

## TOWN OF WEST BOYLSTON

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting held January 28, 2010

Upon notice duly posted, the Finance Committee of the Town of West Boylston met on January 28, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. Committee members present were Chris Berglund, Ray Bricault, Greg Zakarian, Patrick Crowley, Paul Bohannon, Alex Bartholomew and Patricia Altomare.

The Chair called the meeting to order and noted that the first order of business was to welcome the new Finance Committee member, Alex Bartholomew. The Chair also noted that Committee member Judy Doherty resigned due to time constraints. The Finance Committee wishes to thank Judy for her efforts on the Town's behalf.

The next topic of business was success of the negotiations regarding insurance cost contributions from the non-union town employees. Upon discussion and motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously **VOTED**: to recognize the hard work and contributions of the non-union town employees and applaud the efforts of all involved in reaching an insurance coverage agreement.

The Committee then reviewed the request by John Westerling for approval for the DPW to overspend its Snow and Ice budget for the remainder of the year in accordance with MGL 44, 31D. Upon discussion and review and upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously **VOTED**: to so authorize the overspending of the DPW Snow and Ice budget.

The Chair then noted that meetings with the Town's Department heads will be held between March 29<sup>th</sup> and April 16<sup>th</sup> in order to review budgets and department needs in anticipation of the Town budget negotiations.

The Finance Committee then adjourned temporarily so that we could relocate our meeting and join the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee for a joint meeting.

The Finance Committee re-convened along with the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee at 7:10 p.m. Town Manager, Leon Gaumond spoke regarding the Town's present and anticipated fiscal state. The highlights of Mr. Gaumond's presentation are as follows:

- The estimated revenue for FY11 is \$19,465,021. We have limited revenue growth although it looks like revenue will increase approximately \$300,000 over FY10. This increase is in no small part due to the new meals tax.
- "Free Cash" available is \$281,181
- Our Bond rating decreased from an A2 to an A3 due to economic conditions.
- The Governor's plan appears to call for level funding.

Mr. Gaumond requested that the Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee each make formal requests to our State Representatives and Senator to commit to an early Local Aid Resolution that minimally level-funds the local aid accounts and that that Local Aid Resolution be attained in February. With the Governor's present plan, West Boylston can work through its budget process without further cuts but if the present numbers are not maintained then our budget will be seriously compromised.

Tom Kane, Superintendent of the Schools, next addressed the meeting. Mr. Kane noted that the constraints of FY10 budget made a negative impact on the quality of education for our Town's students. He expressed concern over the notion of more cuts for FY11 and emphasized that more cuts are not a feasible solution for the Town as a whole and not just the schools. Mr. Kane proposed that the approach to crafting the budget for FY11 should be to first ascertain what it will cost the Town to maintain the present services for all the departments and then work towards that number. Richard Shaw of the School Committee then reinforced Mr. Kane's remarks by noting the marked exodus of students from our system to Assabet. This is a costly turn of events given that the Town must pay for its students to attend Assabet and that the Assabet tuition is more expensive than the in-town per pupil expense. Mr. Shaw emphasized that the Town must adequately fund the schools in order to stem the tide and, ironically, save money.

Mr. Gaumond then advised the meeting that on March 10<sup>th</sup> the School Committee has a meeting scheduled in order to present their budget and that on March 17<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Gaumond will present his preliminary budget.

There be no further business to discuss, upon motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patricia Altomare  
Clerk of Finance Committee