

Finance Committee Minutes

Town of Bellingham – Municipal Center

Monday, March 24, 2008

1. FinCom Present: Raymond Szczepan, Gary Maynard, Joseph Collamati, Roland Lavallee, Carol Dill, Toni Picariello, Henri Masson
2. FinCom Absent: N/A
3. Meeting called to order: 7:15 p.m.
4. **MEET WITH DPW**
 - A. Lake Street Culverts

Donald DiMartino would like to repair the Lake Street Culverts entirely, but needs \$470,000. The ConCom has approved the entire project, which includes culvert, intersection, widening the road, sidewalks, water mains, etc. (See endnote for details per an email from the DPW)¹

The Town does not have the funds for the entire project, but hopefully will be able to do the minimum repairs to make the culvert safe. The maximum funds available would be \$80,000, the remaining money after the 2008 roadwork is complete.

Roland Lavallee suggested:

- Hire an excavator
- Get stone
- Box culvert
- Use our man power.

Donald DiMartino would have to inform the ConCom that there will be a change in the project. Right now Lake Street is a one-lane road and can be very dangerous.

Members who travel the road stated that they saw no danger when driving on Lake Street.

- B. Jenks Reservoir, Crystal Lake dam and Mill Pond dam on Pearl Street repairs

Donald DiMartino emailed the FinCom the Certificates of Non-Compliance and Dam Safety Order from Department of Conservation and Recreation. Repairs are mandated by the State.

In order to be in compliance the Town needs to spend \$4,500 at this Town Meeting for engineering.
He will be requesting \$55,170 to complete Phase II of the Inspection and Investigation Report. See Endnotes for more details per an email from the DPW.²

Joseph Collamati would like information from Marilyn Mathieu, CFO, regarding the unfunded state mandate.

C. DPW Budgets & Warrant Articles

a. DPW Article 1 Budgets:

<u>Budget:</u>	<u>Salaries:</u>	<u>Expenses:</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Item 421, Highway Administration	\$95,251	\$22,200	\$117,451	Union contract is up in 2008
Item 422, Highway Construction	\$454,097	\$293,700	\$747,797	The Board of Selectmen cut \$100,000 from Equipment Main costs/Contract
Item 423, Snow and Ice Removal	\$20,000	\$80,000	\$100,000	
Item 425, Highway Equipment Maintenance		\$72,000	\$72,000	
Item 426, Gas & Oil		\$164,000	\$164,000	The DPW contracted for diesel at \$2.41 per gallon – the contract is up in 9/2008.
TOTALS:	\$569,348.00	\$631,900.00	\$1,201,248.00	

Joseph Collamati/Carol Dill motion to recommend the DPW budget items as presented above. Funding will be voted on at a future meeting. VOTE: 7/0

b. Article 3, Water Enterprise

The Budget: Salaries: \$589,539 Expenses: \$1,395,915

The big increase of \$86,500 is for the contract for out-flushing the water pipes and hydrants. There are 753 hydrants. When they are flushed the following is done: clean water, check valves and do an underground diagnostic. The DPW does

not have enough guys to flush all the hydrants in town in a timely manner. There are 12 men working in the DPW. They could use two more men in the department.

Roland Lavalley/Joseph Collamati motion to recommend the budget of \$1,985,454. Funding from Water Enterprise Receipts. VOTE: 7/0

c. Article 4, Sewer Enterprise

The Budget: Salaries: \$106,490 Expenses: \$607,887

Joseph Collamati/Henri Masson motion to recommend the budget of \$714,377. Funding from Sewer Enterprise Receipts. VOTE: 7/0

d. Article 8, Highway Construction

This Article is to authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept Chapter 90 funds received from the State. Donald DiMartino is expecting approximately \$385,000 and this will be used to finish the Westminster Street reconstruction.

Roland Lavalley/Raymond Szczepan motion to recommend this Article. VOTE: 7/0.

5. **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

A. Discussion

a. School - Raymond Szczepan mentioned that the School's increase is \$390,000. The High School needed to cut \$53,544, \$15,000 from their original supply request and \$15,000 from new computers.

b. Town Clerk - Toni Picariello brought up the Town Clerk's salary. It was discussed that all four candidates do not have the experience of Town Clerk and the salary should be lower than the \$61,000 that the present Town Clerk is being paid. The salary range discussed was between \$50,000 to \$52,000 to start. Ms. Harvey has been Town Clerk for over 20 years, plus she was also the Assistant for many years before that. There is \$7,000 in the FY2009 budget for Ms. Harvey to train the new Town Clerk.

The question is can the Town Clerk salary be changed to a lower rate before the end of this fiscal year? Can the salary be different from Election to June 30, 2008? We will check with Marilyn Mathieu and Denis Fraine to see what can be done and how to do it.

c. Board of Health ("BOH") – Toni Picariello brought up an unpaid bill for legal services and that the services were for legal issues that Town Counsel could have answered and handled. Also, the increase that the FinCom recommended for the BOH was for a consultant or contracted service for inspection of restaurants and food establishment, not for legal services. The BOH has added that in the detail section of their budget. No other department, under the Board of Selectmen jurisdiction has legal services in their budget.

The BOH will be scheduled to meet with the FinCom regarding this issue.

B. Accept Minutes for February 26, 2008.

Henri Masson/Roland Lavallee motion to accept the minutes for February 26, 2008.

VOTE: 7/0

Adjourned: ***Raymond Szczepan/Roland Lavallee motion to adjourn. VOTE: 7/0. 9:30 p.m.***

(Accepted April 22, 2008)

¹ The Road Committee met on Tuesday and discussed our economic condition. The Committee agreed not to postpone any of the work previously proposed for 2008. There should be approximately \$80,000 remaining after the 2008 work list is completed.

There is no chance of appropriating an additional \$340,000 in May to do the complete reconstruction of the Lake Street culvert and intersection. It may not even be viable to put any money towards road improvements in October. (*Below I explain some water main work we should do as part of this project.)

To do just the culvert work as shown on the approved ConCom plans would require filling of wetlands and therefore the stormwater basin and wetland replication would also have to be constructed. The very rough estimated cost for this work is \$120,000, it could be much more. We do not have enough money to cover this and it may be more difficult to do the partial project.

I suggest we therefore move towards a very basic patch repair of the existing culvert. I will be getting input from our bridge engineers (STV Inc.) but expect to construct a reinforced concrete slab over the top of the existing culvert with some concrete work on each end and reconstructed headwalls should do. I am pretty sure we have enough money to cover the patch work. This will not widen the culvert but will return the road to two lanes. We can start on this work as soon as we get some plans from our engineers.

* Lake at Cross Water Main Work - If we are going to do the complete reconstruction project we should do a \$130,000 water main extension project. A water loop from the dead end on Lake Street to the existing end of the system at Cross and Blackmar is part of the Water Master Plan. We should install the water main to the limits of the roadway rehab project. A future water project with a price tag of around \$100,000 would complete the loop. Funds for the water project could be appropriated in October as we should have a surplus of between \$350K and \$650K once FY08 is closed out. Adding the water main project to the mix would result in a \$470,000 project. If we are going to do the culvert and intersection reconstruction work we should do the water infrastructure work and make it a comprehensive project. If we are not doing the street work the water work can wait.

² I have received proposals from Pare Engineering to address the Dam Notices of Non-Compliance (NON). We need to spend about \$4,500 in FY08 and I can cover that from the annual budget (421).

The cost to complete the Phase II Inspection and Investigation Report (Dam Order #2) is as follows:

\$18,090 for Crystal Lake
\$18,990 for Jenks Reservoir
\$18,090 for the Mill Pond on Pearl Street

Total needed \$55,170. Ideally we appropriate this amount in May. The NON requires the Phase II report be submitted to the Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation (MDCR) by 11/30/08. From the discussion with Road Committee (Denis in attendance) it appears that in not going to be available for the May town meeting. I do not believe that Pare can complete \$55K of work in the time period between the October Meeting and 11/30/08. Maybe they can; I have asked but have not received a reply yet. Joe suggested that if we commit to fund the work at the October town meeting and hope that the commitment will be enough to have MDCR grant us a time extension.

From the Phase II reports we will get some good numbers for dam repair projects or dam breach project. It will also determine if the dams' hazard ratings can be lowered thereby relieving us from the NON requirement for the time

being. At a glance Crystal Lake and maybe the Pearl St Dam could be candidates for breach, but breaching a dam requires some significant environmental filing and will require the reconstruction and widening of the existing culvert across Silver Lake Road.

This new unfunded mandate is hitting every dam owner in the State. The owners of all High or Significant hazard dams that are in poor condition are receiving a NON. The Selectmen will be petitioning our State Rep and Senator to ask for relief or financial assistance and we will not be the only ones asking for help.

To get a sense of the worst case need for dam reconstruction the very roughly estimated dam repair costs from the 2006 Pare Reports are as follows:

\$251,000 for Crystal Lake
\$356,000 for Jenks Reservoir
\$620,000 for the Mill Pond on Pearl Street

In addition it is clear that we will need to enhance our annual maintenance of dams which will amount to more money in the annual operating budget (422).