

Finance Committee

Meeting minutes – May 11, 2009

Present: **Committee Members:** Diane Gaspar (Chair), Burke Bero (Vice Chair), Stephanie Cronin, Chris DeSimone, Jeanne LeBlanc, George Zacharakis

Absent: Chris Johnson

Guests: Toby Tyler (Fire Chief), Peter Shattuck, (Deputy Fire Chief), Frank Quattrochi

Also present: Town Accountant Theresa Walsh

Ms. Gaspar called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

New Business: Diane Gaspar opened the meeting to Reserve Fund Transfers.

The Ambulance Dept Wages Hourly and Overtime request (\$25,195 wages hourly and \$1,300 overtime) was due to an increase in calls from last year. Toby Tyler noted that the department would be running out of money (balance for those two accounts of \$5,378 and \$0). When Stephanie Cronin questioned if the department was reimbursed for any for the calls, Toby Tyler responded yes. Toby Tyler noted that the call volume is up and Toby Tyler and Peter Shattuck gave various information about the call volume. It was noted that in 2008 \$187,000 was spent. In 2007, there were 9,500 calls. In 2008, there were 16,500 calls. As of this date, they are up 70 more calls so far. Diane Gaspar pointed out that she felt money going to public safety was important.

When asked by Jeanne LeBlanc, Toby Tyler confirmed that the call volume did increase in the warmer weather. He did comment that they had very few calls that they did not transport.

On a motion from Chris DeSimone, seconded by Jeanne Leblanc, the Reserve Fund Transfer for \$25,195 (250-23100-51113) as written on 5/7/2009 was put into motion to be recommended to be discussed and voted. There was no additional discussion on this article and it was approved by a vote 6-0.

On a motion from Chris DeSimone, seconded by Jeanne Leblanc, the Reserve Fund Transfer for \$1,300 (250-23100-51130) as written on 5/7/2009 was put into motion to be recommended to be discussed and voted. Toby Tyler and Peter Shattuck explained that this overtime budget was for on-call people. The breakdown is 8 hours with a minimum of 2 hours per call. It was noted that there would be some offset from MEMA. MEMA will pay for use of equipment, but not for the actual help. They used 4 pieces of equipment, which the department can go after MEMA for. It was approved by a vote 6-0.

The Central Telephone request for \$3122 (100-1570-52341) was due to no phone contract, on a 30 day billing cycle. Frank Quattrochi explained how the contract ran out and that they were reluctant to renew because of the terrible service the provider provided. He tried looking for a new provider, including Verizon. Meanwhile, the representative at the provider they had got fired. He was able to work out a 3-year contract with them (Nextel) with a 30-day contract until it starts. Diane Gaspar questioned if there would be savings in 2010. Frank Quattrochi said there should be. The new contract would start in June and would be a 3-year fixed contract.

On a motion from Chris DeSimone, seconded by Jeanne Leblanc, the Reserve Fund Transfer for \$3122 (100-1570-52341) as written on 5/9/2009 was put into motion to be recommended to be discussed and voted. There was no additional discussion on this article and it was approved by a vote 6-0.

The Keyes Conservation request for \$640 (320-17160-58810) was due to processing fees. Rather than the \$320,000 the State deposited only \$319,360. This reserve fund transfer is simply to bring the account balance back to zero.

On a motion from Chris DeSimone, seconded by Jeanne Leblanc, the Reserve Fund Transfer for \$640 (320-17160-58810) as written on 5/9/2009 was put into motion to be recommended to be discussed and voted. There was no additional discussion on this article and it was approved by a vote 5-1.

Business: Diane Gaspar discussed the \$23,646 reduction in the police department budget. She explained that on the Saturday before, the police contract came up with the \$23,646 reduction in exchange if they would get a 1 year extension in their contracts. They would get 2% instead of 4%, but at the end of 2010 they would get it back. Their uniform allowance also went down, as did their education budget which is based on their wages. Diane Gaspar explained that the Finance Committee needed to make their recommendations to the Town Meeting tonight on the police department budget.

George Zacharakis questioned if the DPW contracts were going to expire the same time.

It was noted that the town budget could be in a worse situation next year.

Burke Bero felt that this tied the hands of the Selectmen to work with the other unions.

On a motion from Chris DeSimone, seconded by Jeanne Leblanc, the changes to the Police Dept budget for \$23,646 (reduction) was put into motion to be recommended to be discussed and voted. Diane Gaspar questioned if it could be precluded next year. George Zacharakis noted that it could re-open, but they gave their word. Jeanne LeBlanc commented that the Selectmen have the final say. Chris DeSimone noted that Diane Gaspar would have to explain why FinCom does not recommend it. It was not approved by a vote 0-6.

Diane Gaspar brought the discussion to the Town Meeting. There was some discussion about the potential upcoming Nashoba Valley Technical High School warrant. It was noted that the Townsend town meeting had been postponed. Jeanne LeBlanc pointed out that Judith Klimkiewicz is doing two jobs on one salary. Theresa Walsh noted that there are rumors that Nashoba Valley Technical High School has 2 million in their bank. Stephanie Cronin commented that the right information needs to get out. Jeanne LeBlanc noted that we do not want to spend all of the schools money. It was noted that as far as North Middlesex District, Pepperell pays less per student.

Acceptance of Minutes: On a motion from Chris DeSimone, seconded by Jeanne Leblanc, the minutes from April 30 meeting, with amendments, was approved by a vote 4-0, 2 abstained. On a motion from Chris DeSimone, seconded by Jeanne Leblanc, the minutes from April 6 meeting was approved by a vote 5-0. On a motion from Chris DeSimone, seconded by Jeanne Leblanc, the minutes from March 23 meeting was approved by a vote 4-0.

Other Boards/Commission Meetings: Town Meeting – May 11th 7:30 pm

Upcoming Meetings: None scheduled at this time

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynne Henderson