

Minutes
STOW FINANCE COMMITTEE
September 13, 2005

Call to Order

Jason Robart called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm. Present were members Pam Glauner, David Walrath, Charlie Kern, Patricia Heron, Gary Bernklow, Henry Hagopian and Elizabeth Tobey, Secretary.

Approval of Minutes

Patricia Heron moved that August 16, 2005 minutes be approved as amended. Charles Kern seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Review of Correspondence

- The Municipal Advocate Magazine
- Town Calendar
- Notice of joint board meeting September 8, 2005
- Planning board minutes for July 12, 2005
- Notice of Finance Sub Committee meeting September 22, 2005
- Liability claims form
- September issue of Our Town
- Notice of Minute Man Realty, Chapter 61 Land Notification September 1, 2005
- Copy of letter to William J. Ross regarding appointment
- Summer 2005 New England Trust
- Letter from the New England Municipal Forum
 - Meeting of Municipal Minds Association
 - Annual meeting of Finance Committee's November 5, 2005 at Holy Cross
- 2005-06 Mass Municipal Director
- Metropolitan Planning Council.
 - Information on town growth and population

Discussion of Reserve Fund Transfer Requests

Council on Aging – Advertising - \$331.02

The transfer request is to pay for Advertising in The Beacon Villager for open position in the Council on Aging of the Executive Director position.

Pamela Glauner moved to approve the transfer from the reserve fund, \$331.02 for payment of an advertising bill. David Walrath seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Discussion of Advertising Transfer Requests

Pam suggested that money be budgeted each year to cover advertising for available positions.

Dave stated that technically they are legitimate expenses as long as the requestor has the money in their account to pay for it.

Dave will draft a reminder letter to all departments regarding the process of reserve fund transfer requests.

Liaison Reports

Henry Hagopian regarding Salary Review Study Committee – There has been some progress made on the potential impact for salary reviews. A few positions are significantly paid under the average. The analysis is based on FY05. There will be a request for the town warrant regarding this issue.

Pamela Glauner regarding School Committee – She was unable to attend the meeting, because of the early time schedule.

David Walrath regarding Community Preservation Committee - The CPC voted to recommend putting forward a town meeting warrant article using CPA money to purchase the Cushing land. Dave stated that at closing some land might be segmented off for housing to reduce the purchase cost, and the CPC also wanted to include language to allow the town to segment some land for other possible non-CPC municipal uses in the future, since the closing would not be for about eighteen months.

Steve Piotte regarding Special Joint Boards Meeting, on 8 September 2005 - Jason read from a letter sent in from Steve who was out due to illness.

Regarding Cushing property estimated purchase cost is \$1.6 mil –

- Approximately \$57 annual tax increase.
- Approx increase based on average house assessment of 360k.
- Selectmen want to have decision reached by 23 September 2005.
- Town must provide two lots for Penny Cushing.
- Possibility to have Cushing purchase paid for through selling part of the 70 acre purchase and a grant. (Refer to other attending members).

Regarding Minuteman property estimated costs is \$4 mil.

- Approximately \$112 annual tax increase.
- Selectmen want to have decision reached by 23 September 2005.
- Approximately 25% of property is wetland as estimated by Mr. Ross Perry.

Regarding new school estimated cost is \$30 million

- Approximately \$850 annual tax increase.
- Approximate increase based on average house assessment of 360k

Gary Bernklow regarding The School Building Committee – Gary stated the Cushing Property is not being considered at this time because there poor access to the site. It was voted to submit a warrant article for the Minuteman property. Corzine property between Cushing and Radant is also

available. If it can be negotiated with Radant for an access road, it would make Cushing property more easily accessible. The Corzine property could be used for the school and the Cushing property for fields.

Regarding the Kane property (behind Gates Lane), they are submitting another RFP. They can't discuss it with the property owner without a new RFP.

Regarding the Cushing property, no one has spoken to the owner directly. The owner has requested that everyone goes through her attorney.

Gary stated that he has applied for the open voting position on the School Building Committee.

Other Discussion

Jason asked for a sense from all about how they feel about buying property without an officially stated purpose.

Charlie expressed concerns that we would be opening ourselves up to accusations of conflicts of interests. He feels there is a risk to it.

Pam stated that Stow is in dire need of soccer fields. We don't have a huge inventory of municipal land. It is short sighted not to buy when we have the opportunity.

Pam asked "Can CPA buy the land from the town"?

Dave stated that CPA money cannot.

Jason asked 'If the town bought 114 acres, can CPA money be used to preserve the land'?

Dave stated that CPA cannot.

Charlie stated that Steve Dungan did a spread sheet. If we buy the Cushing and Corzine property it will add \$200 a annually to the taxes.

Jason's concern was if we need land for a new school then let us buy land if there is a demonstrated need. We start to have problems and real concerns if we spend 1.6 million on land and there is not an immediate need for the land.

Jason stated that he has asked, if there are articles to build a school and purchase land to take the school vote first before the land vote.

Gary stated that the School Building Committee did not submit an article for a school. There is only an article for land.

Pam suggested that this would set them back for building the school.

The School Building Committee is still debating the 30 million dollar cost. The town of Lunenburg built the same size school for one third of the cost.

Jason stated that we will have clarity in the morning after the warrant closes.

We as a Finance Committee have a real challenge figuring out what is relevant and what is not for our position.

Special Projects

Fuel issue is going to have a huge impact on the town this year.

Other Business

There was no other business to discuss

A motion to adjourn was mad by Patricia Heron and seconded by Charlie Kern at 8:23 pm.
The Motion Carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth A. Tobey