

Finance Committee Meeting  
April 10, 2012

Present: Al Olmstead, Mark Russo, Tom Clark, Carol Moro, Shawn Patterson, Bernie Kubiak

(and possibly Mark Gilmore, and an Assessor)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

**Pay scale:** Mr. Kubiak reported that the Personnel Board has suggested that employees at the top of the pay scale be given a pay increase of \$.20/hr. This will affect 5 people. He distributed new spread sheets incorporating the change.

**Warrants: The Special Town Meeting**, which will be held during the Annual Town meeting contains two articles. Article 1 asks for a sum of money for the public works building. The amount will be \$6 million. The bond that will be issued will include the cost of the bond. Mr. Kubiak said Ms. Stokarski has the authority to borrow; she can roll the Oxford property bond into a new bond. Mr. Clark said he was uncomfortable recommending this article, without better numbers. A decision on this article was tabled until more information is available.

Article 2 asks for funding of the Collective bargaining agreement for FY'11. This money represents the difference between what was paid in FY'10 and FY'11 and what has been agreed to in the collective bargaining contract. The money has been set aside, but as it has not been expended, it's currently shown in free cash. A motion was made by Mr. Clark, seconded by Mr. Russo, and voted to support this article.

**Annual Town Meeting** The articles were reviewed individually, with attention focused on those having a financial interest. Several articles had already been approved at previous committee meetings. Article 9, the Community Preservation article was not acted upon, as it is not finalized. There was discussion about how the Planning Board revolving fund works.

There was discussion of the Personnel Board's recommendation of \$.20/hr for persons at the top of the pay scale, which the Finance Committee voted to recommend. Information was shared about the methodology for arriving on a monetary cap on various positions. The concept being that the Town should not be paying \$60,000 per year for a position worth only \$30,000.

**Special Revenue Sources:** Mr. Kubiak presented information of sources of revenue that are derived from sources other than taxes. He explained how Chapter 90 money works. That is, the Town is allocated a certain amount of money for roads. Projects have to be approved by *MassDOT*. Once approved, the project is completed and paid for by the Town. Upon submission of the completed project paperwork, *MassDOT* reimburses the Town. He explained how FEMA funds are requested and received. There is also EDWP which is funds coming from Deerfield Academy, for example, to offset some of the cost of riverbank erosion repairs. There may also be grants that, if received, can offset the Town's share of the cost.

**CPA Funds:** Questions were asked about how long awarded funds are held. Mr. Kubiak responded that a limit of 3 years is generally the practice. We don't want small amounts of monies being held. He said he anticipates that something will need to be done, as the memorial on the Town Common is out of space.

Mr. Olmstead asked about properties where ownership is not known. These parcels are in tax-title. Mr. Kubiak said that Ms. Stokarski makes an effort to locate the last known owners. In some cases the cost could be more than the property is worth. Other parcels may be land locked or something that no one would want. She tries to get saleable properties back on the tax roles. Lynn Rose has received a small forestry grant to be used for a town forest, which might be a good use for some parcels.

At one time the Assessors met with the private schools regarding payment in lieu of taxes. The concern voiced was that the responsibility has become the Board of Selectmen's and the speaker thought it was no longer happening. Mr. Kubiak said he does this. He meets with the schools. He commented that the mayor of Boston encourages a 25% contribution from private organizations in Boston, as that is the cost of providing public safety.

Mr. Kubiak talked about things that happen quietly, such as the expansion of broadband service from two locations to most of the Town's buildings, plus some in Sunderland and Whately.

There being no further business before the committee, a motion was made, seconded, and voted to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Priscilla Phelps