

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes

Date: March 27, 2006

Time: 7:00p.m.

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

Absent: Tripaldi

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

Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Hebert to accept the minutes of March 20, 2006 as submitted. Unanimous.

Reserve Fund Transfers

Unemployment Compensation-\$3000

Turbitt: They are asking for \$3000 for the month of February. What about March and April?

O'Connor: We only have one claim right now.

Turbitt: We asked them at the last transfer if they would be needing more money and they said no. I just feel that they should request the whole amount and not keep coming back each month for more. This is an expense that is paid monthly.

O'Connor: We should hold off on this until Mary Ann and Paul come in.

Raymond: We have another transfer from the Highway Department for \$1800. This is for the old sweeper. The account has \$20,000, according to my records, but according to Mary Ann there is only \$10,000.

Turbitt: There are two different accounts that he works from.

Hachey: What is the total of the repair bill?

Raymond: The total is \$4500. When do we call it quits on these machines?

Hachey: There is money in next year's budget to replace this machine.

O'Connor: I think the Manager cut that out of the budget.

Hachey: What will they do with the machine if they get a new one?

Raymond: It is worth getting it fixed and use it for the season.

O'Connor: Does he need this money in order to get the streets done?

Raymond: I think he does. I would like to see this get sub-contracted out.

Turbitt: It would cost about \$200 per hour to do this.

Raymond: It takes both sweepers, a dump truck plus insurance, 3 months to complete.

Motioned by Turbitt, seconded by Hebert to transfer \$1800 from the Reserve Fund to the Highway Department Other Expenses account. Floser and Hachey opposed, rest for.

A memo was received concerning the cost of the printing of the Finance Committee Recommendations. This year's cost is \$483.00.

FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Budget 1-Town Moderator: Motioned by Hachey, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$200 Salaries Elected, for a total of \$200 for the purpose of funding this budget. Unanimous.

Budget 2-Board of Selectmen: Motioned by Hachey, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$16,800 for Salaries Elected, and \$1500 for General Expenses for a total of \$18,300 for the purpose of funding this budget. Unanimous.

Budget 3-Town Manager: Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Hachey to recommend to raise and appropriate \$90,000 for Salaries Administrative, \$59,025 for Salaries All Others, and \$13,000 for General Expenses for a total of \$162,025 for the purpose of funding this budget. Unanimous.

Budget 4-Finance Committee-Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$1150 for Salaries All Others and \$350 for General Expenses for a total of \$1500 for the purpose of funding this budget. Unanimous.

Budget 6-Finance Director/Town Accountant: Motioned by Turbitt, seconded by Hachey to recommend to raise and appropriate \$79,500 for Salaries Administrative, \$33,042 for Salaries All Others, and \$12,000 for General Expenses for a total of \$124,542 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Hachey: I have a question on the Salaries Administrative. The detail only asks for \$75,000 and the actual budget asks for \$79,500.

Paul Guida and Mary Ann Harris were in at 7:20p.m.

Hachey: I have a question concerning the Finance Director's Salaries Administrative. The budget that you presented to the Board of Selectmen asks for \$79,500 and the actual detail only asks for \$75,000. What is the difference?

Paul Guida: This is a non-union position. The department heads were asked to submit a level funded salary. I added her increase to the budget request. Her anniversary date is in September. If you go with the figure that she submitted, she will receive no raise.

Floser: The difference between the 2 figures is 6%.

Paul Guida: she also gets a disability insurance policy which is \$1500. It's a fringe benefit that belongs in the salary account.

Hachey: Do you have a clerk?

Mary Ann Harris: Yes, I do, but she is only part time right now.

Floser: Why is there such a difference in the General Expenses?

Paul Guida: We had consultants in last year's budget, to try to clean up the books before Mary Ann came in. We didn't utilize all of this.

Floser: So, there will be a surplus in this year's budget?

Mary Ann Harris: That money is being used. I have been conservative, but I am trying to update the software package.

Turbitt: It appears that you have cut out all of the dues and memberships.

Mary Ann Harris: They are in there. I made sure that everything I need is in the budget.

Paul Guida: Why are you spending the time on her budget? It has been cut.

Turbitt: We just want to make sure that it wasn't over cut.

The vote on the budget was unanimous.

Reserve Fund Transfer-Unemployment Compensation-\$3000

Raymond: There are some questions on this transfer.

Paul Guida: I have an appeal hearing on Friday.

Turbitt: Back in February, we asked if that transfer was going to be enough until Town Meeting. You said yes. You have a bill for \$6000 in February. This will leave you with a small balance. Will you be back in April for more money?

Paul Guida: Yes, we will.

Mary Ann Harris: No, we won't. My next bill won't be due until May and if this claim is settled, we will be getting money back.

Hachey: Where will you be asking the money to come from at Town Meeting?

Paul Guida: We will transfer it from unexpended funds.

Hachey: Will this carry you until Town Meeting?

Mary Ann Harris: Yes, it will.

Motioned by Hachey, seconded by Hebert to transfer \$3000 from the Reserve Fund to the Unemployment Compensation Account. Unanimous.

Budget Recommendations

Budget 7-Town Audit

Raymond: The detailed pages state the cost of \$22,000 and the Town Manager's recommendation is \$25,000.

Mary Ann Harris: I estimated the amount of \$25,000 for next year. The School Department will have to come up with some of the money.

Paul Guida: They are asking for more reports.

Mary Ann Harris: I rounded the number to \$25,000 in case I need to have a special audit. We will have to have this done on the Enterprise Fund.

Turbitt: Wouldn't the Sewer Department be responsible for paying for this audit? It's their fund.

Mary Ann Harris: Yes, they would be.

Motioned by Hachey, seconded by Floser to raise and appropriate \$25,000 for General Expenses for a total of \$25,000 for the purpose of funding this budget. Unanimous.

Budget 8-Board of Assessors-Motioned by Hachey, seconded by O'Connor to recommend to raise and appropriate \$7200 for Salaries Elected, \$53,150 for Salaries Administrative, \$49,772 for Salaries All Others, \$49,815 for General Expenses for a total of \$159,937 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Floser: When we do the Salaries on the budget, is there a way to indicate the number of employees?

Hachey: There is a breakdown on the back up sheets.

Floser: I would have thought that the reduction in this budget would have been larger.

Paul Guida: We are trying to not do everything in one year. We are trying not to add in articles. The evaluations are put in the budget yearly, so that there are no big spikes every three years. We wanted it to be a gradual amount.

Vote on the budget: Floser opposed, rest for.

Budget 9-Treasurer/Collector: Motioned by Hachey, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$47,164 for Salaries Administrative, \$120,868 for Salaries All Others, \$64,000 for General Expenses for a total of \$232,032 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Floser: This has continued to go up yearly.

Paul Guida: They cut a person a couple of years ago. They are now back on track with the head clerk and a part time person.

Mary Ann Harris: They did add a person in 2006.

Vote on the budget: Unanimous.

Budget 10-Town Counsel

Hachey: I would like to hold on this budget.

Raymond: We need information on this budget. What was spent last year? How much have we spent this year? There are contracts to negotiate next year.

The Finance Committee agreed to hold on this budget for further information.

Budget 11-Town Hall Computer Operations

Raymond: There is no back up for this budget.

Mary Ann Harris: These are contracts. I will get you a breakdown.

Paul Guida: There are some upgrades that we are not going to do.

The Finance Committee agreed to hold on this budget for further information.

Budget 12-Town Clerk: Motioned by Hachey, seconded by Hebert to recommend to raise and appropriate \$88,845 for Salaries Administrative, \$32,742 for Salaries All Others, \$35,000 for General Expenses for a total of \$154,587 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Paul Guida: I decreased the amount for advertising for the Board of Appeals. It should be in his budget.

Vote on the budget: Floser opposed, rest for.

Budget 13-Elections and Registrars: Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$17,500 for Salaries All Others, \$5,000 for General Expenses, \$8,999 for Capital Outlay for a total of \$31,499 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Raymond: Last year the General Expenses were \$300 and this year it is \$5,000. Why the increase?

Mary Ann Harris: There is \$1800 in there for programming and voting machines.

Paul Guida: There is a General Election and a State Primary next year.

Mary Ann Harris: Whatever she doesn't get in this budget, she said she could probably get from the State.

Floser: The \$8000 is for 3 years. We are paying a large percentage for interest.

Mary Ann Harris: I have not seen the lease agreement. I will check with her to see if this is a lease to own deal.

Turbitt: Shouldn't there be a separate article to lease this?

Paul Guida: If it was for over 3 years, you would have to do this.

Mary Ann Harris: This will have to be bid out.

Paul Guida: I recommend that you have the Clerk in at your next meeting.

Vote on the budget: Floser opposed, rest for.

Budget 14-Conservation Commission-Motioned by Hachey, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$23,386 for Salaries All Others, \$1000 for General Expenses for a total of \$24,386 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Paul Guida: They also have a revolving fund to help with their budget.

Vote on the motion: Unanimous

Budget 15-Planning Board: Motioned by Hachey, seconded by Hebert to recommend to raise and appropriate \$33,005 for Salaries All Others, \$2,500 for General Expenses for a total of \$35,505 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Raymond: The General Expenses have been cut in half.

Paul Guida: They have a revolving fund.

Vote on the motion: Unanimous

Budget 16-Board of Appeals-Motioned by Hachey, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$2500 for Salaries All Others, \$200 for General Expenses for a total of \$2700 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Raymond: You reduced the Salary account.

Paul Guida: We are setting up a revolving account at Town Meeting. You will be getting a transfer request for this year.

Floser: What about the advertising that was taken out of the Town Clerk's budget? We know that they need it.

Paul Guida: That is what the revolving fund will be for. The applicant should pay for this.

Vote on the motion: Unanimous

Budget 17-Town Planner-Motioned by Hachey, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$54,500 for Salaries Administrative, \$1500 for General Expenses for a total of \$56,000 for the purpose of funding this budget. Unanimous.

Budget 18-Redevelopment Authority-Motioned by Hebert, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$1 for General Expenses, \$1 for Capital Outlay for a total of \$2 for the purpose of funding this budget. Unanimous.

Budget 19-Town Hall

Raymond: We have no back up on this budget. We will hold on this.

Budget 20-Town Reports-Motioned by Floser, seconded by Hachey to recommend to raise and appropriate \$3200 for General Expenses for a total of \$3200 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Hachey: Is this a good dollar amount?

Paul Guida: Right now it is good. We are not sure what next year will bring. Dottie gets everything camera ready. She spends a lot of time doing this.

Vote on motion: Turbitt, O'Connor opposed, rest for

Budget 21-Police Department:

Paul Guida: I am working on these numbers. I would like to see you hold on this until next week. I will have the correct numbers for you next week. I would like to see you hold on the Fire Department also.

O'Connor: When will we get updated figures?

Paul Guida: I will have them for you by next Monday.

O'Connor: We have a joint meeting next Tuesday with the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager and the School Committee. We won't have updated numbers until Monday. This puts more stress on us.

Paul Guida: I have a meeting with the Superintendent on Wednesday to discuss figures. I would like to have these figures done by Friday so that I don't have to do this over the weekend.

Turbitt: What other fluid departments should we hold off on?

Paul Guida: The Health Insurance and Schools.

O'Connor: Other than the Police Department, Fire Department, Schools and Insurance are there any other budgets that are going to change?

Paul Guida: I would like to add more to the DPW.

Budget 23-Ambulance Services: Motioned by Turbitt, seconded by Hebert to recommend to raise and appropriate \$87,500 for General Expenses for a total of \$87,500 for the purpose of funding this budget. Unanimous.

Budget 24-Building Inspector: Motioned by Hachey, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$67,250 for Salaries Inspector, \$1000 for Salaries Assistant Inspector, \$33,138 for Salaries All Others, \$2000 for General Expenses for a total of \$103,388 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Raymond: The Assistant Inspector decreased from \$10,000 to \$1000.

Floser: The Inspector isn't looking for a raise?

Paul Guida: Yes, he is. I put in the increase.

Vote on motion: Unanimous

Budget 25-Plumbing/Gas Inspector: Motioned by Turbitt, seconded by Hebert to recommend to raise and appropriate \$18,500 for Salaries Inspector and Assistant, \$500 for General Expenses for a total of \$19,000 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Floser: Why do we have \$500 in General Expenses if we didn't spend anything last year?

Paul Guida: It was paid out of the Shoppe's revolving account.

Vote on the motion: Unanimous.

Budget 26-Sealer of Weights and Measures: Motioned by Hachey, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$2500 for General Expenses for a total of \$2500 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Floser: When do we pay him?

Mary Ann Harris: This is paid once a year. It is paid to the State.

Vote on motion: Unanimous

Budget 27-Electrical Inspector: Motioned by Floser, seconded by Hachey to recommend to raise and appropriate \$16,750 for Salaries Inspector and Assistant, \$1,000 for General Expenses for a total of \$17,750 for the purpose of funding this budget. Unanimous.

Budget 28-Emergency Management:

Hachey: What is he going to do with the \$4000? We have no back up.

Paul Guida: He gave us a back up sheet.

Raymond: We don't have anything on this. We will hold on this budget.

Budget 30-Tree Warden: Motioned by Hebert, seconded by Turbitt to recommend to raise and appropriate \$4,850 for Salaries Administrative, \$2,000 for Salaries All Others, \$10,000 for General Expenses for a total of \$16,850 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Floser: We spent a lot of money in 2004 and it went down in 2005.

Paul Guida: They have jurisdiction of all public shade trees in Town.

Raymond: Why the difference in Salaries over the years?

Paul Guida: He pays for private details. We had quite a few ice storms in 2004.

Floser: Why did you cut the General Expenses from \$13,800 to \$10,000?

Paul Guida: If he doesn't have a project scheduled, then it was a pro-active increase.

Vote on motion: Unanimous

Turbitt: How much do you plan on adding to the DPW?

Paul Guida: I would say at least \$50,000.

O'Connor: I would say hold on his budgets until we speak to him.

Budget 42-Board of Health: Motioned by O'Connor, seconded by Hachey to recommend to raise and appropriate \$4,800 for Salaries Elected, \$23,000 for Salaries Administrative, \$34,481 for Salaries All Others, \$23,000 for General Expenses for a total of \$85,281 for the purpose of funding this budget.

Raymond: The Salaries Elected was requested at \$14,400 and the Town Manager reduced it to \$4,800.

Paul Guida: There is a warrant article for the testing at the old landfill. They are upset that the Transfer Station is no longer within their range. I recommend that their warrant article stay in.

Vote on motion: Floser and Turbitt opposed, rest for

Budget 43-Human Services

Hachey: This is the District Nursing Budget.

Floser: Due to the lack of information on this budget I motion that their budget be reduced to \$1.00.

There was no second

This budget was put on hold.

Budget 32-Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational H.S.: Motioned by Floser, seconded by Hachey to recommend to raise and appropriate \$727,638 for Annual Operating Assessment, \$56,431 for Debt Excluded Capital Expenses, \$1928 for Salaries Elected, \$500 for General Expenses for a total of \$786,497 for the purpose of funding this budget.

O'Connor: His budget has increased by 24% compounded yearly. It is imperative that we send a message stating that this is absolutely unacceptable. There is no information that says that this cost is under control. There is nothing in writing that says it will not continue to compound every year. This situation is out of control. We need to take a stand. If 6 Towns vote this down, we can re-visit this amount.

Hachey: This was a State Formula that the budget was based on. It used to be a very complex formula. We have been paying according to the formula every year.

Paul Guida: Regional School Districts get reimbursement for transportation, which public schools do not. Mike is correct in his comments on the foundation budgets.

O'Connor: There should be some room for negotiations. He did not give us any indication as to whether the assessment would go up again next year.

Hachey: I question his figures because the school department went up 6%.

Raymond: If we change the budget and the other Towns vote it as is, we have to give them the money anyway. If we change the budget by \$1.00, is it considered a no vote? I will send him an e-mail and ask him.

Floser: If we went with the Town Manager's recommendation and put the difference in the Reserve Fund, would this cover it?

O'Connor: We either reject or accept his budget. If a taxpayer gets up and rejects the budget, what happens?

Paul Guida: It would end up being a cherry sheet item.

O'Connor: They need to realize that this is not acceptable.

Turbitt: There may be services that he cannot control. You cannot cut SPED costs.

O'Connor: We could go with your cut of \$1.00, just as a stance to them.

Raymond: What number would count as a no vote for the Town Meeting?

Paul Guida: You would have to cut the top number.

O'Connor: If we cannot do anything with this budget, we shouldn't even have them come in to discuss this.

Hachey: We could cut the Salaries Elected account.

Raymond: It doesn't look like he is helping us on this.

Floser: I withdraw my motion.

The Committee discussed additional meeting dates.

Motioned by Floser, seconded by Turbitt to adjourn at 9:55p.m. Unanimous.