

Finance Committee Meeting
March 31, 2008
7:30 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room

Present: Chairman, Lee Tarantino; Vice-Chair, Michael Thomas; Pasquale Barletta; Robert Bouchard; Thomas DeLuca; Jackie Desrochers; Wayne Graf; Paul Helmreich; Philip Zawasky; Town Manager, James Purcell.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to Order at 7:35.

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Helmreich to approve the March 19, 2008 Finance Committee minutes as written. Second by Mr. Thomas. Vote: All in favor, with Ms. Desrochers abstaining. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

Mr. Purcell provided the FinCom with 2 handouts outlining his **recommendations for the town's operating budget**. He stated that his priorities within the budget were: Public Safety, Public Health, and Public Works.

Mr. Purcell said that he gave both the Police and Fire Departments, target numbers of level funded budgets. He told them that once they have that number, they could determine how the funds are dispersed within the budget. He said that he gave the same direction to the Department of Public Health.

Mr. Purcell said that the proposed budget would support having 2 people per shift, 24 hours per day, in the Communications department. He stressed how important this is in keeping the public safe. The additional employees for this will be phased in.

Mr. Purcell reviewed the handout outlining **Program Reductions** as follows:

- There will be a reduction of 17.5 hours per week in the Assessor's office.
- There will be a reduction of 17.5 hours per week in the Treasurer/Collector's office.
- There will be a reduction of 4 hours per week in the Clerk's office.
- There will be a reduction of 6.5 hours per week of an Admin. Asst.'s position in the Police Department.
- There will be a reduction in the training of Call Fire Fighters by 50%, as well as reduction of use of on-call Fire Fighters.
- There will be a reduction of 11% of hours in the Inspections Department.
- Pending approval, the Agent for the Council on Aging will be eliminated and those duties will be combined with the duties of the Veteran's agent. (Discussion took place concerning the possible problems and drawbacks to this combination of positions).
- There will be a \$153,375.92 cut in Library funding. Mr. Purcell said that this is cutting about 1/3 of the library's budget.
- The contracted service of the YMCA to operate the town's Recreation program will be eliminated.

Mr. Purcell said that with the above-stated reductions the town's budget balances. Mr. Tarantino pointed out that this budget does not include negotiated contracts.

A discussion took place on what the impact would be of such a significant reduction of funding to the library.

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Mr. Helmreich pointed out that this budget is dependent upon the Sewer becoming an Enterprise Fund. He asked Mr. Purcell when he would have a contingent plan. Mr. Helmreich stated that he would have a hard time voting on numbers that may not in fact hold.

III. Old Business

Mr. Tarantino asked that FinCom members commit to being liaisons between the FinCom and a particular town committee or department. The following assignments have been made:

School Dept. – Mr. Bouchard & Mr. Barletta

Highway Dept. – Mr. Zawasky

Water/Sewer – Mr. Helmreich

Library – Mr. DeLuca

Police Dept. – Mr. Thomas

Fire Dept. – Mr. Graf

Selectmen/Town Man. – Mr. Tarantino

Board of Health – (unassigned)

Conserv. Comm. – (unassigned)

Mr. Tarantino said that he would write a letter to each committee/department notifying them of the name of their contact person on the FinCom.

Regarding an issue that was discussed at the March 19, 2008 FinCom meeting, Mr. Helmreich asked Mr. Purcell if he knew whether or not the Deputy Director of the town's Emergency Management Agency, if given the requested stipend, would then be eligible for benefits through the town. Mr. Purcell said that he is "99% sure" that the answer is 'no', but that he will confirm that answer and let the FinCom know.

Mr. Helmreich raised the subject of the Sewer Enterprise Fund, saying he presently feels uneasy about supporting the switch to an Enterprise fund and questions whether or not it is the appropriate time for the town to make such a move. Mr. Helmreich stated that he thinks the idea of the Sewer being an Enterprise account is a good one, but would like a lot more information from the Water/Sewer department on the subject.

Mr. Purcell stated that a conference call would take place on Wednesday, April 12th, between the consultant and himself as well as the Water/Sewer dept. and the Town Accountant. He said they will discuss whether or not it is a good idea to go forward with the Enterprise Fund at this time.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for April 2, 2008 at 7:30pm.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Zawasky to adjourn at 8:55 pm. Second by Mr. Thomas. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Respectfully Submitted by:


Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary