

Town of Uxbridge, Massachusetts
 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Posted by
 Uxbridge
 Town Clerk

Date: September 7, 2011

Place: Uxbridge High School Library

Present:

Peter DeMers	P	Mark Andrews	P	Howard Fortner	P
Christine Horwath	P	John Morawski	A	Ray Wright	P
Maureen Kearnan	P				

Call to Order: 7:00 PM

1. Minutes

a. June 23, 2011

Motion/Second/Discussion Vote

Motion	To accept the Minutes of the Meeting held on June 23, 2011.				
1 st	CH	2 nd	RW	Vote	5-0-1

b. June 30, 2011- No action taken.

c. August 23, 2011

Motion/Second/Discussion Vote

Motion	To accept the Minutes of the Meeting held on August 23, 2011.				
1 st	MA	2 nd	MK	Vote	4-0-2

Discussion- Mr. Fortner informed the Finance Committee that he has received a letter detailing the difference between Town Employees and Contracted Employees. He will go through the letter and report back to the Committee.

note
 specific to custodial employees

2. Committee Reorganization

Motion/Second/Discussion Vote

Motion	That Christine Horwath becomes Chairman.				
1 st	MA	2 nd	PD	Vote	6-0-0

Discussion- Mr. ~~Mr.~~ DeMers, the outgoing Chairman, spoke about his desire to see the duties of the Finance Committee, e.g. minute-taking, follow-up on important questions, and information

gathering, delegated and approached from a shared sense of responsibility. He would like to see the Committee work together. Mrs. Horwath remarked that if elected, she would welcome this.

Immediately following the vote, Mrs. Horwath became the Chairman.

Motion/Second/Discussion Vote

Motion	That Mark Andrews become Vice Chairman.				
1 st	HF	2 nd	MK	Vote	5-0-1

Motion/Second/Discussion Vote

Motion	That Ray Wright becomes the Secretary/Clerk.				
1 st	PD	2 nd	MA	Vote	6-0-0

Discussion- Mr. DeMers and Mr. Andrews both offered to assist with the duties of the Secretary/Clerk.

3. Public Hearing

- a. September 24, 2011 Special Town Meeting warrant

The Finance Committee began the Public Hearing by skipping to Article 4.

ARTICLE 4: APPROPRIATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ATHLETIC FIELDS ON THE SITE OF THE NEW HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT

Mr. Fortner stated that he looked forward to being educated by the Working Group that had volunteered to gather and present more details on the project to the citizens of Uxbridge.

Mr. Wright, a volunteer working with the group, agreed to summarize the goals the group had set for itself with regard to bringing information before the town, which was to present the potential costs of the athletic fields project and its scope, the potential costs of delaying the athletic fields project, and the potential costs of not taking action on the athletic fields. The group seeks to illustrate the costs both in terms of costs to the tax payers and costs to the community in terms of tax revenue that would be available to be used by the Town. The group wants to be sure to explain to the Town the difference between the vote over the summer and this Article. The group was also looking to put together information regarding health and safety questions, maintenance questions, and usage questions for the issue of a turf field versus a grass field. The group also wanted to be able to provide resources for the Town so that citizens might be able to get facts for themselves. The group also seeks to educate the Town on the process that includes both a Special Town Meeting and a Ballot Election. Mr. Wright provided examples of what had been discussed and the follow-up taken and agreed to present a full account to the Finance Committee prior to the Special Town Meeting and the Ballot Election.

Mr. Andrews emphasized that the work of the Working Group is not the work of the Finance Committee, and listening to the information presented by the Working Group does not imply an endorsement by the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee heard the Town Manager, Sean Hendricks, say that the Article does not contain a specific amount because of Massachusetts General Law and that the Motion on the floor of the Special Town Meeting, September 24, 2011 would include a "not to exceed" amount.

Mrs. Kearnan reminded the Finance Committee that the Article does not represent an override; rather, it allows for debt exclusion.

Superintendent George Zini discussed the differences in the scope of the project, the items removed from the project and the groundwork for future expansion, if funded by alternative sources, e.g. Booster Club, corporations, or alumni.

School Business Manager Don Sawyer answered questions about the completeness of the design work, the role of the Massachusetts School Building Authority, and the potential for additional financial considerations by the MSBA. Mr. Sawyer answered questions on the life of a synthetic field, the costs compared to those of a natural grass field, the timeline for project completion, and accessibility for citizens and students with special needs.

ARTICLE 1: UTILITY EASEMENT PUMP STATION QUAKER HIGHWAY

Selectman Jay Cahill summarized the purpose of the Article, which is to grant a utility easement to Mass Electric for a new pump station on Quaker Highway, Route 146A. Mr. Cahill suggested that when the Town Finance Director, David Genereux, arrived at the meeting, Mr. Genereux would be able to address the Article and the questions of the Finance Committee in greater detail.

ARTICLE 2: PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAX AGREEMENT – 67 COMMERCE DRIVE

- And -

ARTICLE 3: PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAX AGREEMENT – 21 COMMERCE DRIVE

Mr. Cahill summarized that Articles 2 and 3 are on the Warrant so that the Town might ensure compliance with a Massachusetts Informational Guideline Release on these types of agreements. The Board of Selectmen sees Articles 2 and 3 as good for the Town.

At the time, Mr. Genereux joined the Public Hearing, and the discussion shifted back to Article 4.

ARTICLE 4: APPROPRIATION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF ATHLETIC FIELDS ON THE SITE OF THE NEW HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT

Mr. Genereux discussed why no number for the project appears in the warrant and states that the number of \$3,884,000 will be in the final motion. When asked by Mr. Fortner about the Town's debt limit, Mr. Genereux stated that the recommendation for debt limit is between 6% and 10% for municipalities. The Town is at 7.5%, and if Article 4 were to pass, the Town would not hit its debt limit. When asked by Mrs. Horwath if the debt for Article 4 would be rolled into the current bond offerings, Mr. Genereux stated that if approved, part would be rolled into a scheduled October offering at 4 to 4.5%. Mr. Genereux said that the debt for the renovation of the existing high school comes off the books in 2018.

Mr. Cahill asked the Finance Committee why it voted not to approve funding for the Special Town Meeting, September 24, 2011 and the subsequent Ballot Election. Mr. DeMers and Mr. Andrews answered this question.

Mr. Genereux spoke to Article 1.

ARTICLE 1: UTILITY EASEMENT PUMP STATION QUAKER HIGHWAY

According to Mr. Genereux, work was started but not completed. It is on well-head protection land and belongs to the Water Enterprise Fund.

Mr. Genereux spoke to Articles 2 and 3.

ARTICLE 2: PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAX AGREEMENT – 67 COMMERCE DRIVE

Mr. Genereux stated that Article 2 speaks to “ratification” of a PILOT agreement.

ARTICLE 3: PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAX AGREEMENT – 21 COMMERCE DRIVE

Mr. Genereux stated that Article 3 seeks “authorization” for the possibility of an additional PILOT agreement.

When asked by Mr. Wright is Article 2 does not pass, does the Constellation project continue, Mr. Genereux stated that Constellation would need to make the determination. If Article 2 did not pass, the Town would have to tax Constellation in order to receive the revenue numbers discussed in the agreement, which is now split between tax payments and tax credits. Mrs. Kearnan suggested that a Fact Sheet on how this agreement is structured would help the voters at Special Town Meeting, September 24, 2011.

Mr. Fortner summarized Articles 2 and 3 as “housekeeping” Articles to lower the risk around the Department of Revenue between the Town and Constellation.

Mr. DeMers summarized the agreed upon number of \$81,000 tax benefit per year to the Town as \$41,000 per year in taxes collected and approximately \$40,000 per year in tax credits.

Motion/Second/Discussion Vote

Motion	To close the Public Hearing.				
1 st	MA	2 nd	PD	Vote	6-0-0

Motion/Second/Discussion Vote

Motion	For favorable action on Article 1.				
1 st	MA	2 nd	PD	Vote	5-1-0

Discussion- Mr. Fortner was unclear about which property the project will pass over. Mr. Genereux stated that this is to pump water from the new Rosenfeld well site.

Motion/Second/Discussion Vote

Motion	For favorable action on Article 2.				
1 st	MA	2 nd	HF	Vote	6-0-0

No discussion on the motion for favorable action on Article 2.

Motion/Second/Discussion Vote

Motion	For favorable action on Article 3.				
1 st	MA	2 nd	PD	Vote	6-0-0

No discussion on the motion for favorable action on Article 3.

Motion/Second/Discussion Vote

Motion	For favorable action on Article 4 to the dollar limit of \$3,884,000.				
1 st	MA	2 nd	PD	Vote	5-1-0

Discussion- Mr. Fortner expressed his opinion that this motion discounts the vote he had cast on a similar issue earlier in the summer. Mr. DeMers stated that the scope of this Article has been scaled back because of the results of this summer's vote. Mr. DeMers holds the opinion that if the proposed cost of the project were the same, then he would agree with Mr. Fortner, but since the project has been scaled back by nearly 25%, the voice of the voters has been heard. Mr. Andrews was glad that the public has the opportunity to hear details and discussions on this Article and appreciated the fact the BOS decided not to have just a ballot election. Mr. Wright commented that the stakes go beyond \$3,884,000 over 20 years and suggested that unless the Town could reverse its retention of 8th grade students making the transition to 9th grade from the current 68% back to pre-high school probation days of greater than 80% of all 8th graders moving to 9th grade, the Town stands to lose upwards of \$24 million dollars of tax revenue to our neighboring communities. Mrs. Horwath stated that it is important to move forward.

4. Old Business

Mr. DeMers stated that the meeting minutes from August 23rd need the July and August monthly reports.

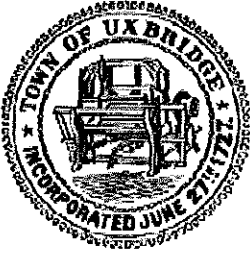
5. New Business

Mr. Wright informed the Committee that he would present the information gathered by the Working Group at the next meeting of the Finance Committee and asked for input and suggestions from the Finance Committee. Mr. Fortner suggested potential options for getting information to the citizens of the Town.

6. Adjournment

Motion/Second/Discussion Vote

Motion	To adjourn meeting.				
1 st	MA	2 nd	PD	Vote	6-0-0



Finance Committee Approval Sheet

Name	Signature	Date
Peter DeMers		21 SEP 2011
Mark Andrews		
Howard Fortner		9-21-11
Christine Horwath		9/21/11
John Morawski		
Ray Wright		9/21/2011
Maureen Kearnan		9/21/11