

Finance Committee Meeting
May 1, 2013
7:30 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen's Conference Room

Present: Chair, Lee Tarantino; Vice-Chair, Michael Flaherty; Peter Carignan; Thomas DeLuca; Richard Dorney; Paul Helmreich; William Rotondi; Michael Thomas.

Also present: Town Manager, Michael Yunits.

Absent: Jackie Desrochers; Stephen Evans.

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 April 29, 2013 Finance Committee minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

Southeastern Vocational Technical School:

Mr. Yunits informed the FinCom that, based on the Ways and Means Budget, Southeastern Vo-Tech could be asking for an additional \$37,291 for FY14. He went on to explain that the formula for tuition for the school is not based on student enrollment for each town. He said that the governor had requested that the formula be changed so that 100% of the tuition was based on enrollment but that the legislature approved that only 15% would be.

Updated Draft of Estimated Revenues and Expenditures:

Mr. Yunits informed the FinCom that the Charter School tuition will drop \$73K from the last estimate. It was also noted that there is still an overall shortfall of \$17,749 that would need to be balanced. Mr. Yunits spoke of the possibility of making up for this shortfall by taking an additional \$25K from the Ambulance Fund.

Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

Mr. Yunits review the articles as follows:

Article 2 – Collective Bargaining – There are 4 contracts that were negotiated after the October 2012 Town Meeting – Highway/Water/Sewer, Fire Department, Police Department, Superior Officers. \$33,900 would come from Free Cash.

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to recommend Article 2 in the amount of \$33,900. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Article 3 – Operating Budget Supplements – These include \$15K for Legal Services to finish the year, \$114,337 (the final figure) for Snow and Ice, and \$12K for Gas and Diesel. Mr. Yunits said that he would like to wait until the October Town Meeting to address the Town Clerk's request for the ongoing expense of a software maintenance fee. The total amount for this article, without the Clerk's request, is \$154,699.77.

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to recommend Article 3 in the amount of \$154,699.77. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Articles 4 & 5 – Water and Sewer FY14 Budget Supplements – These articles shouldn't be needed.

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to recommend "no action" for Article 4. Seconded by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to recommend "no action" for Article 5. Seconded by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Article 6 – HS Feasibility Study Funds to HS Construction – Mr. Bob Kimball, Selectman, addressed the FinCom regarding this article. He explained that once the study was finished, in order to receive the reimbursement, the town had to bond the total amount of what was spent (\$506,802). This number was certified and the town has already received the reimbursement. Therefore, there isn't a "leftover" \$93K available.

Mr. Helmreich expressed his regret that the article wasn't changed to state that the vote would "rescind the sum of \$93K from the \$600K" and then put the \$93K into another account. He stressed that the infrastructure issues that need to be addressed and worked on this summer and cannot wait until the October Town Meeting.

Mr. Kimball listed a few town accounts (Track and bleachers, Jackson Property) that have funds in them and mentioned that this could also be a possibility.

Mr. Helmreich said that he doesn't want to appear as the School Building Committee is asking for more money than what was appropriated because that is not the case, though people may interpret it as such.

Follow-Up – Later in the evening, the discussion resumed and the possibility of taking the \$93K from Capital improvements was discussed. Mr. Thomas also brought up the option of taking the \$93K from the Stabilization Fund.

It was decided to discuss at a later meeting.

Article 11 – Capital Amendment, Highway Truck – It was noticed that the previously voted number was an even \$146K and that the number on the newest support materials is \$146,311.

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to reconsider Article 11. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: All in favor.

Motion carries.

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to recommend Article 11 in the amount of \$146,311. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Articles 14 & 15 – Affordable Housing – Mr. Bob Kimball addressed the FinCom regarding these 2 articles. He said that the purpose of these articles is not to stop affordable housing, but the opposite – to encourage the builders to build the housing for which they have permits. He said that under the present by-law, if after 1 year the builder has not begun building then it no longer counts as part of the 10% requirement and other builders can then apply. Mr. Kimball said that a problem is that builders can apply for extensions and gave an example of Strawberry Fields noting that they have had 6 extensions.

Mr. Thomas pointed out that limiting extensions is not addressed in the proposed by-law.

Mr. DeLuca noted that Article 14 does not give a time limit. Mr. Thomas agreed and Mr. Tarantino said that he thought that it wasn't definitive enough.

Mr. Kimball said that he would take these concerns back to town counsel and return to a later FinCom meeting to re-discuss.

Mr. Helmreich said that he supports Article 15 and getting the state law changed, but does not agree with the home-rule law (Article 14).

It was discussed that these articles could possibly wait until the October Town Meeting.

Report of the Finance Committee Draft:

Mr. Flaherty submitted his Report of the Finance Committee draft to be reviewed by the FinCom members.

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to recommend the Finance Committee Report as written. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

III. Old Business

Veterans District Update:

Mr. Yunits informed the FinCom that there was a meeting last night for the District. He explained that the way that salaries for the District are set is that the Town Managers, for the towns in which the VSOs are based, recommend salaries to the Veterans District board, who would then approve them.

Mr. Yunits said that he would have information at the next meeting on what Norton would be paying to take part in the District in FY14.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2013 at 7:30 pm.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to adjourn at 9:05 pm. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: Unanimous.

Motion carries.

Documents Referenced: Minutes of April 29, 2013
Special Town Meeting Warrant draft
Article 3 Operating Budget Supplements worksheet
Report of the Finance Committee draft

Respectfully Submitted by: _____

Lee Tarantino, Finance Committee Chair

Date Approved

Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary