



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, May 15, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. at the Dartmouth Town Hall, Room 315.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Greg Lynam, Stewart Washburn, Larry Fox, Peter Friedman, Dave Ferreira, Francis Pettengill, George Jacobs, Shannon Jenkins, Melissa Haskell

BEGINNING RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$596,467.48

ENDING RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$414,835.49

(Reserve Fund Transfers: \$4,450 Town Hall – Custodial Salaries; \$47,000 Vet Benefits – Misc. Line-items; \$25,000- Insured on Duty Medical Bills; \$4,500-Lock-up Holding; \$5,681.99 – Printing/binding Exp.; \$40,000 – Liability Insurance; \$40,000 Town Counsel – Legal Expense; \$15,000 vehicles gasoline account)

MOTION

David Ferreira moved that the May 8, 2008 Minutes be accepted as amended. Francis Pettengill seconded the motion.

(Vote 8-0-0)

MOTION

George Jacobs moved that the May 1, 2008 Minutes be accepted, as amended. Francis Pettengill seconded the motion.

(Vote 6-0-2)

MOTION

David Ferreira moved that the April 24, 2008 Minutes be accepted. Francis Pettengill seconded the motion.

(Vote 8-0-0)

MOTION

David Ferreira moved that the April 17, 2008 Minutes be accepted. Francis Pettengill seconded the motion.

(Vote 8-0-0)

MOTION

Melissa Haskell moved that \$4,450 be transferred from the Reserve Fund to Town Hall – Custodial Salaries Account. David Ferreira seconded the motion.

(Vote 9-0-0)

Gregory Lynam asked if these funds were being used to replace a retired employee. Ed Iacaponi said that this reflects a collective bargaining settlement and they are using two existing employees to do cleaning at the Town Hall then they start their jobs at 8:30 A.M.

MOTION

Melissa Haskell moved and George Jacobs seconded a motion to transfer \$47,000 from the Reserve Fund to Veterans' Benefits – Miscellaneous Line Items. Mr. Jacobs asked if there was any reimbursement. Mr. Iacaponi stated that there is.

(Vote 9-0-0)

MOTION

Melissa Haskell moved and George Jacobs seconded a motion to transfer \$25,000 from the Reserve Fund to Injured on Duty Medical Bills. George Jacobs asked if the Town was insured for this. Mr. Iacaponi responded that the Town has stop loss insurance, so most of the claim would not be reimbursed. However, he thought that there might be a small amount that could be recovered based on the accumulated total.

(Vote 9-0-0)

MOTION

Melissa Haskell moved and Francis Pettengill seconded a motion to transfer \$4,500 from the Reserve Fund to Lock-up Holding.

(Vote 9-0-0)

MOTION

Shannon Jenkins moved that \$15,000 be transferred from the Reserve Fund to Vehicle Gasoline Account. Melissa Haskell seconded the motion.

(Vote 9-0-0)

Francis Pettengill asked if there would be any additional gasoline overages. Ed Iacaponi said he thought that this should be the only one. He indicated that he did not foresee sizable overages.

MOTION

Melissa Haskell moved and Stewart Washburn seconded a motion to transfer \$5,681.99 from the Reserve Fund to Printing/Binding Expense. This expense was related to the printing of extra ballots needed for the election.

(Vote 9-0-0)

MOTION

Melissa Haskell moved and Shannon Jenkins seconded a motion to transfer \$40,000 from the Reserve Fund to Liability Insurance. George Jacobs asked for clarification on this transfer. Mr. Iacaponi said it includes liability insurance policies like Workers' Compensation Insurance and the automobile policies. Mr. Gagne stated that the insurance is paid quarterly.

(Vote 9-0-0)

MOTION

Melissa Haskell moved and Stewart Washburn seconded a motion to transfer \$40,000 from the Reserve Fund to Town Counsel-Legal Expense. George Jacobs asked if there was any movement to return to in-house counsel. Mr. Gagne pointed out that even with in-house counsel they are not a specialist in everything and much less is being farmed out than in the past. Mr. Gagne noted that some of the expense was related to an insurance claim. The Town had continued with the insurance lawyer because he was already familiar with the case.

(Vote 9-0-0)

SCHEDULE A

Ed Iacaponi gave an overview of changes to Schedule A. He noted that the school crossing guard had been removed from the Public Safety budget and included in the School Budget. Currently, crossing guards are eligible to collect unemployment. The Town got a lengthy legal opinion that states if the crossing guard were part of the school budget, they would not be eligible for unemployment benefits during the summer months. Mr. Lynam asked if the cost of the crossing guard would be included in minimum net school spending. Mr. Iacaponi said it would not be included. As a follow-up question, Mr. Lynam asked if the crossing guards would be part of the police department. Mr. Iacaponi said that the police chief agreed to relinquish control over their assignments. It was further discussed that by including the crossing guards as part of the school budget, they would no longer be considered a lay off, but rather a hiring for the school year. If they receive notice that they will have employment in the fall, they cannot collect unemployment. Mr. Gagne said that the Town had a legal intern from the law school who had made a very good argument. While there is no apparent downside for the school department, they have been trying to fight this decision. Michael Gagne said that this would be subject to impact bargaining.

Michael Gagne reported that approximately 24,000 meals were served to senior citizens this year, nearly double the number of meals served the previous fiscal year. The meals are served at both the Counsel On Aging and delivered to homes. The marked increase may be indicative of the situation of senior citizen's

because of the high cost of food and fuel. There had been a question about the amount paid by other municipalities and they pay the same breakdown that Dartmouth pays. Ed Iacaponi said that most towns participate in this program.

There was discussion about the Library budget and the amount of the override included in the budget.

Greg Lynam asked about the increase in Medicare and unemployment. Ed Iacaponi said that the schools are doing the bulk of the new hiring. They are trying to make sure that the line item is not underfunded.

With regard to health insurance, Ed Iacaponi reported that there has been a significant migration from Master Health Plus to HMO Blue. The insurance reserve fund is up to approximately \$900K.

Larry Fox noted that there had been no salary adjustment for either Mr. Gagne or Mr. Iacaponi. Mr. Iacaponi pointed out that was because they had not received a salary increase. Mr. Gagne further noted that in order to make the 2% cut to the budgets last year, many department heads took furlough days without pay.

Greg Lynam asked about the increase in "Town Clerk Clerical Salaries". Mr. Iacaponi said that there had been a floating clerk, but because other positions in the Town Clerk's office had not been filled, the floating clerk spends her time in the Town Clerk's office and is now included in that budget.

ARTICLE A – FUNDING SOLID WASTE ENTERPRISE FUND

David Hickox met with the Finance Committee, answered questions about Article A and reviewed information previously presented. Mr. Hickox pointed out that revenue from recycling is approaching \$30,000 per quarter and will largely cover the cost of the new recycling truck.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

ARTICLE I –COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT FY/2009 BUDGET

Howard "Buddy" Baker-Smith met with the Finance Committee to discuss the warrant articles being presented by the Community Preservation Committee (the "CPC"). Mr. Baker-Smith said that the State is expected to match approximately 65% of the funds collected locally. It will be the first year that the State did not match 100% of the funds collected. In Article I, the CPC is placing the 10% required in each of the three funding areas as required by the Community Preservation Act (the "Act"). They are also setting aside 5% of the funds for their administrative budget as allowed under the Act.

ARTICLE R1 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT – FUNDING OF DARTMOUTH HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS

The CPC is proposing using funds to resurface and reconfigure the driveway and parking lot at Sol-e-Mar. More residents have cars than was originally contemplated and this would enable the seniors that live there to have ample parking. Melissa Haskell asked if this was, in fact, maintenance because maintenance is not allowable under the Act. Mr. Baker-Smith said that they were viewing this as preserving affordable housing. Claudia Desbian, Executive Director of Housing, pointed out that it will expand the parking lot by twelve to fourteen parking spaces.

ARTICLE R2 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT- FUNDING OF HOUSING REHABILITATION

Mr. Baker-Smith said that the CPC was proposing a portion of its funding be apportioned to cover the costs of a rehabilitation specialist that would work in support of processing the CPA home loan program that had been established at an earlier Town Meeting. The CPC would be estimating the costs of the rehabilitation specialist. Additionally, the CPC received an opinion from Town Counsel that as long as the costs were associated with the administration of CPA loans, they could use funds for this purpose. Melissa Haskell asked why the funds were not deducted from the CPC's administrative dollars. Mr. Baker-Smith explained that those funds might already be committed. Ms. Haskell asked how many loans were outstanding under the affordable housing revolving fund that had been established. Doris Copley, the grant administrator, said that no loans were currently outstanding. However, loans were expected to be made under this program because grant money from DHCD, the State program, was not expected to be available.

ARTICLE R3 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT – FUNDING OF SEPTIC SYSTEM SCHOFIELD FARM PROPERTY

Buddy Baker-Smith explained that this property did not meet Title 5 and the plan was to make it affordable housing. The funding would bring the home up to code.

SCHEDULE A

Discussions continued about Schedule A

There was discussion about the Library budget and whether or not it should be cut further. Shannon Jenkins pointed out that an override had been passed by voters and the Finance Committee needed to respect their vote. Discussion continued about the formula for accreditation by the State Library Commission and all agreed it was asinine. Greg Lynam noted that the appropriation continues to climb despite a reduction in the number of libraries from three to one. In Mr. Lynam's opinion, the Library budget wasted taxpayer money by funding salaries, especially when compared to other libraries. Melissa Haskell agreed that Mr. Lynam made some valid arguments, but also agreed with Ms. Jenkins that the override vote needed to be honored.

ARTICLE A – FUNDING SOLID WASTE ENTERPRISE FUND

MOTION

Melissa Haskell moved and David Ferreira seconded the motion that the Finance Committee recommend Article A to Town Meeting.

(Vote 9-0-0)

ARTICLE B – AUTHORIZATION FOR EXPENDITURES

Article was withdrawn

ARTICLE I – COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT – FY/2009 BUDGET

Melissa Haskell moved and Stewart Washburn seconded a motion that the Finance Committee recommend Article I to Town Meeting.

(Vote 9-0-0)

ARTICLE J - ACCEPTANCE OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT AND FUNDING FY/2009 CAPITAL PLAN

Peter Friedman had spoken with engineers about the Quinn School windows and had done some calculations to analyze the potential savings in modifying the windows at the Quinn School. Larry Fox vehemently objected to Mr. Friedman putting forth this proposal and characterized it as “pandering to the schools”. Mr. Friedman responded that it fell within the parameters of the Chairperson and the Finance Committee to find ways for the Town to save money and that was the reason he was putting forth this proposal.

Mr. Lynam argued for making the changes to the Quinn School windows based on Mr. Friedman's analysis and did not see a reason to wait to replace them.

MOTION

Shannon Jenkins moved to add the Quinn School window replacement in the amount of \$1.350 million by borrowing to the CIP requests in Article J. Stewart Washburn seconded the motion.

George Jacobs noted that the Quinn School window proposal had been before the FinCom on several occasions, but never came with any way to determine the whether the proposal was financially feasible. He further stated that for the first time a rational analysis had been presented and provided a basis on which to vote. Mr. Jacobs thanked Mr. Friedman for his work and for putting together hard numbers for the Finance Committee to review.

David Ferreira did not disagree with the calculations, but he did not think the State would reimburse the Town for this project for some time.

Mr. Fox continued to loudly and vehemently disagree with recommending this project.

Shannon Jenkins amended the motion to be contingent upon receiving approval for 50% reimbursement from the State and CIP Committee approval. Mr. Washburn maintained his second on that motion.
(Vote 8-1-0)

ARTICLE L – STABILIZATION FUND

MOTION

Melissa Haskell moved and David Ferreira seconded a motion to recommend from the floor.
(Vote 9-0-0)

ARTICLE R1 – COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT – FUNDING OF DARTMOUTH HOUSING AUTHORITY PROPERTY IMPROVMENTS

Stewart Washburn moved and David Ferreira seconded a motion for the Finance Committee to recommend Article R1 to Town Meeting.
(Vote 9-0-0)

There was discussion about the CPC ARTICLE R2 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT- FUNDING OF HOUSING REHABILITATION. Ms. Haskell was opposed to the spending of the CPC funds in this manner. She felt it was an attempt to fund an established position for which grant money had been cut and observed that there are currently not loans outstanding under this CPC program. At best, she felt that the CPC could be charged an hourly rate for the administrator's time and the funding should come out of administrative costs. Mr. Gagne said he would review this proposal with the CPC and see if they would take the funding from their administrative costs.

ARTICLE R3-COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT – FUNDING OF SEPTIC SYSTEM SCHOFIELD FARM PROPERTY

MOTION

Melissa Haskell moved and Shannon Jenkins seconded a motion to recommend Article R3 to Town Meeting.
(Vote 9-0-0)

ARTICLE AA – EXTENSION OF MUNICIPAL SEWER THROUGH BETTERMENT ASSESSMENT FOR RUSSELLS MILLS AND TUCKER ROAD NORTH

MOTION

Stewart Washburn moved that Article AA be recommended to Town Meeting contingent upon two-thirds approval by residents. David Ferreira seconded the motion.
(Vote 9-0-0)

ARTICLE BB – ACCEPTANCE OF CHAPTER 40 SECTION 58: MUNICIPAL CHARGES LIEN

MOTION

Stewart Washburn moved and David Ferreira seconded a motion to recommend Article BB to Town Meeting.
(Vote 9-0-0)

ARTICLE 4STM – WATERWAYS ENTERPRISE FUND – RETAINED EARNINGS

MOTION

Larry Fox moved and David Ferreira seconded a motion that the Finance Committee recommend Article 4STM to Town meeting.
(Vote 9-0-0)

ARTICLE 7STM – AUTHORIZATION FOR APPROPRIATION - WATERWAYS

MOTION

Melissa Haskell moved and Shannon Jenkins seconded a motion to recommend Article 7STM to Town Meeting.

(Vote 9-0-0)

MOTION

Melissa Haskell moved that the meeting be adjourned. Shannon Jenkins seconded the motion.

(Vote 9-0-0)

Adjourn
10:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Haskell