

Finance Committee Meeting
March 7, 2012
7:30 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen’s Conference Room

Present: Chair, Paul Helmreich; Robert Camp; Peter Carignan; Thomas DeLuca; Jackie Desrochers; Stephen Evans; Michael Flaherty; William Rotondi; Michael Thomas; Wayne Graf.

Also present: Town Manager, Michael Yunits.

Absent: Vice Chair, Lee Tarantino.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm.

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to approve the March 5, 2012 Finance Committee minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

Dr. Ansay addressed the Finance Committee regarding the FY13 proposed School Department budget as follows:

#300 – School Department – The requested budget for FY13 is an increase of \$724K over FY12. The salaries reflect a 0% increase for this year and a 1% increase for next. This budget is level-funded with the exception of contractual (step) increases in salaries and Special Education increases. Dr. Ansay pointed out that the majority of the budget goes to salaries and Special Education funding. The Chapter 70 contributes 44.37%, a figure of \$12,147,905. The rest would come from the town, at \$15,231,907, a total of \$27,379,812.

Dr. Ansay noted that as Special Education costs rise, Regular Education costs need to decrease. Costs rise about \$500K per year, so if the budget is level-funded it is actually a budget cut. Dr. Ansay noted that in 2004 there were 205 teachers employed in the Norton Public Schools, but in 2011 there were only 169.

The expenditure per pupil/year is \$200 for Norton and \$446 for the state average.

Dr. Ansay said that substitute salaries are budgeted high for FY13 because of anticipated maternity leaves.

Mr. Helmreich pointed out to the FinCom that a lot of questions, including the Chapter 70 formula, are answered in the appendix of the School Budget binder that was handed out.

Mr. Camp questioned why 24/7 Special Education students are not covered in part by health insurance. Dr. Ansay said it has been looked into and it is not an option. Ms. Jeanne Sullivan, Special Education Director, added that sometimes transporting special education students is not safe and therefore a residential setting is needed. It was also noted that services are provided to special education students until age 22.

Mr. Tom Golotta, School Committee member, explained that the town also has a Special Education “deductible” of \$38,916 that is paid out before any reimbursement from the state occurs.

Mr. Evans questioned where the program fees are spent. Dr. Ansay explained that transportation fees pay for some transportation and sports fees pay for some sports, etc.

Mr. Camp suggested the use of Kindles in place of paper text books. Dr. Ansay said that it was looked into and that the e-copy is just as expensive.

Mr. DeLuca noted that there is a \$549K difference between the School Department budget request and the Town Manager’s recommendation.

Mr. Yunits presented the FY13 following budget proposals as follows:

#141 – Assessors – The total requested budget is \$141,043. Mr. Yunits noted that there would be a reduction in salary because of a position replacement.

#541 – Council on Aging – This budget would be level-funded at \$7,960.

#543 – Veterans – The salary line has been reduced because of regionalization. Norton pays 23% of services for 3 Veteran’s officers in the amount of \$46,619 (which includes benefits). Each town is required to have its own secretary at 20 hours. The towns included in the regionalization are Norton, Foxboro, Mansfield, and Easton.

Mr. DeLuca pointed out that the town entered into the regionalization in order to save money, yet the town is now spending more money for less hours of a Vet’s Agent.

#692 – Memorial and Veteran’s Day – The budget is \$1K. This is for flags and other small parade-related costs.

III. Old Business

IV. Other Business/Announcements

Mr. Tom Golotta presented Mr. Yunits with a commemorative shovel from the groundbreaking ceremony at Norton High School.

Mr. Yuntis informed the FinCom that the Capital Improvements Committee had their first meeting and the School Department requested \$540K for the repair of the JCS School roof.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2012 at 7:30pm.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to adjourn at 9:00 pm. Seconded by Ms. Desrochers. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Documents Referenced: Minutes of March 5, 2012
#300 – School Department budget
#141 – Assessors budget
541 – Council on Aging budget
543 – Veterans budget
#692 – Memorial and Vets Day budget

Respectfully Submitted by: _____

Paul Helmreich, Finance Committee Chair

Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary