

## TOWN OF WEST BOYLSTON

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting held November 13, 2008

Upon notice duly posted, the Finance Committee of the Town of West Boylston met on November 13, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. Committee members present were Ray Bricault, Greg Zakarian, Patrick Crowley, Paul Bohannon, Chris Berglund and Patricia Altomare.

The Chairman, Ray Bricault called the meeting to order and initiated a discussion relative to our foreseeable role in the upcoming budget negotiations. It is generally acknowledged that the Town will have a budget shortfall and it is expected that the Board of Selectmen will shortly announce anticipated cuts that will have to be made to the various departments in order to create a balanced budget for the next fiscal year. Mr. Bricault asked the Committee to think about how we wanted to address the upcoming financial crisis i.e. did we want to do our own analysis of the numbers? It was generally agreed that our numbers are usually fairly conservative due to the efforts of Mike Daly and that accepting his numbers was not unreasonable due to his reliability in the past.

The Committee next reviewed their role within the Town according to the Town's by-laws and Mass. General Laws. It was noted that we appear to be meeting the Town's by-laws for this committee but that the Mass Laws calls for a finance committee to create the Town's budget. However, in West Boylston, the Finance Committee does not have that power.

Mr. Bricault suggested that, although we are just an advisory group, we should do a separate analysis of the budget numbers. Although it appears unlikely that we will find an unseen source of funds, at a minimum this Committee needs to be thoroughly familiar with the budget so that we can provide an educated recommendation to the Town.

The discussion next revolved around the question of where the cuts would come from. Would the school take the largest hit or would the shortfall be distributed equally among the departments? Mr. Berglund indicated that he has attended the joint Board of Selectmen/School Committee meetings; he believes that the Board of Selectmen considers public safety too critical and thus, the School Department will be carrying the burden of closing the budget gap. It was then noted that even if we completely closed the police/fire department – we'd still have a financial gap.

Patrick Crowley suggested that we need to obtain from the Board of Selectmen a forecast of what they anticipate will be cut from the budget and what those cuts will mean for the Town's citizens i.e. will we have to close the library? Will fire response time go down? Etc. It was also suggested that we send each department head an invitation to speak to us regarding what cuts would look like for their individual departments.

After further discussion, upon a motion duly made by Patrick Crowley and seconded by Paul Bohnson, it was unanimously **VOTED**: Authorizing Ray Bricault to 1) make a formal request of the Board of Selectmen for an analysis of the next fiscal budget with cuts sufficient to balance the budget, along with their recommendations of where those cuts will be made and how they anticipate those cuts will affect the Town; and 2) make a formal request of the Board of Selectmen for an analysis of the next fiscal budget assuming the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee agree to the terms of the budget i.e. a “consensus budget”, along with commentary on how they anticipate those cuts will affect the Town; and 3) make a formal request of the Board of Selectmen for an analysis of the next fiscal budget assuming a 10% cut from each of the Town’s departments, along with commentary on how they anticipate those cuts will affect the Town.

There be no further business to discuss, upon motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patricia Altomare  
Clerk of Finance Committee