

Finance Committee Meeting
October 5, 2016
7:00 PM
Municipal Center – Selectmen’s Conference Room

Present: Chair, Michael Fiore; Vice-Chair, Richard Dorney; Peter Carignan; Thomas DeLuca; Stephen Evans; Walter Eykel; Michael Flaherty; Paul Helmreich; William Rotondi.
Also present: Town Manager, Michael Yunits.

Absent: Lee Tarantino; Michael Thomas.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to approve the September 21, 2016 Finance Committee minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

II. New Business

Mr. Yunits reported that the Free Cash was certified at \$2,627,641.

Budget Supplements:

Police Department – Chief Brian Clark addressed the FinCom in regards to the proposed budget supplements (Article 3). The total amount requested for Salaries is \$99,802 - \$55,594 for Overtime that had been previously cut from the budget, as well as \$44,208 for the hiring of 2 new officers. The amount requested for Expenses is \$12,800, for a total request of \$112,602.

School Department – Superintendent Dr. Baeta addressed the FinCom in regards to the proposed budget supplements (Article 3). To offset sports fees, \$150K was requested, and \$126 was requested for materials and supplies. It was noted that Mr. Yunits is instead recommending \$75K for materials and supplies.

Warrant Articles:

Article 2 – Separation Expenses – Mr. Yunits stated that the total for this article is \$27,492.12, all of which is for sick and vacation time buy-back. He detailed it out as \$5,564.18 for Treasurer, \$2,855.30 for Assessor, \$7616.04 for Conservation, \$7,317.82 for Planning, and \$4138.78 for Inspection.

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to recommend Article 2 in the amount of \$27,492.12 coming from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Helmreich. Vote: 8 in favor, with Mr. DeLuca abstaining. **Motion carries.**

Article 3 – FY17 Operating Budget Amendments – Mr. Yunits explained that this article includes putting funding back into salary and expenses (that were cut last spring) for the following departments: Selectmen, Town Manager, Assessor, Data Processing, Elections, Police, Fire, Communications, Dog Officer, School Department, Landfill, Council on Aging, Veterans, Library, Interest, and Medicare. The total amount for this article is \$707,922.

Mr. Helmreich asked about the 70-30 split and also noted that teachers often buy supplies with their own money, particularly when supplies funding is cut. He said that he supports the addition of the \$126K for supplies that the School Department has requested as opposed to the \$75K that is being recommended by the Town Manager. Mr. Yunits explained that he would rather hold some funds for the Capital Fund, Stabilization Fund, Snow & Ice (which may or may not be necessary), OPEB, etc.

Motion was made by Mr. Helmreich to recommend Article 3 in the amount of \$757,722, which includes \$124,800 for Expenses for the School Department instead of the \$75K recommended by the town manager. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty.

Discussion: Mr. Fiore expressed concern about over-spending Free Cash. Mr. Helmreich said that he'd rather see \$100K go to the School Dept than into Stabilization.

Vote: Mr. Helmreich in favor, 8 members opposed. **Motion FAILS.**

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to recommend Article 3 in the amount of \$707,922 as recommended and detailed by the town manager. Seconded by Mr. Rotondi. Vote: 8 members in favor, with Mr. DeLuca abstaining. **Motion carries.**

Article 6 – Capital Improvements Funding – Mr. Yunits noted that his recommendation is that \$800K goes into the Capital Account.

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to recommend Article 6 in the amount of \$800K. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Article 7 – Capital Plan Amendment – This includes, but is not limited to, Police Department vehicles, Fire Department mapping software, tile floors for the School Department, Board of Health, and Highway vehicles, for a total of \$388,683.

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to recommend Article 7 in the total amount of \$388,683 with \$312,683 coming from Capital and \$76K from Ambulance Fund. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Article 8 – Tax Exemption for Veterans – This article would switch the tax exemption requirement from 5 years residency to 1 year.

Motion was made by Mr. Dorney to recommend Article 8 as written. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Article 9 – Open Space Plan Consultant Funding – This would fund a consultant (for \$20K) to work with SERPED to update the town's open space plan.

Motion was made by Mr. Dorney to recommend Article 9 in the amount of \$20K coming from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Articles 10 and 11 – PILOT for 20 Clapp St and 36 Clapp St – Mr. Yunits explained that these two articles are to enter into a PILOT agreement for the Wheaton solar project. He said that he would provide the FinCom with the agreement for their review.

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to recommend Article 10 as written. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: 8 members in favor, with Mr. Evans abstaining. **Motion carries.**

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to recommend Article 11 as written. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: 8 members in favor, with Mr. Evans abstaining. **Motion carries.**

Article 13 – Stormwater Management Bylaw – Mr. Yunits explained that the town is required to have a bylaw that deals with projects involving stormwater runoff, etc. It would establish a local stormwater runoff control program to minimize/eliminate erosion at construction sites. He also stated that this would be a part of the building permit process.

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to recommend Article 13 as written in the warrant. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: 8 members in favor, with Mr. Helmreich abstaining. **Motion carries.**

Article 15 – Zoning Amendment – Mr. Yunits recommended waiting to vote on this article until after the Planning Board votes.

Article 16 – OPEB Funding – Mr. Yunits stated that \$70K was put in the fund last year and that he is recommending that \$80K be put in this year. He said that the only time the town can use the funds is when it is fully funded, which doesn't happen, but he noted that the town is also required to put something in the fund.

Motion was made by Mr. Helmerich to recommend Article 16 in the amount of \$10K. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Mr. Yunits said that this low amount does not look good. Mr. Rotondi noted that funding the \$80K would save the town money in interest rates when applying for borrowing. Mr. Helmreich said that it is impractical and unusable.

Vote: Mr. Evans and Mr. Helmreich in favor, with 6 members opposed, and Mr. Eykel abstaining.

Motion FAILS.

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to recommend Article 16 in the amount of \$80K. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: 8 members in favor, with Mr. Helmreich opposed. **Motion carries.**

Article 17 – Stabilization Fund –

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to recommend Article 17 in the amount of \$100K going into Stabilization from Free Cash. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Authorization to Pay Bills:

Motion was made by Mr. DeLuca to allow Chairman Michael Fiore, Vice-Chairman Richard Dorney, or Town Manager Michael Yunits, in the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, as the authorized signatures for payment of all Norton Finance Committee bills and payroll. Seconded by Mr. Flaherty. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

III. Old Business

Warrant Articles:

Article 1 – Unpaid Bills – Mr. Yunits informed the committee that there is a new bill to add to this article, a \$19.80 bill for Columbia Gas. The new total for this article is \$1149.24.

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to reconsider Article 1. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to recommend Article 1 in the amount of \$1149.24. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: All in favor. **Motion carries.**

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2016 at 6:00 pm in the Norton High School cafeteria, prior to Town Meeting.

Adjournment

Motion was made by Mr. Flaherty to adjourn at 8:30 pm. Seconded by Mr. DeLuca. Vote: Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Documents Referenced: Minutes of September 21, 2016
Town Meeting Warrant draft
Prior Year Bills worksheet
Separation Expenses worksheet
Operating Budget Amendments worksheet
Capital Expenses worksheet
Stormwater Management Bylaw

Respectfully Submitted by:

Michael Fiore, Finance Committee Chair

Date Approved

Sara Lyons, Finance Committee Secretary