

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
MARCH 23, 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, Gordon Johnson, Pam Zicko, Mark Schultz, Jim Crews and Tom Meehan.

Jay Leary, seconded by Mark Schultz, made a MOTION to approve the minutes of February 23, 2010. Passed 5-0-2(J. Crews, K. Szajda abs.).

Mark Schultz, seconded by Gordon Johnson, made a MOTION to approve the minutes of March 9, 2010. Passed 6-0-1 (P. Zicko abs.)

Jay Leary, seconded by Mark Schultz, made a MOTION to approve, but not release, the Executive Session minutes of March 9, 2010. Passed 6-0-1(P. Zicko abs.)

The Conservation budget was presented by Geoff Zeamer and Trish Brennan. Although permits are down, the Board has been under deluge with many other issues, many of which deal with other town depts. as well. FinComm was given a handout with info on these. There are 21 open issues; many of these concern the Highway Dept. They had 9 on-going violations at one time – they are now down to 3. It is still necessary to keep an eye on all these issues. The agent works 22 hrs. p/wk in Holliston and also works for Medway. The clerk works 13 hrs. p/wk and they are hoping to maintain the position. The ConComm is concerned with liability issues if they have to make more cuts. Most of their work does not bring in revenue. They presented 3 budget scenarios: #1- No change other than step increase for the assistant and 3% cost of living raise; #2-Cost of living increase and step increase for Assistant. Drop the agent's hours from 22 to 20 hrs. p/wk; This would reduce the Opt. #1 budget by 7%. #3-Cost of living increase and step increase for Assistant. Assistant up to 15 hrs. from 13 hrs and the Agent at 22 hrs. This option is a 4% increase over #1. They looked into sharing the clerk position, but knowledge of regulations is needed and the Planning and Bldg. Dept. clerks don't need to know this. Tom Meehan asked if they considered meeting the guideline budget. Geoff Zeamer reminded the FinComm that they took a larger cut than some depts. in last year's budget process. He added that the ConComm will meet the budget numbers that they have to. Jim Crews asked what services have not been met since cutting the clerical position from 16 to 13 hrs. last year. They said they had not anticipated the 9 violations. The Dept. is required by law to advertise hearings etc. in 2 newspapers and this has to be done with certain time parameters. Mark Schultz asked if the legal requirements would be fulfilled by putting ads in the 2 web-based papers in town. They weren't sure, but intended to look into it. Gordon Johnson asked if the list of projects they had been given was in the order of importance and Geoff said that it wasn't, but water issues are the biggest concern (i.e. stream maintenance). Gordon also suggested cross-training. Pam Zicko asked about Reserve Fund balances. Jay Leary asked that they put together a list of their requirements and what ones are state mandates. When fines are imposed and collected, the money goes to the general fund.

Lena Arena-DeRosa presented the Council on Aging budgets, a -2% and a -3%. The budgets are the same except for the Professional Development line. There is one conference in the -2%

and none in the -3%. She said she has been able to keep utilities down because of conservation. She feels she can lower it further. She has also stopped sending out the newsletters monthly and gone to every other. She is trying to become more web-based. The Professional Services line is for the cleaning company-TLC. Lena said that Grounds/Maintenance is her biggest concern. She is hoping to rent the building out more on weekends and is trying to come up with a fee that is fair, yet will cover costs. Vehicle Supplies went over budget this year; but \$15,000 has been fun-raised for a new van. Lena did give the 3% raises because the staff works more than the hours they are paid for. The COA has been growing 20-30% yearly. The COA provided fuel assistance to the town and runs the nutrition program, which is funded by the state through the formula grant. There are 925 unduplicated seniors. Lena is a grant writer. She said that the town does not have to pay for any of the programs that are offered. Jim Crews asked about charging for membership. Jay Leary asked about regionalization. Lena was going to look into charging but wasn't sure. Parking is a huge problem. The garage may need to be renovated because the new van won't fit inside. She also handed out her "wish list" if it were a "perfect world".

Rich Macagnano presented the Board of Health budget, which met the guideline. They reduced the septic inspector/agent line; they removed 1 phone line, the fax, cutting the communications line in 1/2. The BOA has many mandates they need to follow. They took \$500 from legal and feel that it should be ok. They also reduced supplies and the visiting nurse line. Ken Szajda asked what services would be cut or eliminated. More of some things will be shifted to the health director and some of her duties will be shifted to the two clericals. Rich did not think there would be any services lost to the town. Tom Meehan asked if the volume of activity is based on home sales. Septic replacements are down because home sales are down. Gordon Johnson asked how many clerical positions there are. There are 2 people, 1 position. He asked if they have too many hrs. for clerical and was told "no" because of the H1N1 clinics, etc. They were lucky because they had many volunteers step forward. Pam Zicko asked about the visiting nurses being reduced and was told they use them for communicable diseases. Jay Leary asked about the animal inspector and was told it is a state mandate. He asked the BOH to put together a list of state mandates they felt were unnecessary. He also asked about regionalization. Rich said they had looked into one but it was for new programs only and would be funded for a limited time only. Jay suggested they look into it again. He also asked why they have a stipend.

FinComm then discussed the Budget Review schedule and how to proceed. Ken said he would like to move the Water Dept. to the 30th, have Keefe in on 4/6 and discussed when to have the schools in. The local aid numbers won't change before Town Meeting. They also discussed a guideline number. A -2% probably assumes -4% 9C cuts, which translates to a -3/4% guideline. This would add \$600,000 to the school budget. FinComm would like the schools to come in on 4/6 with a budget based on that number. Gordon Johnson said that he is comfortable with a -3/4% guideline. Pam Zicko, seconded by Jay Leary, made a MOTION to change the guideline to a -3/4% non wage guideline. Passed 5-2-0. (Gordon Johnson and Tom Meehan were the no's.)

Jay Leary said that they need a good presentation for Town Meeting and need to update the web site. Ken Szajda asked for a subcommittee for the Town Meeting presentation. Gordon Johnson, Ken Szajda, Jay Leary and Jim Crews will do that. The three remaining members, Tom Meehan, Mark Schultz and Pam Zicko will discuss how to communicate Town Meeting information. Ken

Szajda mentioned that Barbara Gardener is going to have a cable show presentation on budgeting.

At 10:25, Pam Zicko, seconded by Mark Schultz, made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Passed 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Faith Antonioli, Secretary

Date Approved: April 6, 2010