

# Finance Committee

Meeting minutes – March 2, 2010

**Present:** **Committee Members:** Chris DeSimone (Chair), Chris Johnson (Vice Chair), Holly Seiferth, Melissa Tzanoudakis, George Zacharakis

**Absent:** Alan Leao Jr., Michael Landino

**Also present:** Thomas Wilson (Town Accountant)

Chris DeSimone called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

**New Business:** Chris DeSimone started the meeting with discussing new department budgets. The first department budget was the Town Engineer budget. Holly Seiferth noted that the Sundries line item (100-41100-54425) was a reduction, but not 5% in the 5% reduction budget. Chris DeSimone pointed out that the Salaries, Appointed Positions (100-41100-51112) did not have correct YTD totals; noting the 2010 budget is \$43, 588.00 and the 2010 YTD spent \$43,587.00. Chris DeSimone noted that the Town Engineer earned income from other department budgets, such as Zoning Board and Planning Board. George Zacharakis questioned what the historical salary was. Thomas Wilson noted that the 2009 budget did not go down. Chris DeSimone added that the 5% reduction budget had increased amounts.

Holly Seiferth noted questions on the Gasoline line item (100-41100-54411), Books, Town Departments line item (100-41100-54511), and Misc Other Public Works line item (100-41100-54579). George Zacharakis noted questions on the R&M-Vehicles line item (100-41100-52242). Melissa Tzanoudakis questioned the decrease in the Wages, Hourly line item (100-41100-51113) in the 5% reduction budget.

On a motion from Holly Seiferth, seconded by Chris Johnson, to accept the 5% reduction budget for Town Engineer (100-41100) as funded was put into motion to be recommended to be discussed and voted on. There was no additional discussion and it was approved by a vote 5(Aye)-0(No) and 0 abstained. Holly Seiferth wondered what the contractual obligation was for the 2.75% increase in the 5% reduction budget.

Holly Seiferth moved the meeting for to discuss the Safety, Traffic Signs & Signals department budget. Holly Seiferth wanted to make sure that the 5% reduction budget would not do anything to make the roads unsafe; was it simply to defer projects. Chris DeSimone noted that they could confirm with the Police Chief at the next Finance Committee meeting, March 4, 2010.

Holly Seiferth moved the meeting for to discuss the Safety, Traffic Signs & Signals department budget. Holly Seiferth pointed out that in the forwarding memo there was information about the FEMA reimbursement. Holly Seiferth questioned if the FEMA reimbursement was not designated for town use. Thomas Wilson noted the reimbursement that was received in 2010 went into the General Fund since it was received the year after it was expenses. Holly Seiferth noted that amount spent for FEMA was the amount per season. Chris DeSimone felt that the level funding budget was a good budget to accept.

Holly Seiferth noted there was not a staff list with the department budget; and questioned the 11 vehicles. Melissa Tzanoudakis noted that there were 8 employees on staff and then a secretarial position which had time split with another department. Holly Seiferth pointed out that all employees were unionized except for the secretary. George Zacharakis questioned if bids went out to the union. George Zacharakis noted that the money was for snow removal. Holly Seiferth added that she was trying to understand how the department worked. George Zacharakis spoke of the employee that was hired back; this was to help with the money spent in Overtime. George Zacharakis added that prior to hiring an employee back; the department had to keep pulling an employee from the Transfer Station to help out.

The Finance Committee members had questions on many line items: Natural Gas-Heating line item (100-42200-52215), R&M-Building & Grounds line item (100-42200-52241), R&M-Vehicles line item (100-42200-52241), R&M-Communications Equipment line item (100-42200-52245), Vehicle Inspection line item (100-42200-52247), Street Paving & Marking line item (100-42200-52248), R&M-Data Processing Equipment line item (100-42200-52252), R&L-Const, Snow. Lawn Equipment line item (100-42200-52272), R&L-Minor Inside line item (100-42200-52277), R&L-Office Equipment line item (100-42200-52280), Stump Grinding Service line item (100-42200-52297), Medical/Random Drug Testing line item (100-42200-52303), Advertising, Legal Notices line item (100-42200-52306), Public Safety-Police Details line item (100-42200-52309), and Prof & Tech – Misc Other line item (100-42200-52319).

Holly Seiferth moved the meeting for to discuss the Building & Grounds department budget. Chris DeSimone questioned the Advertising, Legal Notices line item and why the Building & Grounds department would have this line item. Melissa Tzanoudakis wondered about the Police Detail line item; if they used a private company, what they paid for, and what the town paid for. Holly Seiferth questioned the Paving line item; what projects this was for and what was planned. Thomas Wilson wondered what the Drug Testing line item was for and if it was mandatory for CDL equipment.

Holly Seiferth moved the meeting for to discuss the Forest Warden department budget. Chris DeSimone noted that in 2009 there was a warrant for forest fire hose for \$10,000.00. Melissa Tzanoudakis brought up the truck that was being built for forest fires. Chris Johnson noted the truck was worth about \$43,000.00 that Peter Shattuck got for free that he was now fixing up. Chris Johnson also noted that Peter Shattuck would be looking for a grant to help with expenses to upgrade the truck. Chris DeSimone questioned the Repl Equip -Departmental line item (100-29400-58872) for \$2,500.00 and what it was for.

Holly Seiferth moved the meeting for to discuss the Tree Care & Planting department budget. Holly Seiferth questioned what a tree expert was; Tree Experts line item (100-42700-52318). Holly Seiferth noted that she found out that the department only removed dangerous trees. Holly Seiferth wondered if this budget could be reduced at all. Melissa Tzanoudakis questioned if someone was reimbursed for removing trees. Melissa Tzanoudakis also questioned if the department hired outside of the department or town, if so, how it was done such as bids.

**Business:** Chris DeSimone moved the meeting to discuss the next budgets for the next Tuesday meeting, noting that the budgets started with Board of Health and contained Council of Aging, Veterans, Library, Summer Playground, Community Center, and Parks department budgets. George Zacharakis volunteered to be the primary in-depth person for the next department budgets.

Chris DeSimone noted that he was going to be attending the Finance Team meeting on March 3, 2010.

Chris DeSimone commented that there was going to be a public hearing of the North Middlesex Regional Districts budget after the regular meeting. Chris DeSimone also noted that there was an article in the Lowell Sun about the North Middlesex Regional District school committee and the level funded budget.

**Upcoming Meetings:** Tuesday, March 4, 7:00pm  
Tuesday, March 9, 7:00pm  
Thursday, March 11, 7:00pm  
Tuesday, March 16, 7:00pm  
Thursday, March 18, 7:00pm

**Adjournment:** On a motion from Chris Johnson, seconded by George Zacharakis, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm and it was approved by a vote 5(Aye)-0(No) and 0 abstained.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynne Henderson