to the new plan that the increase would have been a 30% increase.

#911 – Unemployment

This budget decreased by \$10K from \$80K to \$70K.

#940 – Miscellaneous

This budget decreased slightly to \$750,921.

#510 – Board of Health

Mr. Chris Zahner, Health Agent, explained that the Personnel Services of \$136,814 includes step increases as well as the 2% increase. He also explained that the Charges and Expenditures is significantly lower because Professional Services from last year, involving 51 Maple St, are not needed this year. Mr. Zahner discussed the electric car charging grant. He said that the grant requires the town to provide the public with at least 2 charging stations. He said that the total cost for 3 cars and 6 chargers was \$11K, of which \$7,500 is reimbursed.

#438 – Landfill

Mr. Zahner explained that the amount of this budget has increased to \$12K because of the necessary monitoring of 51 Maple St (a hazardous waste site). He explained that annual follow up testing for both gas and ground water is needed to be compliant with the DEP.

#522 – Public Health Nurse

Mr. Zahner explained that there is a very slight increase overall in this budget, just the 2% salary increase as well as a \$200 increase in Charges and Expenditures for Dues and Memberships and Conferences.

#60 Sewer

Mr. Bernie Marshall, Water/Sewer Superintendent, first updated the FinCom on the status of the pump station. He said that it is 90% complete and is now accepting sewage from Wheaton College. Mr. Marshall reviewed the Sewer budget noting the increase in Engineering from \$50K to \$75K for work at the West Main Street housing complex and the schools.

#61 Water

Mr. Marshall updated the FinCom on the Plain Street water treatment facility. He explained that there have been a lot of delays because of archeological issues. He said that it is 90% on track, but that he did speak with Reps. Howitt and Barrows in regards to the project and he said that if things aren't resolved quickly that he will need to ask for assistance from town officials as well.

Mr. Marshall stated that the total Water budget for FY18 is \$3,313,927. He noted that there is an Engineering increase from \$50K to \$65K. He also noted there is an increase in Laboratory Services and Chemicals because of an increased need for sampling and testing.

Mr. Marshall informed the FinCom that the schools need assistance with plumbing because of poor water at the schools. Because of this he has raised the pH in the water which will help with the lead and copper levels in the water at the schools.

#541 – Council on Aging

Ms. Beth Rossi, Director of Council on Aging, explained that she would like to keep her hours at the increased amount of 40 hours per week. She explained that her role is both Director of the Senior Center as well as Director of Human Services. She stressed how vital her work is to the senior community. Ms. Rossi also stated that she would like to see the 10 hour per week outreach position remain in the budget. She noted that Norton is 2nd to last in the state for senior support.

#543 – Veterans

Ms. Estelle Flette, Veterans Agent, explained that the proposed budget includes an extra \$1K in Charges and Expenditures for a cell phone for her, and that Personnel Services includes the 2% increase. She also noted that the Veterans Benefits line remains level at \$230K.

#692 Memorial and Vets

Ms. Flette explained that this budget request is for the level-funding amount of \$1,500, which is used for parades, flag holders in cemeteries, etc.

III. Old Business

None.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2017 at 7:00 pm.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to adjourn at 8:40 pm. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Documents Referenced: Minutes of October 5, 2016
Minutes of February 27, 2017
FY18 Budget proposals for accounts - #630, #141, #147, #158, #711, #750, #910,
#911, #940, #510, #438, #522, #60, #61, #541, #543, #692
Recreation Supplemental worksheet

Respectfully Submitted by:

Michael Fiore, Finance Committee Chair

Date Approved

Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary