

Finance Committee Minutes

Town of Bellingham – Municipal Center

Monday, March 26, 2007

1. Present: Henri Masson, Gary Maynard, Joseph Collamati, Roland Lavallee, Toni Picariello, Raymond Szczepan
2. Absent: Carol Dill.
3. Meeting called to order: 7:15 p.m.
4. **ARTICLE 23 - PENNY LANE ACCEPTANCE**
ARTICLE 24 - BUFFY ROAD ACCEPTANCE - Petitioner: Gerald Lorusso

Bruce Wilson of Wilson Associates appeared on behalf of Gerald Lorusso. He explained that the tasks that still need to be done in order for Penny Lane and Buffy Road to be accepted will be completed hopefully before Town Meeting. Mr. Lorusso's brother and partner passed away and he is having a difficult time completing the roads.

The FinCom will continue this hearing to Wednesday, May 23, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at the High School and will write to the DPW, ConCom and Planning Board to request an updated comment or recommendation before that date. If the work on the streets is not complete by Town Meeting the article will be passed over.

5. **ARTICLE 1, ACCOUNT 135**

Marilyn Mathieu appeared. Questions were asked:

Why did the permanent personnel salaries increase by 8% (\$34,510)? Per the Contract, there are step increases of 5% and the annual salary increase of 3%, which totals 8% increase.

Is the \$10,000 still needed for overtime? The overtime is to pay an employee to perform extra duties, which include personnel office duties along with the regular work tasks.

Why the 6% increase in professional services (\$38,500)? This is for the federal government mandate for GASB (Government Account Standards Board) requirements. This is for the cost of the audit.

Roland Lavallee/Henri Masson motion to recommend the CFO budget at \$252,169, broken down as: \$206,069 Salaries and \$46,100 in expenses. VOTE: 6/0.

ARTICLE 9 - AMEND ARTICLE 1

The FinCom will continue this Article until April 23, 2007. Marilyn Mathieu will have more accurate figures closer to Town Meeting.

ARTICLE 12 - SPECIAL LEGISLATION

This article was recommended by the MA DOR in their report. The accounts are the Nextel Revolving Fund (Board of Selectmen), Bank of America Lease (Town Common Trustee) and Bellingham Historical Commission. These accounts are currently considered "revolving funds" under M.G.L. c.44, §53E ½, which needs to be voted each year at Town Meeting. By authorizing the Board of Selectmen to petition the Legislature to allow the Town to set-up the Special Revolving Funds, there will be no need to obtain Town Meeting vote and there will be no limit on the revenues to be deposited in the funds.

Raymond Szczepan/Roland Lavallee motion to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the legislature to establish the Special Revolving Funds for Nextel Revolving Fund (Board of Selectmen), Bank of America Lease (Town Common Trustee) and Bellingham Historical Commission. VOTE: 6/0

6. ARTICLE 11, NO. 6 – REVOLVING FUND

Ernest Taft and Peter Morelli appeared. This is an annual Article, which need to be voted on. Any funds that the Historical Commission ("HC") receives from donations will be deposited into this account, not-to-exceed \$5,000.

Joseph Collamati/Raymond Szczepan motion to recommend to maintain this account, not-to-exceed \$5,000.00. VOTE: 6/0

ARTICLE 13 - TOWN HALL REHABILITATION

The North School was sold for \$181,500 at 2006 Fall Town Meeting. The original intent was that the proceeds from the sale of the school would be used to refurbish and renovate the exterior of the old Town Hall. The Historical Commission wants to get the Town Hall on the Historical Register so that they could apply for grants. They want to take the siding off the building and paint it like the original building was. They are looking into paint that last longer, so the building will not have to be paint as often.

Roland Lavallee asked questions:

- a. Is there a plan? No detailed plan is available.
- b. Is there a budget? The budget is the \$181,500.

The interior is being done by the Town Carpenter. There will be new furniture, building will be rewired, tin ceilings, repair to the chair railing along the walls

The building has a lot of historical assets. The tower still has the WWII platform, and the upstairs' stage and flooring are original.

The HC will be happy to just save the building. If the bids to restore the exterior are more than the \$181,500, then the HC is willing to just put up siding and keep the building functional.

Raymond Szczepan mentioned that he does not think this project meets the priority criteria and that we need new roofs on other town buildings.

The Capital Improvement Committee has not heard this Article.

Roland Lavallee/Henri Masson motion to transfer not-to-exceed \$181,500 from the North School Sale account to the Town Hall Rehabilitation account. VOTE: 5/1 (Raymond Szczepan feels there are other priorities)

7. **ARTICLE 11, NO. 5 – REVOLVING FUND**

Michael Graf and Vincent Forte appeared. This is an annual Article, which need to be voted on. Any funds that the BOH receives from services provided for food inspections will be deposited into this account, not-to-exceed \$35,000. They requested that the amount be increased from \$7,500 to \$35,000.

Joseph Collamati/Roland Lavallee motion to maintain this account, not-to-exceed \$35,000. VOTE: 6/0

ARTICLE 14 - APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS-SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS, FUEL STORAGE TANKS AND DELEADING DWELLINGS

This article would authorize the Town/BOH to loan money to a homeowner who needs help with a Title 5 repair. The loan would be added as a lien on the borrower's property. There is no tax dollars involved in this article.

Toni Picariello noticed that the M.L.G. was for not only sewage disposal systems, but also fuel storage tanks and deleading dwellings. What stops someone from asking to borrow for fuel storage tanks or deleading? The BOH sets the guidelines and this will only cover sewage disposal systems.

Roland Lavallee/Henri Masson motion to authorize \$200,000 to be funded by borrowing. VOTE: 6/0

8. **ARTICLE 1, ACCOUNT 220 - Fire Department**

Chief Richard Ranieri and the Deputy Chief appeared. The overall Fire department budget increased by 3%.

Questions asked:

a. Why did the civilian personnel salary increase by 27%? This person will be working more hours. Permits will now be done on the computer. Also ambulance receipts will be entered in the computer and then sent to the third-party (Comstar) billing company. The office hours are 8:00 to 12:00 noon weekdays for citizens to obtain permits. The office hours are open 7:00 to 2:00 p.m.

The Fire department personnel is: Chief, Deputy Chief, 5 Lieutenants and 15 Privates. They work shifts that are 24 hours-2 days off- 24 hours – 4 days off. The town is fighting this shift arraignment and the case is now in the Supreme Court.

Joseph Collamati/Raymond Szczepan motion to recommend the Fire Department budget at \$1,612,962, broken down as \$1,522,762 salaries and expenses at \$90,200.

VOTE: 6/0.

Joseph Collamati asked about the Roof repair. They will hire Roof consultant for \$6,000 and this will be under Article 9, Amend Article 1, which we have scheduled on April 23, 2007.

Toni Picariello asked when the Deputy Fire Chief will be moving into Bellingham, per his employment agreement. The Fire Chief did not give an answer, just said that the Deputy has been given an extension.

9. ARTICLE 2 - TRASH ENTERPRISE

Marilyn Mathieu and Denis Fraine appeared. No one from the Board of Selectmen appeared.

The MA DOR recommended that there be separate articles for Trash, Water and Sewer Enterprises, instead of being included in Article 1, Budget.

The trash will increase by 18% so that it will be self funded and not supplemented by the general fund.

Toni Picariello believes that the increase is too steep and a hardship for people in Bellingham. She thinks there are other options.

Joseph Collamati/Roland Lavallee motion to recommend a budget of \$1,484,500, broken down as \$24,000 salary and \$1,460,500 expenses. Funding from Trash Receipts. VOTE: 5/1 (Toni Picariello because of the large rate increase)

ARTICLE 3 - WATER ENTERPRISE

This is the same as the Trash Enterprise.

Raymond Szczepan/Roland Lavallee motion to recommend the budget at \$1,681,622, broken down as \$600,002 Salaries and \$1,081,620 expenses. Funding from Water Receipts. VOTE: 6/0.

ARTICLE 4 - SEWER ENTERPRISE

Question asked:

a. Why has misc. equipment increased by 150% (\$10,000)? This is for pump repairs.

Roland Lavallee/Raymond Szczepan motion to recommend the Sewer budget as \$655,698, broken down as salaries \$106,037 and expenses \$549,661. Funding from Sewer Receipts. VOTE: 6/0.

ARTICLE 5 - CONVEYANCES AND EASEMENTS

This article authorizes the Board of Selectmen ("BOS") to accept and/or purchase conveyances or easement for town projects. The amount requested is \$1.00.

Joseph Collamati/Roland Lavallee motion to recommend \$1.00 to be transferred from taxation. VOTE: 6/0.

ARTICLE 6 - PURCHASE OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT

This article authorized the BOS to purchase surplus equipment. The Tree Warden has used this account in the past. The \$1.00 requested is to keep the account open.

Raymond Szczepan/Henri Masson motion to recommend \$1.00 to be transferred from taxation. VOTE: 6/0.

ARTICLE 7 - TOWN PROPERTY AUCTION

This article authorizes the BOS to sell, by auction, real estate taken by non-payment of taxes and other town property, such as vehicles, etc.

Raymond Szczepan/Roland Lavallee motion to recommend this article. VOTE: 6/0

ARTICLE 11, NO. 8 - REVOLVING FUND

The Town receives revenues from Nextel for the lease they have to put antennas on the Chestnut Street and Pine Grove Street water tanks. The revolving fund is used to pay for the monthly charges to the mobile communications within the Police and Fire Department.

Joseph Collamati/Henri Masson motion to recommend increasing this revolving fund not to exceed \$35,000. VOTE: 6/0.

ARTICLE 15 - M.G.L. C.39, §23D (ADJUDICATORY HEARINGS)

By accepting this M.G.L., any Board member in Town who misses one meeting, will still be able to vote on a matter being presented to the board. The member can only miss one meeting where the matter is presented.

Joseph Collamati/Henri Masson motion to accept M.G.L. c.39, §23D only as written as of this date. VOTE: 5/0/1 (Raymond Szczepan abstained).

ARTICLE 24 – SALE OF WATER TO MENDON

Mendon has requested to buy water from the Town of Bellingham. They are buying water from Hopedale right now. Mendon will have a meter at the Town Line (Hartford Avenue). There will be a connection fee and they will have a block rate. The benefit to the town will be the revenue from 250,000 gallons per day that they use. They will have to follow the same water bans as Bellingham has. DEP would have to approve this. The Board of Selectmen are working on an agreement.

The FinCom will continue this article to Monday, April 23, 2007.

10. GENERAL DISCUSSION

A. Accept February 12, February 26, and March 12, 2007 Minutes

***Joseph Collamati/Henri Masson motion to accept February 12, 2007 minutes.
VOTE: 6/0***

***Raymond Szczepan/Henri Masson motion to accept February 26, 2007 minutes.
VOTE: 6/0***

Joseph Collamati/Raymond Szczepan motion to accept March 12, 2007 minutes. VOTE: 6/0

B. Appoint 2 members to the Capital Improvement Committee.

Joseph Collamati/Raymond Szczepan motion to recommend Roland Lavallee as a member of the capital improvement committee. VOTE: 6/0

Roland Lavallee/Henri Masson motion to recommend Joseph Collamati as a member of the capital improvement committee. VOTE: 6/0

C. Roland Lavallee edited the letter to the School department regarding the South School Roof leaks and Toni Picariello will send it out.¹

Adjourned: ***Raymond Szczepan/Roland Lavallee motion to adjourn. VOTE: 6/0. 9:05 p.m.***

(Accepted April 9, 2007)

¹ Letter send to the School Committee and Superintendent on Tuesday, March 13, 2007.