

# **Finance Committee Minutes**

## **Town of Bellingham – Municipal Center**

### **Monday, September 17, 2007**

1. Present: Raymond Szczepan, Henri Masson, Roland Lavallee (Vice-Chairman), Carol Dill, Toni Picariello
2. Absent: Joseph Collamati, Gary Maynard
3. Meeting called to order: 7:15 p.m.
4. **BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
Ann Odabashian (Board of Selectmen), Denis Fraine (Town Administrator) and Marilyn Mathieu (CFO) appeared.

#### **Article 1 – Amend Article 1** **Street Lighting**

Amount requested \$25,000. The Account is running short. The kilowatt hours have increased, because we have more street lights. The street lighting is a fixed cost. The traffic signals are billed per usage.

*Raymond Szczepan/Carol Dill motion to recommend \$25,000 to be transferred to the Street Lighting account. Funding: Free Cash. VOTE: 5/0.*

#### **Group Insurance**

Amount requested is \$125,000. We are self-funded and would need between \$900,000-1.0 million in the trust fund. We have approximately \$600,000 in the fund now.

*Henri Masson/Raymond Szczepan motion to recommend transferring \$125,000 to the Group Insurance Account. Funding: Free Cash. VOTE: 5/0*

#### **Article 2 – Capital Outlay (Board of Selectmen recommendations)**

Selectman Ann Odashian (“AO”) mentioned that the Board of Selectmen have recommended all of the capital requests that are listed. Denis Fraine mentioned that if the Board of Selectmen had not recommended them, they would not have been submitted to be voted on at Town Meeting.

Roland Lavallee questioned the need for the Fire Department Ambulance. AO stated that the Fire Department is on a purchase plan to obtain a new ambulance every 3 years and by the time they bid and receive the ambulance it is 4 years.

Roland Lavallee continued his questioning and stated that new ambulances are made better, they last longer and the Fire Chief’s complaint about the electrical system

malfunctioning was unfounded. The electrical systems are warranted for 10 years, so we are getting rid of an ambulance before the warranty expires. He suggested that the Board of Selectmen reconsider the turn-over of the ambulances to maybe 4-5 years.

### **Article 3 – Non-Capital Outlay Expenditures**

#### **Copy Machine**

Amount requested: \$15,000. This request is for a heavy-duty copier that will include a printer, scanner and fax functions. The copy machine will be networked. It is a Savin and the Town will not be leasing it, but purchasing it. There is a maintenance charge of approximately \$400 per month.

***Raymond Szczepan/Henri Masson motion to recommend \$15,000. Funding: Free Cash. VOTE: 5/0***

#### **Board of Selectmen recommendations**

Selectman Ann Odashian (“AO”) mentioned that the Board of Selectmen have recommended all of the capital requests under Article 3. Denis Fraine mentioned that if the Board of Selectmen had not recommended them, they would not have been submitted to be voted on at Town Meeting.

### **Article 6 – Purchase of Land**

Amount requested: \$15,000. This request was brought up because of drainage problems in the area of Lake Hiawatha. The owner of the land is Richard C. St. Germain and he has agreed to this purchase. There is no house built on the property. The land is between Lakeshore Drive and Indian Run Road. The land was appraised in 2004 at \$12,500.

***Carol Dill/Henri Masson motion to recommend \$15,000 to purchase the property. Funding: Free Cash. VOTE: 5/0***

### **Article 11 – Tax Stabilization Fund**

The amount requested is \$100,000. There was a special legislation passed to allow the Town to put away funds so when the power plants’ revenue is not longer available, then the loss of taxes will not be so severe to the Town. The balance to date in the account is \$1.2M. Marilyn Mathieu would like to see an amount transferred into the account each year.

***Henri Masson/Raymond Szczepan motion to recommend \$100,000 to be transferred in the Tax Stabilization Fund. Funding: Free Cash. VOTE: 5/0.***

5. **BOARD OF ASSESSORS**

**Article 1 – Amend Article 1 (Assessors-Salaries)**

Amount requested \$7,500. This amount is to hire a part-time person to assist in the Assessors' Office. It is a 2-person office and one of the employees has been sick and will be out. One employee has been working and not taking any vacation time. Senior citizens do help out, but on a limited basis. This amount of money will cover the rest of the fiscal year.

*Raymond Szczepan/Henri Masson motion to transfer \$7,500 to the Assessors Salaries account. Funding: Taxation. VOTE: 5/0.*

**Article 3 – Non-Capital Outlay (10-year Property Measure)**

Amount requested is \$25,000. This amount is requested to go to each property and physically measure everyone's foundation and take pictures of the property. This needs to be done every 10-years, per State statute. Bellingham does about 1/3 of the properties every 3-years.

*Henri Masson/Toni Picariello motion to recommend \$25,000. Funding: Overlay Surplus. VOTE: 4/1 (Toni Picariello voted against this because it is an unfunded mandate from the State)*

**Article 4 – Small Personal Property Accounts**

The request is to accept state statute to put a minimum amount on what personal property to send out bills. Some bills go out for \$ .34, which is a waste of postage and time. The minimum of \$9,500 equals a \$10.00 tax bill. This exemption will take effect in FY2009.

*Raymond Szczepan/Carol Dill motion to recommend this article. VOTE: 5/0.*

6. **CFO**

**Article 1 – Amend Article 1**

**MIS (Management Information Systems)**

Amount requested \$6,500. The State is requiring (per Court Order) all towns to archive all emails. The compliance date was July 1, 2007. We should be in compliance very soon. Any email is now considered "public information". This cost will allow all email to be archived with a software company. The public would be charged for the expense of retrieving the documents.

*Raymond Szczepan/Henri Masson motion to transfer \$6,500 to the MIS account. Funding: Free Cash. VOTE: 5/0.*

## **Zoning Board of Appeal-Expenses**

Amount requested \$20,000. A bill was received from Deutsch/Williams to Town Counsel Lee Ambler in regard to the ZBA litigation with South Center Realty (Fafard). The FinCom had been alerted in the past that more legal bills would be received for this legal matter. This is the case between Fafard's proposed development at Silver Lake and the ZBA.

Raymond Szczepan/Henri Masson motion to transfer \$20,000 to the ZBA Expenses. Funding: Free Cash. VOTE: 5/0.

## **Article 2 – Capital Outlay (Financial Software)**

Amount requested \$75,000. This is a yearly request in order to get the Town's software up-to-date.

This phase will connect the Fire Department, Police Departments and Library. Budgeting will be done on the system with the upgraded software. The Town has been using "Admins" software since 1994. Real Estate and personal property will be the next to be upgraded. They are getting better budgeting and central collections.

*The CIC recommended this request on August 23, 2007.*

***Raymond Szczepan/Henri Masson motion to recommend \$75,000 for Financial Software Upgrade. Funding: Overlay Surplus. VOTE: 5/0***

## **Article 3 – Non-Capital Outlay**

### **GASB 45 (Government Accounting Standards Board)**

Amount requested \$9,800. This amount is to be used for actuarial services of what the actual liability for the Town will be for post-employment benefit for health insurance. The Town pays 50% of the health insurance for retired employee and spouse until they are eligible for Medicare. This cost will be requested every two-years. We can start to fund the Group Insurance Trust Fund for the retired employees when the Legislature allows the Town's petition, which was submitted after the 2005 Fall Town Meeting. See footnote below<sup>1</sup>.

Carol Dill/Henri Masson motion to recommend \$9,800. Funding: Free Cash. VOTE: 5/0.

---

<sup>1</sup> This Article is needed so that the town can petition the legislature to allow the town to establish a Group Insurance Liability Fund. The Fund is suggested by the Government Accounting Standards Board. Regarding Group Insurance, we pay as we go. Eventually we will need to fund the account. Per actuarial figures, we will need to disclose each person's details in order to get a estimate of their life expectancy. If the legislature accepts this, a pension reserve fund will be transferred to cover this fund. Pensions must be fully funded by 2018.

## **MIS/GIS Mapping**

Amount requested: \$25,000. This money will be used to update the assessors' mapping. There will be a new overlay on the assessors' maps. These maps show water mains, sewer pipes, cemetery plots, topography. It was mentioned that in the future town hydrants will be shown on these maps. The maps are used by the ZBA, ConCom, for abutter's lists, residents, etc.

See footnote below for more information<sup>2</sup>.

## **Article 12 – Unpaid Bills**

### **Building Inspector**

Amount requested: \$290.00. This is for longevity, which was forgotten to be budgeted. There was money left in the budget at the end of the year.

Stuart LeClair will be paid \$290.00, transferred from the Building Inspectors' expense account.

### **Board of Health**

Amount requested: \$100.00. This is for longevity, which was forgotten to be budgeted. There was money left in the budget at the end of the year.

Michael Graf will be paid \$100.00, transferred from the Board of Health expense account.

### **Planning Board**

Amount requested \$21.98. This is for an unpaid balance to W.B. Mason for office supplies; the bill was submitted late. There was money left in the budget at the end of the year.

W.B. Mason will be paid \$21.98, transferred from the Planning Board expense account.

### **OJI**

Amount requested \$76.00. This is for an unpaid invoice from Health Resources. The bill was dated 7/31/2007, but the services were performed in June 2007. There was money left in the budget at the end of the year.

Health Resources will be paid \$76.00, transferred from the OJI expense account.

---

<sup>2</sup> . This is Management Information System/Geography information system mapping. The money is for the server. If the entire \$50,000 is not used, it will stay in the account. This will be used for mapping water, sewer and cemeteries. They are updating water drainage mapping. There is \$50,000 already in the account. (from 9/12/05 minutes)

## **OJI**

Amount requested \$27.75. This is for an unpaid invoice from Provident Agency, Inc. The bill was dated 8/6/2007, but the services were performed in June 2007. There was money left in the budget at the end of the year.

Provident Agency, Inc. will be paid \$27.75, transferred from the OJI expense account.

***Raymond Szczepan/Henri Masson motion to recommend all of the above as typed. Funding: per above transfers. VOTE: 5/0***

### **7. FINANCE COMMITTEE**

#### **Article 10 – Stabilization Fund**

Amount requested is \$300,000. This is the annual transfer of funds into the Stabilization Fund. There is a balance of \$1.3M.

***Raymond Szczepan/Carol Dill motion to transfer \$300,000 to the Stabilization Fund. Funding: Free Cash. VOTE: 5/0***

### **8. GENERAL DISCUSSION**

A. All Boards meeting has been rescheduled from 9/24/2007 to 10/1/2007 at 7:15 p.m.

B. The Association of Town Finance Committees' 2007 Annual Meeting is being held Saturday, November 3, 2007. Those interested will need to let Toni Picariello know before Town Meeting.

Adjourned: ***Raymond Szczepan/Henri Masson motion to adjourn. VOTE: 5/0.*** 8:20 p.m.

(Accepted 9/24/2007)