

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
March 31, 2005
Town Building

The meeting was brought to order at 7:10 p.m. In attendance: Steve Dungan, Jason Robart, Brian Burke, Pam Glauner, David Walrath and Patti Heron.

Reserve Fund Transfer: Patti Heron made a motion to approve a \$760 Reserve Fund request to fund interim building inspector wages; Steve Dungan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

FY06 Departmental Budget Reviews:

Karen Kelleher was present to discuss the Planning Board budget.

- The need for the \$30,000 Special Article for Engineering/Consulting was discussed, in light of the fact that there have been significant carry-over balances in the past few years. Karen indicated that the carry-over balances (estimated to be \$16.6K at year-end FY05) are earmarked for specific projects. The \$30,000 of new money will be used for a traffic study of the Lower Village.
- Karen stated that the department had requested (via the ITAC budget) a blueprint copy machine, costing approximately \$8,000. Presently a staff member has to drive to Hudson when large copies are needed.

Chief Mark Trefry and Rachel Belanger were present to discuss the Police Department budget.

- Steve Dungan questioned the headcount increase from 16 in FY05 to 18 in the FY06 budget. The difference is 1 Asst. Clerk, and 1 Custodian (to replace the inmate labor previously used for custodial services).
- For capital, the department is requesting 1 new cruiser, down from 2 in the original budget request.
- The Lieutenant position will remain vacant for now. One patrolman will be promoted to Sergeant, and possibly next year a Sgt. will be promoted to Lieut. One benefit of having a Lieut. is that there is another non-union employee to help the Chief run the department.
- The various compensation line items (Vacation, Comp Time, Holidays, Shift Differential, etc.) were discussed. It was noted that the Education Incentive affects all compensation line items by raising the base salary of the officer.

Discussion of the Upcoming Public Hearing:

The public hearing is scheduled for Tues. April 12, 2005. The FinCom will hold a meeting immediately after the hearing; at this meeting we will discuss and vote the NRSD budget as well as other articles as time permits.

Other Business: Jason Robart and Steve Dungan will work on an outline for a FinCom presentation on Stow TV, to air before Town Meeting.

Statistics relating to Education: Steve Dungan compiled various cost per pupil data and MCAS score information from the Mass. DOE websites. This was done in an attempt to correlate “educational outcomes,” measured by MCAS results, to cost per pupil of a particular school district. The committee discussed whether outcome and cost are indeed correlable variables, and at what point should we stop spending more per pupil in order to raise the MCAS scores a small amount. Jason Robart asked 2 questions relating to educational spending: 1) Are we getting a bang for our educational buck? 2) Is it a buck we want to spend? Do we have this money to spend?

A motion to adjourn was made by Steve Dungan and seconded by David Walrath at 9:00pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Pamela Glauner.
April 11, 2005