

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
FEBRUARY 9, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room of Town Hall. The following members were present: Ken Szajda, Jay Leary, Jim Crews, Tom Meehan, Gordon Johnson and Mark Schultz. Pam Zicko was absent from the meeting.

Craig Denman presented the budget for the Auxiliary Police. He handed out a budget with a scenario of -3% and one with a -2%. The reductions were taken from the supplies and materials line. The biggest impact to the budget is that there is no money to send new officers to the Reserve Police Academy. Craig would like to add 2 new officers to his group, which would bring them up to 20. The cost of the academy is also going from \$240 to about \$1000, and the hours needed at the academy are increasing from 120 to 240 hrs. The Auxiliary Dept. has saved the town over \$100,000 if overtime had to be paid. Jim Crews asked if the academy is required and Craig said that Holliston requires it at some point.

Peter Tartakoff presented the budget for the Building Dept. and said that he did it the same way as last year, collaborating with the Planning Board and the ZBA. He pulled the -3% from the Assistant Bldg. Inspector's line, an amount of \$5,352. Peter said that he can cover the field inspections himself. That will leave \$5877 in that line, which he would like to move to purchase services in case it becomes necessary to contract services out at some point. Mark Schultz asked if there has been an increase in permitting and Peter said that it has been very active this year. Ken Szajda asked about the assistant inspector's position with the increase in permits but was told that they are mostly large projects that won't tie Peter up – it will fall on the designers. Peter said that the revolving account for inspectors is working well – he's been able to pay for mileage and education from these accounts. Gordon Johnson asked if there was a fourth dept. that could be included with his budgeting that deals with land issues. Ken Szajda asked about a more comprehensive permitting process that would involve more consolidation. He also asked about communication between the Bldg. Dept. and the Assessors. Peter said that he sends out monthly reports about permits and notices on closures to various depts.

Chuck Corman presented the Technology budget with 4 scenarios: a -3% and a -2%, each with and without a cost of living raise. In order to reduce the budget to the guideline, he trimmed service contracts, office supplies and equipment. He has an inventory of 5 extra computers (donated by an outside company) that are the generation of the ones in the Town Hall and purchased 4 new laser printers that are good for everyday use. Chuck said that the Police, Library and Senior Center are set for now, but that the Town Hall will need new computers next year; so he will be looking for capital purchases next year. He can purchase 44 computers for \$16,500 (no monitors) and build them to what they need to be for an estimated \$350 each. Mark Schultz asked if his numbers for supplies is realistic and he replied "yes". Chuck said that he receives many donations of equipment that help him live within his budget. Jim Crews asked if it was time efficient for Chuck to build the computers himself and he said that it would take him about 20 min. each. Jay Leary asked about the main servers and they are okay. Ken Szajda asked about the communications line and had phone system options been explored. He deferred the question to Paul LeBeau.

Paul LeBeau presented the **Sealer's budget**. In the last 2 yrs. it has averaged about \$4000 per year in revenue. Paul said he would be comfortable dropping the budget to \$1000. Within a year, it is hoped that the revenue will cover the expense. The sealer's stipend is \$3300.

The **Veteran's budget** is mandated. In the FY10 budget of \$17,863, about \$4,327 has been expended, but none to benefits. The budget for FY11 is reduced to meet the guideline. MA reimburses 50% of the money spent in our local aide.

The **Snow & Ice budget** is over by about \$12,500 so far. Paul LeBeau included a history from FY00 of the budget and expenditures. By statute, it can't go below \$200,000. FinComm questioned whether it should be increased this year. Ken Szajda asked about the cost of salt and sand and was told that it has gone down for now, but it tends to be all over the place.

The bulk of the **Street Lighting budget** goes to the cost of lights. It is an amortization schedule. A review is being held once an energy management company does a study and can recommend energy conservation measures.

The **Solid Waste budget** has made allowances for increases based on an escalation clause in collection and transportation from the curb for trash and recycling and the disposal of the trash at Wheelabrator in Millbury. The budget is based on an assumption of a 4% increase. It will be going back out to bid. Paul LeBeau said that the recycling rate is in the high 40%'s. Jay Leary asked if they had looked into combining trash pickup with other towns.

The **Wastewater budget** reduced to the -2% or -3% leaves no room for anything other than a smooth, normal operation. Jay Leary asked if the schools using the wastewater treatment plant could go back to a septic system. Ken Szajda asked if the water from the treatment plant could be used for irrigating the school fields.

Jay Leary, seconded by Mark Schultz, made a MOTION to approve payment of a bill submitted by Faith Antonioli for meetings and minutes for the month of January, totaling 6.25 hrs. Passed 6-0-0.

The DPW study committee is looking for a liaison from the FinComm.

Jay Leary, seconded by Mark Schultz, made a MOTION to approve the minutes of January 19, 2010. Passed 6-0-0.

There will be an "all boards" meeting at the Senior Center Thursday night at 7:00 PM. Discussion will be based on a -3% bottom line, with no wage shifts. Mark Schultz is concerned with the "what ifs" of the budget.

At 9:37 PM, Jim Crews made a MOTION, seconded by Mark Schultz, to adjourn the meeting. Passed 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Faith Antonioli, Secretary

Date Approved: March 9, 2010