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TOWN OF NORTON

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room

MARCH 11, 2019

7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

**I. 7:00 P.M. Call to Order**

The March 11, 2019 meeting of the Finance Committee was held in the Board of Selectmen's Room and was called to order beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:00 P.M., by Mr. William Rotondi, Chairman.

**Members Present:**

Mr. Peter Carignan, Mr. Tom DeLuca, Mr. Richard Dorney, Mr. Walter Eykel, Mr. Paul Helmreich, Ms Aimee Sawyer, Mr. Aaron Smith, and Ms Bonnie Yezukevich.

Absent: Mr. Steven Evans, Mr. Mike Fiore

Also in attendance was Mr. Yunits, Town Manager, Mr. Gouveia, Town Moderator.

**II. New Business**

Mr. Rotondi thanked Mr. Yunits for getting some of the packets to the committee ahead of the meeting.

Mr. Gouveia spoke to the Committee regarding statements made on Social Media. He disagrees with the Town Manager that a particular person should resign from the Finance Committee because of those statements. Your job as Finance Committee members is to give your opinions. You are unique as a committee in that you should ask questions and give your opinions without political fallout.

**Proposed FY20 Budget Reviews:**

#630 – Recreation Department – Ms Rice, director was introduced. Mr. Yunits stated that the part time wages showing are the same number of hours as last year. Ms Rice stated that the budget increase is due to the repairs needed for the Pavilion at Leonard Park. Equipment updates are needed: for example, life guard chair needs repair or replacement.

**Questions asked of Ms Rice:**

1. Do we know why the electricity went up? Mr. Yunits explained that the credits from Hill St go to the highest demand areas/building. Since the pool is lower the rates are not covered by the credits.
2. Why is there such a large jump? Mr. Yunits explained that the town is in between power contracts bringing us to a higher rate. The town is going out to bid again.
3. Do we have to budget electricity per department or could we put them together as one? There's a meter on every property and allocation is per meter. But for budgeting could we bundle them under one category for

the entire town then break down each department. It is too confusing to do it that way and this method allows us to see what each department's expense is for each building.

4. Private residences and businesses are only allowed on the aggregation.

#175 – Planning – Mr. DiGiuseppe, director, introduced. The budget remains about the same as last year showing contractual increases. The town is very close to getting the Zoning map digitalized. Soon launching the new Town Master Plan, the last one was 20 years old. We received a \$20,000 grant for technical assistance and a \$30,000 grant for State Dept. of Revenue. This money will be used to update the Master Plan. The plan shows things like how our land will be used.

Questions asked of Mr. DiGiuseppe:

Are the electronic Zoning Maps already online? Yes. It is online and soon the public will be able to view these by clicking on a link under the Assessor's page.

1. Will it show the street and wetlands? Yes. It will drill down to the street level, environment data is also there.
2. Are there dates showing how long a zone have been in place? Not yet, but perhaps that would be worth looking into.
3. Can you give us highlights of successes of the current 20 year Master Plan? There were strong environmental plans and laws identified then. And going forward we are speaking about the village center. It is important to have a Master Plan that the town can work with. It should have game plan to show what steps to take in order to make future changes and future spending happen.
4. Is the work currently going on in the center independent of the Master Plan? Yes. They look at the Master plan but are running separate. We will have to incorporate this process in the new plan.
5. Will the cost of the Village Center Redesign be part of the upcoming meeting? No. We will have to raise money to pay for the engineering aspects. The big expense is to figure out how to deal with 123 and 140. We do not know what the cost will be yet.

#122 – Selectmen – Mr. Yunits stated the budget reflects the first year with a Full Time person and expenses are the same except for \$200 fees for attending conferences for licensing.

#135 – Town Manager – Mr. Yunits stated the budget reflects 2 staff people. The expenses have only gone up \$250.00.

#131 – Finance Committee – Mr. Yunits stated the budget is the same as last year.

Questions asked of Mr. Yunits:

1. Would it be beneficial to have email addresses in the town hall? Computers? It would benefit everyone to do away with paper, but would mean computers, etc. The selectmen use their own personal email today.
2. What about a separate drop box for this committee that we could just go into? That is more plausible.

#135 – Accounting – Mr. Yunits stated that the budget shows contractual salaries, annual audit shows an increase from \$24,000 to \$25,000, expenses show a slight increase under his book binding cost.

#151 – Legal – Mr. Yunits stated the budget is the same as last year. We never know what we be hit with year to year.

Questions asked of Mr. Yunits:

This year so far hasn't been bad. Correct. However, next year will go up as negotiations will start again.

#177 – Zoning Board – Mr. Yunits stated they have a small budget for supplies.

#192 – Municipal Building – Mr. Yunits stated that this budget went down. He stated that last year he requested \$240,600 this year he is requesting \$220,900. The bulk of the reduction is due to a large drop in electricity.

Do we know how much we are saving with these new lights? Yes, I know what was estimated, but could give you more exact from the electric company report.

Mr. Yunits continued: Last week you asked for a wish sheet, the total request is a 6.5% increase for a deficit of \$1,484,480. The simplest approach would be to cut each to 3% to likely get a balanced budget.

1. The cut you are speaking of is with the requested increases right not the operating budget? Correct not from the operating budget, but from the requested increases.
2. The total of money coming in is only up 2.2%. How much more money will we be getting? Unfortunately the rest are estimates, and we don't have firm numbers yet.
3. Any hard numbers with insurance yet? No.
4. Regarding the wish list, and other needs; have the CPAs done any projections as to how soon we will be in dire need. 1 year, 2 year, cliff? Or no cliff? We are in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of expansion sooner or later that will end. We have not projected that out.
5. Are we at a level of diminishing receipts due to our being affluent according to the state? Mr. Yunits replied: - I don't understand the formula but the state is talking about revising Chapter 70 formula, not sure if that will help. Mr. Helmreich says we should be at the point of diminishing receipts where we do not go down anymore.
6. Who is presenting at the next meeting? Schools, Water and Sewer, and Communications.
7. We have this \$1 ½ million additional seemingly reasonable requests and plans; wondering how we could get these done.

Discussion between the committee and Town Manager at length about overrides, examples of projects and how they are funded outside of operating budget, how to get the message to the townspeople, what would happen if another economic downturn occurs, understanding 'Free Cash' and the Town Government 101 meeting. March 20<sup>th</sup> 7p.m. there will be an informational session at the High School about the Town Hall/Center project. Also there will be an informational session about the 'stretch code', stating how the energy reduction must be set for building projects.

### III. Old Business

Mr. Rotondi asked again for minutes that were taken by members back to January 2018 that might not have been submitted yet.

### IV. Open items

Mr. Rotondi will ask Mr. Yunits to send school budget ahead of time again.

Next Meeting Monday March 18, 2019

### V. Minutes

Minutes for March 4, 2019 reviewed. Revisions were suggested.

Motion to accept minutes as amended by Mr. DeLuca.

Second by Mr. Helmreich

8 yes – 0 no - 1 Abstain due to absence at the meeting being reviewed.

VI. Adjournment

Mr. DeLuca motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 P.M.

Seconded by Mr. Helmreich

Unanimous

Respectively submitted by: William Rotondi 3/18/19  
William Rotondi, Finance Committee Chair Date Approved  
Patricia Tarantino  
Patricia Tarantino, Recording Secretary