



TOWN OF NORTON
FINANCE COMMITTEE

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NORTON TOWN CLERK

Minutes of the Meeting
October 3, 1994

CALL TO ORDER: 7:34 p.m. by Jack Nicolas, Chair.

Attendance: Jack Nicolas, Chair, Tom Deluca, Tim Phelan, Jackie Desrochers, Donna Summerfield, Michael Thomas, and Paul Helmreich. Absent: Julia Sweet, Mike Fiore, and Bill Gouveia. Others Present: Walter Lindberg, Town Manager, Selectmen Patty Graney and Ken Zanoni.

MINUTES

Desrochers made a motion to accept the Minutes of September 28, 1994. Seconded by Thomas. Vote: 6 in favor and 1 abstention (Deluca).

Special Presentation

A presentation was made to out-going chairman, Phil Zawasky for his many years of service to the Town of Norton. Chairman, Jack Nicolas presented Phil with a gavel plaque honoring Phil's position as Chairman last year. Phil resigned from the committee in September due to a promotion at work that would require a great deal of his time.

NEW BUSINESS

Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)

The SWAC made a presentation reviewing the work they had done in the spring and the progress they have made collecting bids since the annual town meeting.

When they received the results of the bidding process they realized that there may be an opportunity for additional recyclable items than first expected. This includes such items as magazines, junk mail, and cereal boxes.

The cost of bags will be .35¢, .65¢, and .90¢ each. A committee member questioned whether there would be "bulky-waste" pick-up (chairs, etc...). There will be allowances for one bulky item per week but additional items will cost extra.

The projected start up date is January 1995. They are working with the water

department and are expecting to bill once a year with a notation on the Water bill explaining the charges for waste disposal. The rubbish disposal company will bill monthly to individual homes based on how many bags are used.

The start up cost will be \$5,900. Some of this money will go toward software changes and billing lists (adding names of people who don't have town water). A \$4,400 balance will be ongoing every year as charge back to the water department. It includes collecting money from the stores for bag sales. The first bill will probably arrive in Mid-February. There should be a surge in bag sales initially because people will run out and buy bags to start the program.

The SWAC has applied for a grant from the State for the recycling bins and for education of recycling. This will help supply the information citizens will need to help the program run smoothly.

The average household in Norton will use 1.2 medium-size bags per week.

Helmreich suggested asking the Water Department to split the fixed-fee into two payments each year just like they do with their own bills.

The "trash disposal" line under Expenses FY96 (page 2 of handout) -- the trash disposal is funded 100% by bag purchases. Uncollectable fees will be funded by having a 20% mark-up included in the fixed fee.

The Solid Waste Advisory will be recommending the figure \$277,402 at the town meeting because if they have guessed wrong they want a cushion to keep from becoming in violation of a town agreement. Phelan suggested they work with the town accountant and town manager to do a cash flow analysis.

The Committee made suggestions to SWAC about the wording of their Article and also the timing of their first billing.

Hazardous Waste collections were looked into but are extremely costly, averaging \$25,000 per day. They did apply for funding for a Used Oil Container.

The SWAC will contact the town manager and town counsel to work on the wording of the Article and get back to the FINCOM by Wednesday, October 5, 1994, so that a vote may be taken.

Communications Department

E911 was scheduled to go on line approximately October 15, 1994. They are now pushed back to November 16, 1994. They are hoping to get more use out of the dispatchers if they move the communications center out of the basement into the front of the police department. They would sit in the police area with bullet proof covering, and could do paper work and/or pass paper work through a secured area. This would make for a more efficient communications department.

If the communications department is moved to the police department it would accomplish 3 things: (1) It would allow for more space to keep the records department, (2) we can upgrade the console, and (3) give more security space. The police department could be open 24 hours a day with the communications department in a secure area. A computer floor has already been put down in the police department but the police chief assured the FINCOM that it would not go to waste if the computer equipment was not voted in at town meeting. Motorola has the computer equipment in stock.

Questions were asked as to the feasibility of moving old equipment. The equipment is 15 years old, it could last another ten years or another 10 minutes. The main concern is the electronic control cabinet. It is a chance they are willing to take to move the equipment.

The members of the FINCOM were concerned that purchase orders were filled out and equipment was ordered without the funding by appropriation. The chief of communications has not signed any purchase orders.

All police officers will be trained for E911 back-up answering for free by the State. The fire chief feels that the situation right now is very bad and that they should move the department. The town manager has not made a recommendation on this issue as of tonight but he will be slowing the moving process down as of tomorrow. This will give people more time to work through the problems that the move may cause. He also recommended that the finance committee support this at town meeting.

The town manager made clear to the committee that by installing 911 in the rear of the building then moving it to the front in another three months or so will have financial costs. He feels these costs will be worth it in the long run because the time will allow for better planning. If Walter can give a firm bid on any of the extra costs then he will move that number at town meeting.

Selectman Ken Zanoni spoke on his concerns about renovating a building that is already plagued with heating and ventilation problems. He would rather see money be allocated toward getting in a consultant to evaluate and prioritize the problems plaguing the municipal center. He was also disturbed by the fact that computer cabinets were ordered without a purchase order. He feels this is wrong and a mistake.

Selectman Patty Graney spoke in support of the move noting the department will benefit a great deal by being up front in the police station this will provide them access to the police to help dispatch during clutch times.

OLD BUSINESS

Charter review. Thomas made a motion to TABLE the charter changes discussion until Wednesday, October 5, 1994. Seconded by Phelan. Vote: unanimously in favor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Walter Lindberg, Town Manager handed out the draft for the Special.

Article 3 - Part-time Account Clerk: this would be someone to work approximately 10 hours a week. The funding would come from free cash or stabilization fund.

Article 4 - Industrial Development: this is a re-take of Article 15.

Article 5 - Household Hazardous Waste: \$11,000 was appropriated 1 year ago but it takes about \$19,000 to do a 3-4 hour day. The money would come from the stabilization fund.

Article 6 - Underground Storage Tank Removal: stabilization or capital improvements fund.

Comments

The town manager was asked his opinion of the wording of the SWAC Article using the word "appropriation". Local revenue section of the re-cap sheet is set by the amount they estimate for revenue. It will increase the bottom line revenue. They need the appropriation to get funding. Helmreich suggested they approve the budget then authorize the water department to collect fees for that budget. The use of the word "appropriate" in the Warrant Article bothers many of the FINCOM members because they feel the citizens will think the funds will come out of their taxes.

NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA

Warrant Articles for Annual and Special Town Meetings/Recommendations for Articles

Charter changes

ADJOURNMENT

Deluca made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Phelan. Vote: unanimously in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia C. Mello

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Recording Secretary