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TOWN OF NORTON

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Norton Media Center Studio
MAY 20, 2019
7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

I. 7:00 P.M. Call to Order

The May 20, 2019 meeting of the Finance Committee was held in the Norton Media Center Studio and was called to order at 7:00 P.M., by Mr. William Rotondi, Chairman.

Members Present: Mr. Peter Carignan, Mr. Thomas DeLuca, Mr. Richard Dorney, Mr. Stephen Evans, Mr. Walter Eykel, Mr. Michael Fiore, Mr. Paul Helmreich, Ms Aimee Sawyer, Mr. Aaron Smith, and Ms Bonnie Yezukevich.

Absent: None

Also in attendance was Mr. Yunits, Town Manager

II. New Business

Review, Discuss, Vote, and/or Revote Town Meeting Requests

Mr. Rotondi began with stating that the Goal of this committee is to make the best possible decision for the entire town, not the Fire Department, vs, Police Department, vs School or other departments.

STM

Article 1 – Vote for new Municipal and Senior/Community Center

Mr. DeLuca motioned to reconsider Article 1

Mr. Fiore seconded

7 – yes

4 – no

This article was previously considered and voted on at the 5/13/19 meeting. The request to reconsider was to allow full committee attendance on this article. The original vote failed (5 No- 4 Yes). Discussion went forward.

Some of the points made:

*The town is not in good shape and cannot continue to rely on Free Cash every year. The example given of Plainville running into major problems by relying on Free Cash until the year there was none. Then they were in the negative. We need an override so we are not continuing to rely on Free Cash.

*Mr. Kimball read from the 2011 Town Report that at that time the town budget was \$756,000 below the requests. Yet that was the year we approved the High School Addition and Remodel. We are in better shape today and have the ability to build this new complex now.

*Parallel vs Serial Approach:

- Mr. Wannamaker stated there are two approaches: Parallel - where worksite and plan moves along together which is the most economic and lower risk. Or Serial - where we wait until the site is ready, then begin the construction and at that point the cost to build will have increased. The Parallel Approach is a strategic decision where everyone benefits.
- Mr. Smith stated that he doesn't see the rush and this should be part of a Holistic Approach.
- Mr. Rotondi asked that if we take the Parallel Approach, can we move ahead with the project while still working on the financial modeling and projections he has requested? Mr. Yunits said yes, but we cannot solicit additional funds and grants until this Article is approved. We cannot get bids until this is approved.

* The concerns with the entire proposal:

- Mr. Helmreich stated recent examples of the problems with approving a plan for new construction; the costs continue to increase each year for unseen items. He is not ready to approve until we have firm numbers. In the past, when we built a school we had the site first, then building began, I am opposed to spending money when sites are not ready.
- Mr. Yunits stated that we have two excellent contractors for this project. Also mentioned recent successful projects: Middle School, Library, Police Station, Remodel of High School, 2 new roofs, new window project. Hopes this project will not be held hostage because of Water & Sewer Project cost issues.
- Ms O'Brien stated that the appropriation is up to and not to exceed \$25,700,000.00. This total has a 4% increase for the next two years included so we will avoid going back for more funds and the total might be less when completed. There'll be an initial amount paid out to get the project started; then payments will be made quarterly. The Building Committee will be actively meeting throughout the project to keep close control. By meeting quarterly, they will be watching cost and be able to change scope as needed to stay under the approved amount.

*Construction Site questions:

- Ms Sawyer asked why are we hiring someone to oversee EPA's cleanup and deconstruction on property we do not yet own? This is to protect the town. Ms O'Brien stated the site is being cleaned by EPA and the town will not accept the property until it is clean.
- Ms. Sawyer stated concern about what we may find under the building. Mr. Yunits stated that there is boring going on and we will know what is under there.
- Mr. Kimball stated that if we don't have a clean bill of health on the site we cannot take it.
- Mr. Rotondi states that this is not a political issue, however, it is difficult to do consider this without the additional information he has requested.
- Ms O'Brien stated that there is a new Master Town Plan in the works, and then we will have a better roadmap for the town.

* Condition of the current buildings:

- Ms Rossi stated some of her concerns
 - The Seniors are parking behind the school barn
 - There are no cameras back there and would not know if someone fell

- Seniors have been seen climbing over snow banks
- Dining area is overcrowded
- Many come to center to eat because they are hungry in these overcrowded rooms
- We are counseling people in open rooms with no privacy
- Concern over lawsuits.
- Mr Carmichel, the Building Inspector stated that the he inspected the building today and the Senior Center Building has about 5-6 years before it is condemned.
- Mr Carmichel, the Building Inspector also spoke about the Town Hall issues:
 - regarding heating/cooling waste because the building has no insulation,
 - open shafts and fire hazards,
 - cracks in walls,
 - too many items to list.
 Both of these building are past their life.
- Mr. Dorney stated that we need to bring the town buildings up to code. He also mentioned that the town of Berkeley had to vacate their building and use trailers for 3 years. We do not want this to happen in Norton.

Mr. DeLuca motioned to recommend Article 1 for the Special Town Meeting to be held June 3, 2019.

Mr. Smith seconded

6 - Yes

5 - No

Motion passes to recommend Article 1

Reserve Fund Transfer Request – Fuel Expense

Mr. Yunits request that \$12,000 be transferred from Miscellaneous to supplement the FY19 Fuel Expenses due to increases in fuel costs.

Mr Dorney motioned to move \$12,000 from Miscellaneous Account to 1-940-540-5481

Mr. Carignan questioned the account and made the correction that the funds were from the Reserve to the Highway Dept.

Mr. DeLuca seconded

Unanimous

III. Old Business

IV. Open items

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 30, 2019 at 7:00 P.M. at the High School Library. Joint meeting with Board of Selectman, School Committee, Finance Committee

Mr. Rotondi asked the Finance Committee to suggest topics for this meeting:

- Need for general override
- Transparency from all departments
- Special Education Stabilization Account
- We would need a Financial Policy
- Talk about Funding Sources and where funds are coming from
- Combining positions? Why do we need 2 accountants, more than one Business Manager. Are there services that can be shared?

V. Minutes

Mr. Carignan motioned to approve the minutes of May 15, 2019 as amended

Ms Sawyer seconded

10 - Yes

1 - Abstain

Mr. Carignan motioned to approve the minutes of May 13, 2019 as amended

Ms Sawyer seconded

9 - Yes

2 - Abstain

Ms Sawyer motioned to approve the minutes of April 24, 2019 as amended

Mr. DeLuca seconded

7 - Yes

4 - Abstain

Mr. Carignan motioned to approve the minutes of April 10, 2019 as amended

Mr. DeLuca seconded

9 - Yes

2 - Abstain

Mr. Carignan motioned to approve the minutes of March 25, 2019 as amended

Mr. DeLuca seconded

9 - Yes

2 - Abstain

Mr. Carignan motioned to approve the minutes of March 18, 2019 as amended

Ms Sawyer seconded

Unanimous

Mr. Carignan motioned to approve the minutes of April 23, 2018 as amended

Ms Sawyer seconded

Unanimous

VI. Adjournment

Mr. DeLuca motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 P.M.

Seconded by Mr. Dorney

Unanimous

Respectively submitted by: William C. Rotondi 7/10/19
William Rotondi, Finance Committee Chair Date Approved
Patricia Tarantino
Patricia Tarantino, Recording Secretary