

Sturbridge Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 1, 2012
Town Hall
7:00 pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm with the following members present: Kevin Smith (KS), Mike Serio (MS), Larry Morrison (LM), Prescott Arndt (SA), Patti Affenito (PA), Joni Light (JL), Virginia Stallone (VS) and Arnold Wilson (AW).

KS begins by correcting a misstatement by Selectman Tom Creamer that the FinCom vote for the SRO position in the Police Dept. was 7-0-0. The vote was in fact 5-1-1.

SA makes a motion to approve the April 19 minutes as amended, PA seconds. Vote 4-0-3.

KS says that for now the line item budget is complete; there may be a change next week.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant: Articles 1-26 are done; Articles 27-29 have not been voted pending information from the DPW Director. KS will get the needed information.

Special Town Meeting Warrant: Articles 66-68 are done; Article 69 dates have been changed and are 7/1/2011 - 6/30/2012. MS makes a motion to approve Article 69 as written, SA seconds. JL asks if the SRO is included in this article, answer is no since this for FY 12. AW notes that the text box should read that the time period for the contract actually runs through 2014 and that funds for years subsequent to 2012 will be reflected in the salaries/wages line. Vote 3-3-1.

Finance Report:

LM arrives at 7:18 pm.

KS highlights AW's comments for the report about the Assessor with regards to dwellings and OPEB. KS asks for comments on his section of the report about Article 4. MS believes the term 'nightmare' should be made more sober or neutral; some people will think this is a good start. LM says that as advisors the board should have a sense of conviction about our decisions; this board should be persuasive in its arguments. MS states that the board can advocate strongly against a position. LM goes on to say that the FinCom is not representative since the members are appointed, not elected. MS counters that the FinCom can make its position known; FinCom credibility is protected by our rhetoric. AW thinks the term 'nightmare' may be a little over the top; if residents read the report they are going to conclude that this is not appropriate. KS says it needs to be called something. PA suggests Article 4 – What does it mean for the Town? LM suggests some consequences of Article 4. KS could see a way to eliminate the two percent raise but that is only about \$37,000, SA agrees. LM feels it is wrong to penalize the employees that did not create the problem. General discussion about the text box language to make clear that there are certain expenses over which the Town has no control. MS wants to reiterate that this is only one possible scenario of cuts; there are many others. MS also asks KS why cut the Senior Center; KS responds that he looked at the hierarchy of needs. VS asks what happens if this is

approved and it is presented again next year; KS believes this situation will be worse next year. LM notes that the residents will get the Town that they want to pay for. PA would like emphasis on the fact that this is one scenario, that this is not the FinCom recommendation. LM says it one way to achieve the budget cuts; he urges KS to use his opening remarks to address this issue. AW points out that one way not discussed would be to re-open union contracts. LM asks what would happen since the Town needs a budget. AW answers that the Town would go the Article 4 route or go without services. KS says this board does make policy but does not implement. There is general discussion about the format and language for the report.

Motion to adjourn at 8:16 pm.