



# TOWN OF DARTMOUTH MASSACHUSETTS

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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 8, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. at the Dartmouth Town Hall, Room 315.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Greg Lynam, Stewart Washburn, Larry Fox, Peter Friedman, Dave Ferriera, Francis Pettengill, George Jacobs, Shannon Jenkins, Melissa Haskell  
BEGINNING RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$ 639,438.60  
ENDING RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$628,959.35

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## AGENDA

DARTMOUTH FINANCE COMMITTEE  
May 8, 2008, Room 315, 7 PM

7:00 PM Library trustees  
7:30 PM Attorney Matt Thomas to discuss articles BB and DD.  
7:50 PM Further discussion of Schedule A  
8:10 PM Articles  
10:00 PM Adjourn

## MEETING WITH DARTMOUTH LIBRARIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Kathy Aisenberg, the Chairperson of the Dartmouth Library Trustees and Rachel Charrier, the Assistant Chairperson of the Dartmouth Library Trustees were in attendance to discuss the library budget and respond to questions that had been raised. Ms. Aisenberg wanted it noted that the merit increase for the Library Director was not going to come from the Library budget. Ms. Charrier went on to say that the Trustees have a goal of maintaining certification for the library and being open at least 63 hours per week. Gregory Lynam asked how they would meet the minimum spending requirement if the budget, as proposed, was not enough to meet the requirement. Ms. Charrier said that if the Library was within 5% of the targeted amount, they would need to apply for a waiver, but they would not need a hearing to receive the waiver. Peter Friedman pointed out that the formula for minimum spending to maintain certification did not allow for efficiencies. All agreed with that statement. Ms. Charrier said that contracts are being renegotiated with the union to allow lower starting pays. The Trustees are trying to get a reduction in starting grade levels and a reworking of job descriptions to include more duties. The Trustees had reviewed the privatization proposal, but LSSI, the company that made the bid, would not disclose details of the proposal, so the comparison has been difficult.

David Ferreira asked if it was fair to say that the State measured the library standards by the money being spent. Ms. Aisenberg agreed with that characterization. An extended discussion took place about the funding of the Director's merit increase from an alternate source of funding and its impact on the Town's obligation under the contract and the pension funding for this position. Mr. Iacaponi said that he had been unaware of this funding source prior to the meeting and would look into it.

George Jacobs observed that neither the Director of Library nor the Trustees participate in the collective bargaining for employees. Based on the union that the employees belong to, the Trustees have not control over salary expenditures.

Mr. Lynam brought up the length of the work week and observed that most employees had a 35 hour work week. Mr. Iacaponi noted that no overtime was paid to employees until they exceeded 40 hours. There was a suggestion that Dartmouth move to a 40 hour work week. Ms. Aisenberg said the Trustees were looking into hiring part-time employees to minimize costs. Denise Medeiros, the Director of Libraries, explained the difficulties they have had with part-time workers in the past. Mr. Lynam pointed out that the Towns in the Commonwealth that spent markedly less than Dartmouth, but served more people had between 2-3 times as many part-time as full time employees and he suggested that the ratio of part-time to full-time employees in Dartmouth might be off.

Ms. Aisenberg assured the Finance Committee that the Trustees are aware of the financial constraints of the Town and are working at being as efficient as possible.

#### MEETING WITH ATTORNEY MATT THOMAS REGARDING ARTICLES DD(1), DD(2), EE,FF Article DD(1)

Attorney Thomas explained that when the approval was given by Town Meeting to purchase the Carriero Farm with Community Preservation Funds to create two affordable housing units, the Select Board was not given the authority to execute the deed. Warrant article DD(1) would allow the Select Board to execute the deed and sell the parcel to a new owner that qualified for affordable housing and whose name would be drawn from a lottery at the Select Board's next meeting. The parcel would have an affordable housing restriction in perpetuity and would essentially restrict the sale price for the next 15 years. The rental unit would have an affordable housing restriction in perpetuity, as well.

#### Article DD(2)

A parcel of land has been subdivided out of the affordable housing lot and will be offered for sale. It is a non-buildable lot. Melissa Haskell asked if there would be a restriction put on this parcel. Attorney Thomas said it would not be restricted. Ms. Haskell said that she believed that the Community Preservation Act required that the parcel carry a restriction. In this case, it would be an affordable housing restriction, an open space restriction or a recreation restriction. Mr. Thomas was not aware of this requirement and Mr. Iacaponi said he had not been engaged to review the Community Preservation Act requirements. It was agreed that this issue would be looked into.

#### Article EE and FF

For Articles EE and FF, Attorney Thomas indicated that the Municipal Relief Act allows the taking back of a deed in lieu of foreclosure, but legislative changes now require the legislative body to approved taking the deed. Ms. Haskell asked if there is risk to being in the chain of title. Attorney Thomas said there was no liability with that and remediation of any issues is not necessary. The municipality cannot take a deed in lieu if anyone else has a lien on the property. A property owner cannot buy back the property at a tax sale. At a sale, the tax value is recouped and the difference is given to the seller. With a deed in lieu, any proceeds in excess of the tax lien are kept by the municipality.

#### REVIEW OF TOWN MEETING WARRANT

ARTICLE A – FUNDING OF THE SOLID WASTE ENTERPRISE FUND was discussed and Ed Iacaponi said that the annual fee for Pay-As-You-Throw (“PAYT”) had been reduced from \$95 to \$80 annual. Larry Fox asked about the salary decrease and expense increase. Mr. Iacaponi said that the information presented was consistent with the Finance Committee's meeting with David Hickox about his budget. Gregory Lynam observed that money was running in arrears on the PAYT program. Mr. Iacaponi expressed his concern and indicated that another billing was being sent out. Larry Fox made a request for information about how all the money had moved around.

Mr. Iacaponi described ARTICLE B – AUTHORIZATION FOR EXPENDITURES as a housekeeping item that is no longer needed by law. The Finance Committee asked that if it were no longer legally needed that it be withdrawn. Mr. Iacaponi wanted to discuss this with Michael Gagne.

#### MOTION

#### ARTICLE C - SALARIES OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Melissa Haskell moved that the Finance Committee recommend Article C – Salaries of Elected Officials written in the schedule. Larry Fox seconded the motion.  
*(Vote 9-0-0)*

**MOTION**

**ARTICLE E - FUNDING WATER DEPARTMENT BUDGET – ENTERPRISE FUND**

Melissa Haskell moved to recommend Article E to fund the Water Department Budget – Enterprise Fund. Gregory Lynam seconded the motion.  
*(Vote 8-1-0)*

**MOTION**

Melissa Haskell moved and George Jacobs seconded the motion that the Finance Committee recommend Articles DD1, EE, FF.  
*(Vote 9-0-0)*

**MOTION**

Melissa Haskell moved and Greg Lynam seconded the motion to recommend ARTICLE F- FUNDING SEWER DEPARTMENT BUDGET – ENTERPRISE FUND.  
*(Vote 9-0-0)*

**MOTION**

David Ferreira moved that ARTICLE G - FUNDING DARTMOUTH SENIOR SOCIAL DAY PROGRAM be recommended by the Finance Committee. Larry Fox seconded the motion.  
*(Vote 9-0-0)*

**MOTION**

George Jacobs moved and Melissa Haskell seconded a motion that the Finance Committee recommend ARTICLE H – FUNDING WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT – ENTERPRISE FUND.  
*(Vote 9-0-0)*

**There was discussion of ARTICLE J – ACCEPTANCE OF CAPTIAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT AND FUNDING FY/2009 CAPITAL**

Shannon Jenkins expressed concerns that not enough information has been provided about the amount that will be saved, the kinds of cars to be used, and their fuel economy. She stated a desire to be able to quantify the savings for voters. Michael Gagne said it was the plan of the Town to replace a number of vehicles with a vehicle like a Ford Focus. Replacing vehicles would lower maintenance costs. When questioned about the cost of the vehicles, Mr. Gagne said that the Town could purchase three Ford Focus sedans for approximately \$12,000. Ms. Jenkins did not doubt the cost savings but questioned why the savings would not be quantified and made part of the public record for voters to be able to access. She declared a need for transparency. Mr. Gagne responded by saying that he did not think there was a need for justification on something that would provide such obvious savings.

Greg Lynam asked about meeting with the Planning Board, with regard to street acceptances. There was agreement that a meeting with the Planning Board would need to happen after Town Meeting.

**ARTICLE N – ACCEPTANCE OF A PORTION OF LINCOLN STREET**

*(Vote 8-1-0)*

It was asked if there were changes to ARTICLE T, U, V since the Finance Committee met with Mr. Perry, the Town Planner, and asked that a blacklined copy be provided to highlight any changes.

**MOTION**

George Jacobs moved and Melissa Haskell seconded a motion to recommend ARTICLE X – SCHOOL BUILDING AND RENOVATION STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT.  
*(Vote 9-0-0)*

**MOTION**

Melissa Haskell moved and David Ferreira seconded a motion to recommend **ARTICLE Y – RECINDING PRIOR BOND AUTHORIZATION.**

*(Vote 9-0-0)*

With regard to **ARTICLE Z – REALLOCATION OF AGRICULTURAL FUNDS FORM PAYMENT BY STATE APR PROGRAM**, the State Agricultural Preservation Restriction program bought an agricultural preservation restriction on the Sousa-Lagasse Farm, but the money was not able to be returned to the Agricultural Preservation Trust Fund despite the fact that they had helped to fund the original purchase. This article would allow the return of those funds to the Agricultural Preservation Trust Fund.

**MOTION**

Melissa Haskell moved and Larry for seconded a motion to recommend **ARTICLE Z-REALLOCATION OF AGRICULTURAL FUNDS FROM PAYMENT BY STATE APR PROGRAM**

*(Vote 9-0-0)*

There was a brief discussion about **ARTICLE AA – EXTENSION OF MUNICIPAL SEWER THROUGH BETTERMANE ASSESSMENT FOR RUSSELLS MILLS AND TUCKER ROAD NORTH.** Mr. Gagne pointed out that two-thirds of the individuals on this road need to agree to a betterment assessment. Some questions remained about permanently protected land. Mr. Gagne noted that money was not collected on farm land until it was converted to a non-agricultural use. The farmland represents approximately 20% of the cost for this project.

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

Mr. Iacaponi said that this is a housekeeping item to allow the Town to continue to make municipal lien charges.

**ARTICLE CC – FUNDING FOR TCE WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT**

This article would allow for the replacement of cement water mains and allows the issuance of debt or payment through retained earnings. It is something that is done every year.

**MOTION**

Melissa Haskell moved and George Jacobs seconded the motion to recommend Article CC.

*(Vote 8-1-0)*

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES**

**ARTICLE 1STM BUDGET SUPPLEMENTS FY/2008 – WATER ENTERPRISE FUND**

Ed Iacaponi said there was a considerable amount spent in purchasing water from New Bedford. Since they are only allowed to expend the budgeted amount, there needs to be an additional appropriation.

**MOTION**

Melissa Haskell moved that the Finance Committee recommend Article 1STM. David Ferreira seconded the motion.

*(Vote 9-0-0)*

Ed Iacaponi was not sure if he would be requesting an additional appropriation for the Sewer Enterprise Fund, so asked if the Finance Committee would be willing to recommend **ARTICLE 2STM** from the floor of Town Meeting.

**MOTION**

Melissa Haskell moved and Francis Pettengill seconded a motion to recommend Article 2STM from the floor.

*(Vote 9-0-0)*

**MOTION**

Stewart Washburn moved that Article 3STM – SENIOR SOCIAL DAY PROGRAM be recommended to Town Meeting. Francis Pettengill seconded the motion.  
(Vote 9-0-0)

Melissa Haskell moved that the meeting be adjourned. Shannon Jenkins seconded the motion.  
(Vote 9-0-0)

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Haskell  
*Clerk*