

# DRAFT

## Finance Committee Minutes Town of Bellingham – Municipal Center Monday, March 31, 2008

1. FinCom Present: Gary Maynard, Joseph Collamati, Toni Picariello, Roland Lavallee, Henri Masson
2. FinCom Absent: Raymond Szczepan, Carol Dill
3. Meeting called to order: 7:15 pm
4. **BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
Selectmen Odabasian, Davies, Picard, Goodnow; Denis Fraine; Marilyn Mathieu appeared.

A. Article 9, Amend Article 1, Board of Selectmen

The Board of Selectmen will need to add \$20,000 to their expense account for legal services for the police and fire issues.

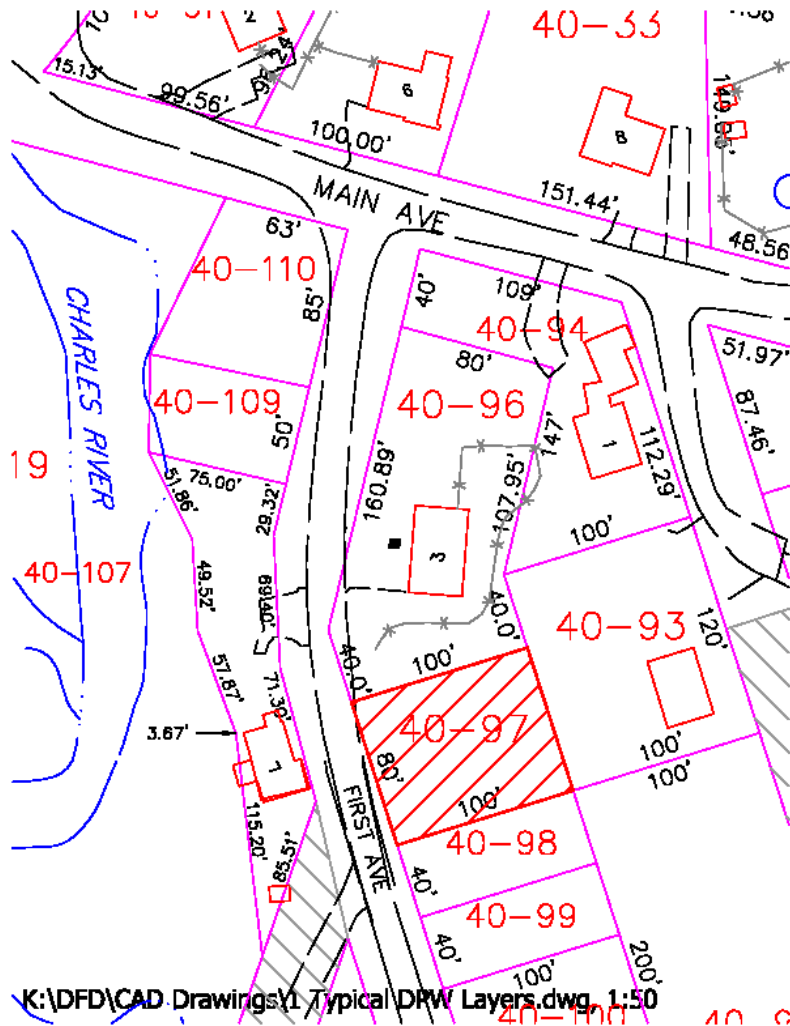
B. Article 14, Purchase of Land

Amount requested: \$200.00. This land is located on First Avenue, Lot 40-97 and owned by Mary Caccavelli. The lot is unbuildable and appraised at \$23,440. There are property taxes due of under \$200.00. The Board of Selectmen believe that this property could benefit the Town, to be used to fix the drainage problems in the area and they have a signed Purchase and Sale Agreement.

Below is the comments received by email from the DPW and discussed:

*I do want to note that I feel this parcel should not become ConCom protected land. The article does not suggest that it become ConCom protected, but if that were to arise I would not support it. Nothing against the ConCom, but once a parcel gets ConCom ownership the restriction make other uses nearly impossible. This is in the area where we could use some drainage improvements and therefore this parcel may have some benefit to the town as a site for stormwater treatment basin or the like facilities.*

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*Joseph Collamati/Roland Lavallee motion to recommend \$200.00 for the purchase of this property. Funding: from Taxation. VOTE: 5/0*

C. Article 10, Capital Outlay

Total amount requested: \$70,436.40. The only capital recommended to date is:  
Assessors – Revaluation \$45,000

This is the yearly appropriation for property revaluation for 1/3 of the Town. Each property needs to be revaluated every 3 years.

School Technology \$8,936.40

We will question the School Department on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Marilyn Mathieu mentioned that this Bellingham's share of the technology tax that is assessed on telephone bills.

Fire-Replacement Upgrade LT12 \$16,500.00

This amount will upgrade/replace defibullators.

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***Roland Lavallee/Henri Masson motion to recommend \$70,436.40 for the above listed capital. Funding to be “transferred from” as listed below:***

***VOTE: 5/0***

Assessors	Revaluation	\$45,000.00	Overlay Surplus
School	Technology	\$8,936.40	USSL Fund
Fire	Replace/Upgrade LP12	\$16,500.00	Ambulance Receipts
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$70,436.40</b>	

D. Article 2, Trash Enterprise

Trash Enterprise budget is requested at \$1,528,300, an increase of \$43,800. The trash rates are not going to be increased.

- a. It was brought up that not all residents, especially single homeowners and elderly, do not use the trash and recycling every week. The Board of Selectmen mentioned that they are considering a discount for the elderly.
- b. It was asked if the Board of Selectmen considered a “pay per bag” collection. They have considered it, but there was no details offered.

***Roland Lavallee/Joseph Collamati motion to recommend \$1,528,300 for the Trash Enterprise budget. Funding: from Trash Enterprise receipts. VOTE: 5/0.***

E. Article 5, Conveyances and Easements

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

***Roland Lavallee/Joseph Collamati motion to recommend \$1.00 to be transferred from taxation. VOTE: 5/0.***

F. Article 6, Purchase of Surplus Equipment

This article authorized the BOS to purchase surplus equipment. The \$1.00 requested is to keep the account open.

***Roland Lavallee/Joseph Collamati motion to recommend \$1.00 to be transferred from taxation. VOTE: 56/0.***

G. 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. The last time there was an auction was in 1993. The Collector is compiling a list of property now.

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*Joseph Collamati/Roland Lavallee motion to recommend this article. VOTE: 5/0*

## 5. GENERAL DISCUSSION

### A. Town Clerk election/position

There was discussion regarding decreasing the annual salary. The present salary will be paid until June 30<sup>th</sup>. It was discussed because no one running for Town Clerk has any experience with the position. The figure of \$50-54,000 was discussed. The questions were:

- 1) Can the salary be amended at Town Meeting to lower the salary from the election to June 30<sup>th</sup>?
- 2) Can Ms. Harvey stay after the election to train the new person?

Marilyn Mathieu has a letter into MA DOR regarding the above questions.<sup>1</sup> Ms. Harvey can stay up to seven (7) days after the election.

### B. Legal Fees:

The procedure for a department who requests to use legal counsel, other than Attorney Ambler, is to get the Board of Selectmen's OK to use labor counsel or another attorney. There is a budget for legal fees, which come under the Board of Selectmen's jurisdiction. The Planning Board and ZBA got the OK from Board of Selectmen to use special counsel.

This was brought up because the Board of Health went ahead and hired an attorney instead of going through the Board of Selectmen. They have an unpaid bill for the attorney and billing from the attorney for this fiscal year. We will question the Board of Health on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

### C. Assessment of Telephone poles.

Per a recent court decision, the Town can assess taxes on telephone poles. The Town will be receiving approximately \$70,000, but have been advised not to spend it yet, since the telephone companies will be appealing the decision.

Adjourned: *Joseph Collamati/Roland Lavallee motion to adjourn. VOTE: 5/0. 8:06 pm.*

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<sup>1</sup> From email from Marilyn Mathieu dated 4/2/2008 - Here is the "official" word from the Department of Revenue: Once an elected position has a salary established at town meeting AND the tax recapitulation sheet has been completed and filed with the DOR, (and ours has been), the salary cannot be increased or decreased.