



TOWN OF DARTMOUTH MASSACHUSETTS

Finance Committee
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Peter Friedman, Chairman
Greg Lynam, Vice-Chairman

Pursuant to a call to order and notice duly given in the manner required by law and the By-laws of the Town of Dartmouth, a meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, April 3, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. at the Old Town Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Greg Lynam, Peter Friedman, David Ferreira Melissa Haskell,
Stewart Washburn, George Jacobs

MEMBERS ABSENT: Shannon Jenkins, Larry Fox

BEGINNING RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$639,438.60

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Dartmouth Finance Committee
Meeting Agenda
Old Town Hall
April 3, 2008, 7 PM

7:00 PM Pledge of Allegiance

7:05 PM Planning Board Articles

7:45 PM -Revision of Schedule to Town Meeting

-Discussion of Possible Public Hearing

-Discussion of Joint Select Board/FinCom Budget Priority Meeting

8:15 PM Implications of Override on Budget – Where do we go from here?

-Implications of Capital Improvement question failing

-Library Roof

-Sustainable budget

9:00 PM Adjourn

MOTION

Francis Pettengill moved that the Minutes of March 27, 2008 be approved. Stewart Washburn seconded the motion.

(Vote 4-0-2)

Town Planner, Donald Perry, reviewed the Warrant Articles the Planning Board is recommend for by-law changes.

Gregory Lynam expressed a global concern about the recommendations being made in these warrant articles are not maintaining the character of the Town, but rather turning it into a city like New Bedford. Mr. Perry said that the Planning Board was trying to take direction from the Master Plan and the feedback that was received from the community's input that came out of the Master Plan update process. In particular, Mr. Perry pointed out that the community wanted to return to the "village" concept and redevelop the business in these area to enhance the idea of "village centers". He pointed out that traditionally villages were apartments above storefronts. Gregory Lynam called the changes "creeping crud" and expressed the concern that we will be looking back and see what a mess we have made out of the Town. Ms. Haskell agreed with Mr. Lynam's concern, but said that she thought to address many of Mr. Lynam's concerns, the Town would need to implements architectural review type by-laws. Mr. Perry pointed to Wickford Village as a model of the village model.

Melissa Haskell pointed out that the residents of Dartmouth were invited to participate in the Master Planning update process and subcommittees were created and reported back with their recommendations. Ms. Haskell pointed out that the Zoning Board of Appeals (the “ZBA”) needed to be reined in so that the zoning by-laws that the Town has adopted are not circumvented. Granting of appeals should be the exception and not the rule.

Gregory Lynam asked Mr. Perry about the Assessors assertion that there is no further opportunity for “big box” store development. Mr. Perry responded that the current lot coverage requirements would generally not allow for further “big box” store development, but the ZBA could circumvent the coverage requirements. Mr. Perry pointed out that Site Plan Review would go a long way to address Mr. Perry’s concerns. This would be a baby step toward Site Plan Review.

Mr. Perry said that there is a Public Hearing on these by-laws scheduled on April 14th. He also said that they would send out clarifying language for review. The intent of the by-law modification is one apartment per business lot, not per business.

Mr. Lynam asked about the legality of a municipality restricting age. Mr. Perry pointed out that we have over 55 age restricted communities already.

Michael Gagne said that there is a Slocum Farm street acceptance article being brought forth again. The Homeowner’s Association would like to come and meet with the Finance Committee. Gregory Lynam asked if anything had changed. It was reiterated that the Association would like to meet with the Finance Committee. It was pointed out that Tim Lancaster would like to revisit the idea of a Revolving Fund for Parks and Recreation. There is also the Wind Turbine by-law.

Mr. Iacaponi was asked for an update from the CIP and it was expressed that there was a concern about how the Town would pay for some of these improvements.

Gregory Lynam asked if the FinCom needed to have a public hearing. Mr. Iacaponi said that the FinCom did not need a public hearing, but the School need a public hearing. David Ferreira suggested that we should be putting together a capital improvements program that would encourage more faith in Town government and be an appropriate use of funding.

A public hearing by the Finance Committee remains an open issue.

Implications of Override Vote

Peter Friedman pointed out that the public is expecting the Town to make additions to the budget immediately. Mr. Lynam suggested that capital improvements need to be looked at first. We need to do things that will save us money. He asked if the library roof was already leaking. Mr. Gagne said it has been under a maintenance agreement, but the membrane is brittle and coming away at the edges. This is something that is one of the highest priorities. They have not put a bid on the roof, but they have received a professional estimate. Mr. Iacaponi said that the roof would be a good candidate for a 5 to 10-year note.

Gregory Lynam asked about the savings that could be expected from the DPW. Mr. Iacaponi said he would be attending the Board of Public Works meeting. Mr. Lynam asked if there was money available to fix the potholes and inquired as to the liability for the Town in the pothole situation. Mr. Gagne said that there is liability if the Town has knowledge of the defect. The liability is capped at \$100,000. He suggested that Mr. Hickox be consulted about which roads need to be done before more extensive work is required and the cost to fix those roads increase. Mr. Iacaponi said that the Town is expecting \$875,000 in Chapter 90 money, but it was pretty much committed to finishing the work on Slocum Road.

Francis Pettengill asked about other money savers like the replacement of the Quinn windows. Mr. Iacaponi pointed out that the original plan was to replace the windows in phases. There was discussion about the cost versus the payback period. Mr. Lynam pointed out that even with a 50% savings, the heating

cost of the building was only \$175,000. When questioned, Mr. Iacaponi indicated that any infrastructure spending was not part of net school spending. Mr. Jacobs pointed out that the Finance Committee has not received hard numbers with regard to the potential savings on the windows. He further pointed out that the savings only really starts after the borrowing is paid back. He further asked about the useful life of the windows. Mr. Iacaponi said that there should be some hard numbers available. David Ferreira stated his agreement with the need to replace certain things because they are old, but also pointed out the need for transparency to the community. He noted that the voters did not authorize the debt exclusion and we need to carefully explain how the capital improvements were being funded. Without an explanation, voters feel like they did not need to vote for a debt exclusion because the work would get done anyway.

Peter Friedman asked if the library roof repairs could be funded from their operating budget. Mr. Iacaponi said that the library was in striking distance of maintaining its certification. He could check to see if maintenance counted toward certification.

Melissa Haskell moved that the meeting be adjourned. George Jacobs seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM.