

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**MARCH 2, 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, Jim Crews, Gordon Johnson, Pam Zicko (left at 9:10 pm), Mark Schultz (arr. at 8:05 pm) and Jay Leary (arr. at 8:00 pm). Tom Meehan was absent from the meeting.

Pam Zicko, seconded by Gordon Johnson, made a MOTION to approve the minutes of January 26, 2010. Passed 4-0-0.

Paul LeBeau presented the budget for the Town Accountant. He has decreased the clerical part of the budget and increased Professional Services. He has 2 new concepts he wants to implement in the accounting system: 1- off-load data input for bills payable to reduce the time spent processing bills, reducing the data entry time in the office and 2- clean up the charter accounts and make adjustments to the accounting system to make it more flexible for the end of year expenditure reports. Paul also mentioned that in 2012, MUNIS is going to shift to Microsoft products. The total budget for the Town Accountant is \$76,268 at -3% and \$77,054 at -2%. Gordon Johnson asked if these new changes had been run by the outside auditors and Paul said that they had. Pam Zicko asked if there was a need for part time clerical and Paul said that the accountant would like a couple of hours p/wk.

Tom Smith presented the budget for the Highway Dept. His budget included a cost of living raise of 3% for his employees. To reach the -3%, \$1,079,277 (a \$33,380 cut), he was going to have to make 1 reduction in staff, but that is no longer necessary because someone went to the Water Dept. and they won't be replaced. The lost salary was at \$46,000, so he can put \$25,000 back into the labor line. He will need to reduce vehicle maintenance by \$11,820 – the cuts being taken from the supplies line. With the -2% budget, \$1,090,404 (a \$22,253 cut), he can add \$11,000 back into vehicle maintenance. Jim Crews asked the impact to the town with 1 less man in the dept. and Tom said there would be no impact on services. Ken Szajda asked about fuel expenditures and are they highest during the winter due to plowing. The fuel budget is \$106,700 at -3% and \$107,800 at -2%. For capital projects, Tom said that the street sweeper needs to be replaced and is looking into a lease/purchase option. He also needs to replace a 1-ton dump truck and is looking into a lease/purchase option for that too. Tom was asked how many man-hours the sweeper is used and would it be worth looking into a private company to do the work.

Chief Lambert presented the Police Dept. budget. The contract for officers has not been negotiated yet. To level fund the FY11 budget with contractual agreements and service contracts, the budget would be \$2,327,681, which is \$74,528 over FY10. For the -2% budget guideline, he would have to cut \$119,591 from the budget; for the -3% budget, he would have to cut \$169,591. The Chief said that these numbers can be reached only by reducing 1 officer or possibly 2. But there is an overtime cost of at least \$50,000 by doing this. He said that they may have to look at regionalization – but it would take several years to get to that point. Pam Zicko asked about concessions with that union that were mentioned last year. If only 1 officer is cut, it is a program cut (the resource officer) not a personnel cut, but there would be some cost associated with it-about \$10,000. For capital, the plan calls for 2 patrol cruisers to be replaced,

but the dept. is still behind 1 vehicle from last year. Ken Szajda asked about the Court Diversion Program and was told they could get more specifics from Youth & Family Services. They thanked the Chief for his work in Holliston, as he is leaving in April.

Fire Chief Mike Cassidy presented the Fire Dept. budget first. The difference in money between the -2% and the -3% would be added to Professional Services. He kept the Chief's salary flat, but gave the 3% to all other personnel, including the dispatchers. He said that he shifted part of the dispatchers' salaries from fire to ambulance and felt justified because the volume of ambulance calls has increased and the fire calls decreased. Mike had graphs to show this. Jim Crews asked what would happen if he couldn't shift from ambulance and he said that he would have to cut back from the 50 firefighters he currently has. With 50, he may have 30 - 35 to respond at any given time. They are a paid, on-call dept. as opposed to volunteer. Gordon Johnson asked about the equipment and Mike said that the ladder truck is very old and he has a pumper that needs to be replaced. Engine 3, in East Holliston, needs to be replaced. Gordon asked about the buildings. Jay Leary asked what would happen if the ladder truck had to be taken off the road. There is about a 12-18 month turn-around before a new truck could be built and delivered. Mike said he would not be interested in a new truck, but would possibly consider a demo. He said he is pursuing grants, etc. for a ladder truck. Jay asked if Mike could have firm numbers for costs by Town Meeting. Mark Schultz asked the cost of a pumper and was told \$300,000 - \$315,000. Mike was asked if all surrounding towns have ladders and said that Hopkinton does not have one and Sherborn has a different configuration. He was also asked about regionalization of a ladder truck.

The Ambulance Budget was presented and Mike Cassidy said that he kept his salary flat, but gave cost of living increments to everyone else. EMT's receive hourly compensation for providing First Aid and CPR training. He does not charge groups for the training (believes it's a service that he should provide). However, participants' purchase Red Cross cards, etc. Jim Crews asked if more monies can be shifted from ambulance to reduce fire budget – such as utilities. Mike said it is a possibility, but only one building stores the ambulances.

Mike Cassidy reported that the EMS budget met the guideline at either -3% or -2% by reducing Purchase Services slightly. Mike said that he is actively pursuing different technology for the community notification system.

Gordon Johnson, 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 February, totaling 4.25 hrs. Passed 5-0-0.

At 9:40 PM, Jim Crews, seconded by Gordon Johnson, made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Passed 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Faith Antonioli, Secretary

Date Approved: March 16, 2010

