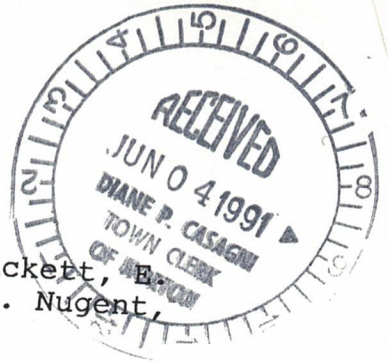


FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
March 18, 1991



Present: M. Brown, J. Desrochers, K. Eagan, M. Hackett, B. Hamilton, P. Helmreich, B. Kimball, C. MacQuown, R. Nugent, D. Ward

Minutes of February 27 were approved.

P. Helmreich informed the Committee that he received another letter in support of the Inspection Department and arguing against the cuts in that department.

P. Helmreich also received information relating to the court judgment on the Fire Department. The sums that are being asked represent the thirteen months previous to this fiscal year. Sums involving this fiscal year are being taken out of the current budget. The total judgment was \$48,000 of which the Town can recover \$8,200. \$23,000 of that represents monies for which the Town is responsible prior to this fiscal year and monies from the budget for this fiscal year cannot be used for those purposes.

P. Helmreich noted that only one department, The Council on Aging, has so far requested to come before the Committee to discuss their budget.

P. Helmreich also noted that there will be an April 1 regional meeting sponsored by MMA regarding cuts in state aid. The Town Manager and the School Superintendent are organizing representatives to attend the meeting. Committee members are also encouraged to attend.

P. Helmreich informed the Committee that S. Lombard decided to delete \$175,00 for unfunded raises from the 2 1/2 budget and to restore 2 firemen, 2 policemen, and 1 highway worker. He will continue to bargain in good faith all union contracts. The budget will show the change and will show that there is no money for raises. Any raises in contracts will result in a reduction of personnel. Discussion focused on concerns about the legal issues regarding the deletion of the \$175,000 and bargaining in good faith. P. Helmreich to request that S. Lombard consult with Town counsel for an opinion.

P. Helmreich also discussed letter from John Tyler sent to S. Lombard and Governor Weld giving his analysis of the Town budget for FY '91 and '92 and stating his concern over tax increases.

Tonight's agenda: the formula 2 1/2 budget for the schools

M. Splaine presented the Committee his recommended formula 2 1/2 budget for fiscal 1992. He said that this is a budget that maintains the integrity of the educational program and applies

the reductions equitably while providing a core education for all students.

M. Splaine said this budget reflects the reduction of \$941,555 and that he reviewed every position in the school system and devised a plan that will be in place in September. He noted that state aid cuts are not reflected in this budget.

M. Splaine noted that this is a sound and balanced budget and is not designed as a plan to force parents to vote for an override. He reiterated that this is a minimum maintenance budget to survive. He also said this budget is 9% less than the first budget he submitted.

M. Splaine discussed reductions in personnel, reductions in the athletic budget (\$7,322), the cafeteria budget (\$12,000), and the \$124,391 reduction in the school budget. He then discussed the implications of the reductions for elementary schools, the Norton Middle School, and the High School. M. Splaine spoke about the characteristics of his reduction plan, noting that the reduction force is evenly distributed among the elementary, middle and high school staffs, that the core curriculum is still provided, and that class size is reasonable.

M. Splaine answered questions from Committee members regarding changes in the school population; the costs for special needs children; the consequences of eliminating home economics and industrial arts; teachers' salaries; the clerical expense line item in the Principals' Offices; the loss of the Librarian; travel expenses; why there are no administrative cuts; expenses associated with transportation; and level funding of the cafeteria budget.

P. Helmreich thanked Dr. Splaine and School Committee members for coming before the Committee.

Committee members next discussed the override. P. Helmreich suggested that members take a vote on the override at the Finance Committee Meeting on March 27. P. Helmreich reminded Committee members that according to the Town Charter the Committee is appointed to review, discuss and advise the Town on fiscal matters. He said that it is important to take a vote and that this is not setting a precedent. The Committee agreed to accept sealed ballot votes from Committee members who are unable to be present.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.