

Pepperell Finance Committee

Minutes

February 5th, 2009

MEMBERS

Present: Diane Gaspar (Chair), Burke Bero (Vice-Chair), Christopher DeSimone, Stephanie Cronin, Jeanne LeBlanc, Christopher Johnson, and Theresa Walsh (Town Accountant)

Absent: Shaun Cummings

OPENING

Ms. Gaspar called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm

APPOINTMENTS

Town Accountant (13500)

- Ms. Walsh voluntarily level funded her own salary to save hours for her assistant (32 hrs/wk).
- \$2K for Consulting Services (13500-52307) – this must be done every two years – mandatory actuarial study per Moody's. Joined with NMRSD to get a better negotiated price.
- \$20,125 Auditing Service (13500-52331) is part of a contract cycle.
- Did not take any mileage for conferences attended at UMass.

Determine Essential vs. Non-Essential Budgets

- Diane Gaspar stated her opinion - the BOS should determine the list.
- Chris DeSimone offered the suggestions that the BOH adjust their budget to transfer responsibility to the Nashoba Board of Health and that the Town close the Community Center/Summer Playground.
- Terry Walsh will check for exact numbers (savings) on contracting with Nashoba.
- \$1.6 million shortfall is derived by making assumptions on certain Town numbers.

First pass list of non-essentials

Human Services

- Council on Aging: remove \$20K (10%)
- Board of Health: Sign on with Nashoba Board of Health. Net Savings? Motion made to replace BOH with Nashoba (Chris DeSimone) and seconded (Chris Johnson) – Yes (5) No (0) Abstain (1 – Diane Gaspar) – motion carries.
- Nursing: Motion made to replace Town nurse with nursing services from Nashoba (Chris DeSimone) and seconded (Chris Johnson) – Yes (6) No (0) Abstain (0) – motion carries.
- Mental Health: Motion made to remove budget for the Lipton Center (Chris DeSimone) and seconded (Chris Johnson) – Yes (6) No (0) Abstain (0) – motion carries.
- Clinics: Pay for themselves
- Veteran's Services: Not sure
- Housing Authority: Already gone

Culture & Recreation

- Community Center: 2 employees – 1 Custodian/Coordinator (\$18,500) does booking and works 19 hrs/wk – 1 Program Director (\$8,200 from Town and remainder from Revolving Fund) works 19 hrs/wk. The Revolving Fund takes in money from programs. Motion made to remove the entire budget (Chris

DeSimone) and seconded (Chris Johnson) – Yes (3) No (3) Abstain (0) – motion does not carry.

- Summer Playground: Just under \$10K. Motion made to remove from the budget (Chris DeSimone) and seconded (Chris Johnson) – Yes (6) No (0) Abstain (0) – motion carries.
- Memorial Day Event: Motion made to remove budget (Chris DeSimone) and seconded (Chris Johnson) – Yes (4) No (2) Abstain (0) – motion carries.

General Government

- GIS: Motion made to cut entire budget (Chris DeSimone) and seconded (Chris Johnson) – Yes (6) No (0) Abstain (0) – motion carries.
- Town Reports: Verify if there is a law which requires a certain number to be printed, or if any hard copies need be printed at all (charge fee per copy or make available online only). Discussion tabled until answers are received from Bob Hanson.

Public Works and Facilities

- Street lights: Must shut off 30 lights to save \$1K. Motion made to turn off ALL lights (Chris DeSimone) and seconded (Chris Johnson) – Yes (3) No (3) Abstain (0) – motion did not carry.
- Tree Care/Planting: Cherry pickers. Motion made to remove the full budget (Chris DeSimone) and seconded (Chris Johnson) – Yes (1) No (5) Abstain (0) – motion did not carry.
- Cemeteries: Stephanie Cronin asked if this could be gradually phased out to become self supporting.
- Costs of oil/diesel/natural gas: can cuts be made across the board?

Public Safety

- Ambulance grant writer:?
- Forest Warden: Motion made to remove this budget (Chris DeSimone) and seconded (Chris Johnson) – Yes (4) No (2) Abstain (0) – motion carries.
- Constables: Discussion tabled until we can determine if there is an employee who might act in this capacity for free (i.e. Chief Davis).

Respectfully submitted by: Jeanne LeBlanc (left the meeting)

Burke Bero took minutes for the remainder of the evening;

Chris D suggested that the true deficit is about \$2 million with the expected school request being higher than what Terry has estimated and the loss of money from the state.

The Fin Com spent some time discussing Bob Hanson's list cost saving reductions and their implications. This led to a general discussion on strategies for reductions, no definitive conclusions were reached. A discussion about the override and how to approach it ended the proceedings.

Minutes of the 1/29/09 meeting were reviewed, Chris D moved to accept and Chris J seconded. Motion passed 5-0. Meeting closed at 9:10 pm on a 5-0 vote.

Next meeting is Thursday, 12 Feb. at 7pm. The NMRSD representatives will be at this meeting.