

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes

Date: April 3, 2006

Time: 7:00p.m.

Present: O'Connor, Turbitt, Hachey, Hebert, Floser, Tripaldi

Absent: Raymond

Meeting called to order at 7:00p.m.

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Hebert to accept the minutes of March 27, 2006 as written. Unanimous.

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Hebert to accept the minutes of March 30, 2006 as written. Unanimous.

Leah Devine and Marie Johnson were in to discuss a drainage article for the Greenwood Street Area at 7:00p.m.

Hachey: There is no money assigned to this article.

Leah Devine: I realize that money is tight. I tried to see if we could get a grant to do this. There is a need for this. Hawthorne Street has always been bad since the Mass Pike was put in. Mr. Chase said that the roads would be fixed when the sewers are put in. Our road has to be fixed. When the sewers are put in, are the roads done?

Hachey: You would have to check with the Sewer Commissioners about that.

Floser: Any time you dig out a Town road, you have to account for the paving from curb to curb. It is a by-law.

Leah Devine: I went with this article to see if it can be done when the road is dug up. We want it done for health reasons.

Marie Johnson: I've been pumping for years. We have no curbs. The streets are a mess. We are trying to get rid of some of the water.

O'Connor: It is my understanding that the paving of the road is included in the project. We don't know why the drainage wasn't thought of with the project.

Hachey: Is your problem surface water or sub-surface water?

Marie Johnson: It's coming from underground.

Leah Devine: It wouldn't be a problem for me to call about Chapter 90 money.

Hachey: Chapter 90 funds are for Town roads.

Leah Devine: Who would I call?

Hachey: You would call the Department of Transportation. If the ground is that wet, then I don't think the sewers will help you. You should call Paul Guida to find out who to call.

O'Connor: An engineer would have to study this and suggest what to do.

Leah Devine: We just don't want to hold up the project.

Leah Devine and Marie Johnson left at 7:20p.m.

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School

O'Connor: I read the letter from Town Counsel. Basically it is saying that you have to go back to a Special Town Meeting to fund the budget as submitted if 9 other Towns approve it. I did a cost analysis on the budget. There is a huge difference in the per pupil cost if we delete the Chapter 70 aid. Dr. Fitzpatrick should have used an average per pupil cost when figuring out the budget. Millbury's assessment is \$433 per student above the average. We should support a warrant article for \$34,138 less than the given number from Dr. Fitzpatrick.

Hachey: There are 8 Towns below the average. You would have to convince them to fight.

O'Connor: Both Dr. Fitzpatrick and David Roach commented that the foundation budget is broken.

Turbitt: The average cost won't matter. He needs to apportion it out.

O'Connor: The additional contribution is a manual figure that balances out the budget. He has the ability to fix the system.

Hachey: The apportionment is constructed by the DOE. There used to be 37 components to the formula. One was based on the ability to pay.

O'Connor: He is required to charge us the minimum contribution. If we had a Special Town Meeting during the year, we could vote it back at that time. He needs to stand up at Town Meeting and fight for his 19% increase.

Floser: Why don't we vote the decrease?

Hachey: We need to find out how they are paid. Are they paid quarterly, twice a year or yearly? You have to make sure that we have the money for a Special Town Meeting, if that is what you are leaning towards.

Turbitt: I don't think our Town was represented correctly during the meeting.

Floser: I don't think he is looking out for us. He didn't say much at the meeting. Isn't he supposed to be there to help us? I think we should lower the Salaries Elected amount.

O'Connor: When meeting with him, he stated that he doesn't come back to the Towns for more money. That means that there is a lot of fat in his budget. I would like to have him stand up and fight for his budget. We could put the \$34,138 in the Stabilization Fund and have a 2/3 vote at Town Meeting to okay it.

Floser: We can't keep eating a 19% increase.

O'Connor: I would like to hold on motioning this budget until Thursday, when everyone is here.

Hachey: Previously we did all of our deliberations at our meetings. We haven't gone to the Town Meeting floor to deliberate. We should resolve this at one of our meetings.

O'Connor: I thought that Joe Chase was coming in tonight. I would like to find out from him if he knows of the cuts that Paul Guida made, especially after learning from other departments that they are unaware of his recommendations. He made cuts and no one let anyone know about it.

O'Connor: We have \$277,000 in special articles. Until the Selectmen and David Roach give us a balanced budget, we really cannot vote on them.

Hachey: We can reconsider any vote that we take.

WARRANT ARTICLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Article 5-Police Department Computer Upgrade-\$30,000-Parks Commission Improvement-\$10,000:

Turbitt: I don't think you can upgrade what they want for the Police Department for \$30,000 unless they aren't going to do a complete upgrade.

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$40,000 for the purpose of Article 5. Floser opposed, rest for.

Article 6-Police Department Improvements:

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Floser to recommend that action on Article 6 be indefinitely postponed.

O'Connor: I thought this was covering the engineering. Is this for the whole project?

Hachey: The way it is written, it is for the entire project. It authorizes a bond that we have no dollar amount on. We would be handing them a blank check. We should at least know what the entire project will cost. There is no specific dollar cap put on this article.

O'Connor: The Chief said that these changes would cover his needs for 10-20 years. We will know a ball park figure by Town Meeting. This is going to go against the levy limit every year. Why not put this as a debt exclusion?

Hachey: They don't want a 2-1/2 override.

O'Connor: We will have to lay off teachers if we vote this. This and the Fire Station should be debt excluded.

Turbitt: Paul is going to be here on Wednesday. I thought we were supposed to have the figures already. He could probably explain this.

Vote on motion: Unanimous.

Article 7-Municipal Office Building-HVAC

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Floser to recommend that action on Article 7 be indefinitely postponed.

Hachey: This is worded the same as the previous article. This is for the bond interest. This is another blank check.

O'Connor: We don't have an exact cost. We cannot afford this on the tax rate.

Vote on motion: Unanimous.

Article 8-Personal Property Damage-\$500

Motioned by Floser, seconded by Turbitt to recommend that \$500 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of Article 8. Unanimous.

Article 9-Free Cash-\$817,214

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Turbitt to recommend that \$817,214 be transferred from Free Cash for the purpose of reducing the tax rate. Unanimous.

Article 10-Stabilization Fund

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Turbitt to hold on this article. Unanimous.

Article 11-Abandoned Property-\$5000

Motioned by Floser, seconded by O'Connor to recommend that \$5000 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of Article 11. Unanimous.

Article 12-Revolving Fund, Board of Health-Compost Bins

Motioned by Floser, seconded by O'Connor to recommend that Article 12 be accepted as written.

O'Connor: Revolving Funds have to be voted on every year.

Vote on motion: Unanimous.

Article 13-Revolving Fund, Asa Waters

Motioned by Floser, seconded by Tripaldi to recommend that Article 13 be accepted as written.

Hebert: We cut their budget by \$35,000, so we should approve this article.

Vote on motion: Unanimous.

Article 14-Revolving Fund, Board of Appeals

Hachey: We had to make a Reserve Fund Transfer last year for their salaries. What does he need a revolving fund for?

Floser: They have been pretty busy this year. This is where the fees will go from the hearings. We should delete his budget completely and have him be self-sufficient.

Hachey: I would be leery of cutting his budget to zero in case it takes a while for the money to come in.

O'Connor: We will know better next year, what he needs.

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Hebert to recommend that Article 14 be accepted as written with a change to \$5,000 in the maximum amount to be expended in FY2007.

Unanimous

Article 15-Revolving Fund, Hazardous Waste Disposal

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Floser to recommend that Article 15 be accepted as written. Unanimous.

Article 16-Revolving Fund, Sealer of Weights and Measures

Motioned by Hebert, seconded by O'Connor to hold on this article. Unanimous.

Article 17-Revolving Fund, Police Department

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Turbitt to recommend that Article 17 be accepted as written. Unanimous.

Article 18-Enterprise Fund-Solid Waste Disposal

Motioned by Floser, seconded by O'Connor to recommend that action on Article 18 be indefinitely postponed.

Turbitt: Why are you recommending this?

Floser: This is not the right answer to the trash issue in Town. We are not ready for another fund that will go out of control.

Turbitt: This is to be used to reduce the amount of funds for the Transfer Station.

O'Connor: If this is going to generate money, it is going to be an Enterprise Fund. I am afraid it will get tied up and not be used to help with the taxes.

Hachey: The charges are based on the fund.

Turbitt: The State recommends an Enterprise Fund to collect the funds for this purpose. The Sewer money is taken out of the General Fund and the Enterprise Fund pays at the end of the year.

O'Connor: Paul was going to do this in the fall. He was told that he can only appropriate money for this at an Annual Town Meeting. The article is still written incorrectly. He was told this in the fall. I have read about the Enterprise Fund and it is very specific on what you can and cannot do and when you can do it. If this is approved, you will wait another year to add money to it. You cannot add to it at a Special Town Meeting. With no money listed in this article, you cannot do anything until the next Annual Town Meeting.

Tripaldi: This is only for a small period of time.

Floser: Why establish this account if there is only 18 months left of the contract?

Hachey: If we okay this, we will be back approving a budget in another 18 months.

O'Connor: We should look at it gain with a dollar figure in it.

Tripaldi: If this goes through as indefinite postponement, what happens to the proposal that the Selectmen okayed?

O'Connor: The money goes into the General Fund like it does now.

Vote on motion: Turbitt opposed, rest for.

Article 19-Elder Community Services Program

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Tripaldi to recommend that Article 19 be accepted as written. Floser opposed, rest for.

Article 20: 86McCracken Road Clean-up

Motioned by Floser to recommend that action on Article 20 be indefinitely postponed.

There was no second. Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Tripaldi to recommend that \$12,000 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of Article 20.

O'Connor: Paul Guida stated at a Selectmen's meeting that this is for certification from the DEP. He stated that this is the last to be spent on this property.

Vote on motion: Floser, Hebert opposed, rest for.

Article 21-Butler Farm Maintenance

Motioned by Floser, seconded by Turbitt to recommend that \$3000 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of Article 21.

O'Connor: Based on the Board of Selectmen's Meeting, they asked Paul Guida who was doing the work. Paul stated that maybe the DPW could take care of it. The Selectmen do not feel that we should pay the \$3000 if the DPW will handle this.

Vote on motion: O'Connor, Tripaldi opposed, rest for.

Article 22-Zoning Map

Floser: Why is this an article and not part of their budget?

Floser stepped out at 9:08p.m.

O'Connor: We haven't heard from the Planner on this. Does she need it this year? Paul found a lot of money somewhere. Can't we transfer this from somewhere? I don't know if she needs it now. If she is asking for it, she must need it.

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Turbitt to recommend that \$750 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of Article 22. Unanimous.

Article 23-Official Map

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Turbitt to recommend that \$5000 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of Article 23. Unanimous.

Floser back at 9:12p.m.

Article 24-GASB

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Floser to recommend that action on Article 24 be indefinitely postponed.

O'Connor: I want the Town to go on record to say that they cannot do this in house. I don't see anything in this that I feel the Finance Director cannot do.

Turbitt: What if the Auditor doesn't agree?

O'Connor: You should know ahead of time what the Auditor needs from you.

Turbitt: I would like to know how many other Towns are doing this. I don't think this is a statement that she is not qualified. As of June 30, 2007, the Town has to have this in place.

O'Connor: I retract my motion. I am just very upset over this.

Floser: I withdraw my second.

Article 24 was put on hold.

Article 25-DEP road improvements on Goff Street

Floser: I would like to wait on this article until after tomorrow night's meeting. We may be able to get it done with the School's project.

Article 26-Prior Year bill, Police Department

Motioned by Floser, seconded by Turbitt to recommend that action on Article 26 be indefinitely postponed.

Floser: How do we know this is right? Why did it take so long to figure out that we owed this? Don't we balance our books at the end of the fiscal year?

Motion was withdrawn. Motioned by Floser, seconded by Turbitt to recommend that \$650 be raised and appropriated for the purpose of Article 26. Unanimous.

Article 27-Prior Year bill, Library

O'Connor: The Board of Selectmen are not convinced that this balance is legitimate. The Town Manager couldn't convince the Board of Selectmen on this. I don't understand why this wasn't taken care of earlier.

Motioned by Floser, seconded by Tripaldi to adjourn at 9:30p.m. Unanimous.