

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

Date: March 27, 2014

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Present: Girard, Kupcinkas, O'Connell, Hebert, Bartosiewicz, O'Connor

Absent: None

Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, Finance Director, School Committee, School Superintendent

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

Town Moderator, Tom Fox, was also present

Bernie Plante: This has been one the toughest budgets to work on. I don't think it is going to get any better. If the State doesn't increase revenues, I am not sure what is going to happen.

Bob Spain: State Aid helped us out a little this year. It has been decreasing over the last several years. I am happy to say that the State Aide is \$42,000 higher than the Governor's figures. The process started with a shortage of about \$2Million. We did cuts and we had some additional new growth. It was not what we needed though. We did go out to bid on Health Insurance to get a better rate and were able to get a \$424,346 savings on that. We have to present a balanced budget and we reduced a lot of services and positions to get a balanced budget. Workers' Compensation also went up an additional \$10,000 as of this week. The Workers' Comp rates are based on our average claims over a three year period. If this was a single year glitch, we could handle it, but it isn't. The Finance Committee is waiting to get the final budget so that they can get their voting done.

Susan Hitchcock: I think we should let everyone at the table know what the dollar reductions are. The School Department will be reducing their budget by \$300,000, which results in 4.4 FTE positions.

Bob Spain: I don't have the total number of cuts for the Town side y. Hopefully the School's cut will be lowered but I cannot give you a figure on that.

Susan Hitchcock: We have 10 unfunded mandates in our budget. With the \$300,000 reduction, our budget has a 2.39% increase.

Bob Spain: The biggest problem we had was dealing with the budgets that we don't have any control over. We came to a good resolution with the budget. We will be looking closely at the budget before we finalize it.

Bernie Plante: Can we get any extra lottery dollars?

Bob Spain: It is not likely. We will continue to look at any and all avenues to get increased revenues.

Bill Borowski: I would like to thank Susan, Bob and Dick for all of their hard work coming to an agreement. If we have to continue this way, we will have to cut additional personnel. This is far from over.

Bob Spain: We will also have to look at an override if the economy keeps up this way.

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Bernie Plante: I am thankful that everyone has been working together on this each year.

Susan Hitchcock: If anyone is interested in a copy of the unfunded mandates, I have them available tonight.

Francis King: If we don't do these mandates, will it affect our accreditation?

Susan Hitchcock: Not our accreditation, but if we don't fund these mandates, we would lose our entitlement grants.

Bernie Plante: I would not be opposed to coming back to the table if we receive additional money.

Bob Spain: It would be too late for this meeting, but if we need to come back afterwards, we will.

Albert Kupcinkas: I appreciate the cooperation between the boards.

Bernie Plante: Thank you to everyone for being here and being so cooperative.

Tom Fox: I believe this is the earliest we have ever had an agreement. This says a lot for the teams working on this.

Meeting adjourned by Bernie Plante at 7:35 p.m.

Albert P. Kupcinkas
Jennife O'Connell
John Baty
Steven P. Albert