

Finance Committee
Room 5
Wednesday, April 18, 2012

Present: Ms. Hurlbut, Mr. Kelliher, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Duffy, Mr. Veneziano, Mr. Pulver, and Mr. Wolpin

Absent: Mr. Mastascusa

Guest: Ms. Pavao, Finance Director

Chair brought the meeting to order at 7:05 PM

Liaison Reports

Police Department - Mr. Pulver spoke with Police Chief Murphy on March 29th. They discussed the fact that there are no more grants, fuel, and 3 men out on patrol and, therefore, training has to be done on O.T. They are looking to fund two positions and would use the Reserve program money to do that. Mr. Pulver felt there were two issues, 1) “big disconnect” on details for DPW, and 2) they may not be able to have 3 patrolmen on at all times. Ms. Hurlbut spoke with Mr. Balukonis about the police details for DPW work and Mr. Balukonis believes that 2 hours for DPW was the policy. Ms. Pavao said she believes the police have a contract that they get 4 hours. Ms. Pavao will check with the Town Administrator and ask him to report back to the Finance Committee. Ms. Pavao said the Town is not getting all the Chapter 90 money back from the State because DPW is not applying, which can be time consuming and detailed. Mr. Pulver asked the Police Chief what impact the new school will have on the department. The Chief said he didn’t know yet.

Board of Health – Mr. Johnson said this budget doesn’t have a lot of flexibility. Ms. Hurlbut questioned whether the Board of Health agent could be a part-time employee. Mr. Johnson said, some years ago (not by most of the current BOS) the Town forced him to work full-time and give up another contract. Mr. Johnson felt that Mr. Fair could possibly take on some work that’s being done by outside providers. Mr. Johnson said he told Mr. Fair that the creation of a Revolving Fund wouldn’t be supported by the Finance Committee. The money from flu shots has gone into the general funds. Shots can now be gotten at pharmacies and there may not be a lot of shots given out by the town.

Parks and Recreation – Mr. Veneziano spoke with Maureen Stevens and advised members that she has two main concerns; 1) sign ups are way down and 2) sick and vacation time buybacks, which was not factored into their personal services. Since they are an Enterprise Fund, they don't get supplemented from the Salary Pool). Ms. Pavao said it has been included in their budget for FY13.

Fire Department – Mr. Wolpin advised members that there are two budgets for the Fire Dept., the ALS budget has been separated. Mr. Wolpin said the Fire Dept. wants a staff of five. The Board of Selectmen wants them to remain with a staff of four. Overtime was discussed. The Fire Department contends they are running on less than needed and if an ALS call comes in or someone is out sick or on vacation, they need to call in additional help. ALS has hopes of becoming self supporting. Mr. Wolpin said that the Fire Chief has issues with the maintenance of vehicles being provided by DPW, but he is please about the changes with the gas budget. The question of how the gas budget will be controlled was discussed.

IT Budget – Mr. Wolpin said the budget has a request for additional staff. Members questioned if it is approved whether someone will be hired. Ms. Pavao said as soon as the budget is approved the position will be posted. Mr. Kelliher noted that the Finance Committee should exam overtime and hiring.

Mr. Wolpin stated his frustrations with the budget process and felt that the Committee should discuss the manner of funding the budget. He feels that more of the deficit is coming out of Free Cash and the town has to face facts that things aren't going to get better. Mr. Hurlbut stated that the town is trying to avoid layoffs. Mr. Kelliher noted; the town now has all the Quinn Bill costs, the state of local receipts – no new construction and the economy in general. Ms. Hurlbut reviewed some financial history of North Reading.

Ms. Pavao handed out the draft Revenue & Expense preliminary sheets. Mr. Kelliher noted that there is no line item for Post Retirement Expenses. Ms. Pavao said she was told not to include it. Mr. Kelliher said they will need to address it again at the Chairs and Vice Chair meeting. Ms. Pavao advised members that the Regional School assessment contribution is down from what was expected at \$475,000 to what came in at \$459,521.

Reserve Fund Transfer

A reserve fund transfer was received for \$12,042.17 to cover the Special Town Meeting and Special Town Election expenses.

Mr. Johnson moved to approve the reserve fund transfer in the amount of \$12,042.17 to the Town Administrator's budget to cover costs associated with the Special Town Meeting and Special Town Election expenses. Mr. Pulver seconded the motion; and it was unanimously approved.

Members went over the draft Report of the Finance Committee. Mr. Veneziano will re-write and send back to Mr. Kelliher and Ms. Hurlbut for final review.

A meeting will be posted for April 26th to review and possibly vote on some of the warrant articles.

Mr. Pulver moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 pm, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and voted unanimously in favor.

Approved _____ Date _____