

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
MARCH 16, 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, Pam Zicko, Mark Schultz and Gordon Johnson.

Jay Leary, seconded by Pam Zicko, made a MOTION to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2010 meeting. Passed 6-0-1 (T. Meehan abs).

With the 4% cut in local aid announced in a joint statement this week, that translates to about a -3/4% guideline. Jay Leary asked if FinComm thinks the legislature is correct with the -4% number. He asked Paul LeBeau his opinion and Paul said that he would plan for 9C cuts after the November elections. He thinks that the worse case scenario with 9C cuts would be an additional 3% cut in local aid. This would be about a -1.5% guideline.

The library budget was presented by Leslie McDonnell. She had a -2% and -3%. The budgets are almost identical. She is not concerned with meeting the MAR this year because the state is giving an unlimited number of waivers. There were no 3% cost of living raises or longevity given; but the furloughs are gone. The Assistant Director's line is up slightly because of Saturdays. There is a big jump in the library aides' line because they have to cover the desk. The Children's Librarian position has been eliminated. It had previously been cut to 20 hrs. The person in this position is the newest hire. She had also covered the desk for 8 hrs a week. The library can keep its certification without a Children's Librarian. Lesley will use aides for unpacking deliveries and free herself up for other duties. The cleaning contract has gone out to bid. Energy and utilities have gone down and seemed to level off. The maintenance for the elevator went out to bid and the new contract calls for inspections 4 times p/yr. instead of monthly. This is a savings of \$800. Office supplies are down by \$300. The book purchases met the state requirement of 16%. The only difference between the 2% and the 3% guideline reduction is that at 2%, the Children's Librarian will work 3 weeks in July and have 3 weeks vacation. It will keep her until some time in August. The Library has put in a self checkout upstairs, acquired a new book drop for \$100 and more movies for rental. This was all paid for by the Friends. Museum passes are being done on-line. Book Angels are bringing in about \$5000 p/yr. A new 5 yr. plan is being initiated. Jim Crews asked if they didn't have to make any cut, would they reinstate the Children's Librarian and they said "yes". Future capital requests include having work done under the eaves and a heating system. Lesley said that she was told it would take years to make up the money spent on a new system. She would like to add self checkouts on other levels. Jay Leary asked if the library could be used by other communities (not part of Minuteman) as a contract service deal. Lesley said that other than Medway, which is in a legal agreement with Franklin, she couldn't think of any area towns that would be interested; but she would look into it. Mark Schultz asked if anything big could come up. Lesley said that the phone in the elevator had needed replacement and she was able to pay for it with the money saved in electricity. Gordon Johnson asked about the \$4000 she has budgeted for unpredicted repairs and she said that she almost always spends it. Ken Szajda commented that with the 20 hr. reduction in the past few years (which is 1/3 less hrs.) it correlates with the decrease of a position. Lesley said that non-print media is becoming big. Libraries are changing. They are

heading to down-loadable materials. This is addressed in the 5-yr. plan. Distribution costs are skyrocketing.

Paul LeBeau presented the ZBA budget. The revenues for FY09 were \$7000. To date in FY10 they are \$3500. Legal expenses are an unknown – but there is no ability to assume responsibility for legal in this budget. They are doing some sharing with the Bldg. Dept.

Peter Barbieri presented the Assessors' budget. He said that they met the budget. No raises were given. The only difference between the 2% and the 3% decrease was in professional services. In personnel services, they are shifting to a different vendor for evaluations of personal property. It's not a re-val year. There may be a reduction in counsel time for appellate tax cases and some inspections. Tom Meehan asked if the Assessors can make the budget. Jay Leary asked about the \$7500 stipend and the benefit the town receives. Peter defended the stipend and said that the Assessors put in many hours going over the information on evaluations and many hours during the abatement process. Ken Szajda commented that the part time clerical used up 99% of the budget. He also asked about properties that hadn't been inspected. Peter said that all properties have been inspected in the last ten years; if they can't get inside, they do an outside inspection. There are deficiencies in the overlay account. There have been some 09 releases that should help to cover the overlay deficiencies in FY10. Peter said that they are allowed to run a deficit in overlay accounts.

At next week's meeting, on March 23, the following budgets will be presented for review: ConComm, Council on Aging, Board of Health and KeefeTech.

At 9:50 PM. Pam Zicko, seconded by Mark Schultz, made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Passed 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Faith Antonioli, Secretary

Date Approved: March 30, 2010