

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 21, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM in the meeting room of lower Town Hall. The following members were present: Ken Szajda, Michelle Zeamer, Michelle Johnson, Charlie Kaslow and Dan Alfred. Kathleen White was absent from the meeting.

Lena Arena-DeRosa presented the budget for the Council on Aging, which came in within the guideline. However, she is looking for more funding. She said that the Energy and Utilities line is down and she attributes this to an energy audit that was conducted by NStar. She said that the Center has done a lot of small things recommended, but not the big items such as windows and roof. Charlie Kaslow asked about insulation and Lena said that it was another suggestion. Ken Szajda asked about salaries and Lena said that they are all in line with the table. He also asked if the Center is on the new phone system and was told that they are; but Lena said that that is only one part of the communications line - it also includes the newsletters and cell phones for the vans. Dan Alfred asked if the rise in office supplies is due to the increase in the cost of copy paper. Mrs. Arena-DeRosa explained that a lot of it is due to the rise in the cost of paper products, such as paper plates, napkins, paper towels, toilet paper etc. She said that they offer lunches twice a week. Lena also said that she tries to order supplies with other departments to get better prices. Lena added that this year (FY13) she will go over in office supplies. Charlie Kaslow asked if the newsletter is sent electronically and Lena said "no" but it is one of her goals for next year. Lena then talked about her "wish list" and why she needs more funding. She would like to hire a part time program manager for 18 hrs. a week for the following: the lunch program has "exploded" and there are 40-50 volunteers who work at the center - this person could coordinate the volunteers; this person could also help out on Fridays, as Linda is alone there because Lena attends meetings on Fridays; younger seniors are requesting the Center be open some nights for classes and Lena would like to open from 7-9 on Tuesday nights and this person could be there. Ken Szajda asked what grade the position is, beginning at \$16.77 an hour and Lena said she would find out. Lena Arena-DeRosa pointed out that of a \$52,000,000 town budget, the Council on Aging budget is less than 1/2 of 1% of the total, yet 23% of the population is 55 or over. She would also like more money for the vans (the MWRTA has been great to Holliston) - there has been an 8% increase in usage in 2013. Riders do give a donation for the rides and the Council made about \$3000 this year. Michelle Zeamer asked about the MWRTA and Lena said that they pay for a lot of the maintenance on the vans. Ken Szajda asked about the percentage of out-of-towners who utilize the center and Lena guessed it to be between 10-11%. No programs at the Senior Center are paid for by taxes. Appropriations have gone up only 8% in the past 5 years. Ken Szajda asked if the programs are self-funded and Lena said that some make money and some don't. She said she is looking at the programs statistically and may end some classes. Lena mentioned the compensation study and said she and the council disagreed with the director's M-4 designation and thought it should be M-6. She also talked about monies received from grants which ties into her goals for next year. There were grants she didn't receive any money from this year and she investigated why. With new health care laws, Lena needs to be evidence base trained for the center to become a licensed evidence based center. This will allow them to apply for grants through

health agencies and bring programs to Holliston and assist surrounding towns. MetroWest Health is presenting a fall prevention program in Holliston and Tufts is presenting a chronic pain self management program. She does not know what Blue Cross is going to do. The Center received \$1000 from Celebrate Holliston for new chairs and Lena has applied to Newcomers for tables. Renovations to the utility closet at the Center were done by Keefe Tech and Lena only had to pay the cost of the materials. Ken Szajda asked if the Reserve Fund transfer being requested was for an inspection that has already been done and Lena said it was. As for the problems with the roof, Lena said that Peter Tartakoff had been there to look it over and will get back to her with his recommendations.

Keefe Tech's FY14 budget was presented by Superintendent James Lynch. He began by explaining the 5 tab notebook he gave to each FinComm member. The first tab included the annual report for Keefe Tech and some historical background. The second tab gave background and present information on the Seaman's Project, and the agreement Keefe Tech entered into with them. The third tab deals with budget. The fourth tab is a narrative of the budget and the fifth tab includes FY13 grant awards. Kirsteen Leveille, the business manager, went through the preliminary budget. The regional transportation has been low funded - at about 55% and it should be at 100%. For the assessments to the towns, the minimal contribution number is from the state. Transportation figure shown is the amount over the reimbursement. The assessment to the town is a 3.65% increase over the FY13 assessment figure. There are several unknowns at this time. Keefe Tech should be able to finalize the assessments and budget by their April 8th School Committee meeting. Ms. Leveille said that they are currently in negotiations with 3 bargaining units. Also, they built in an 8.6% increase for health insurance and have applied to join West Suburban Health Group. They should know soon. They are also waiting to find out the final Ways and Means number for Chap. 70 funds. There are some roof repairs that need to be done and at the same time, they are looking into the possibility of having solar panels installed. They have a rough number of \$2.5 million. Holliston had an increase of 3 students this year which increased the minimal contribution required by the state by \$34,200, bringing the increase to the town for FY14 to \$71,613 for the 3 students. There are no capital expenses at this time. Mr. Lynch urged towns to contact their state legislators to fund the regional transportation before taking up new initiatives. They also can't charge bus fees as individual towns can; yet the individual towns have to pay for the transportation for these students. Ken Szajda asked how health care impacts Keefe - they are hoping to get into the West Suburban Health Plan but will be giving up the Legacy Plan they have now. If they don't get in, they will be forced to go with the GIC next year or try to get into West Suburban again next year. Charlie Kaslow asked if the figures for employee retirement and health insurance are current obligations and how does the district handle current and post-employment obligations. According to Ms. Leveille, there is no OPEB fund at this point but is recommended by their auditor. Michelle Zeamer asked about the school capacity - it was originally built for 950; it is currently at 711. Mr. Lynch would like to see it grow it to 750 - 800. Michelle Johnson asked how they make capital requests. It shows in the 700 series in the budget breakdown.

The Water Dept. represented by Jared Adams, presented their FY14 budget. The basic difference between FY13 and FY14's budget is that the superintendent is leaving and they don't know the number for the new superintendent's salary. This won't be resolved for the next 2 or 3 months. Mr. Sharpin did not take health benefits from the town; but money will need to be added to benefits for the new hire. There is also going to be another new hire – they need one person at well 6 and well 4 for processing. This is mandated by the DEP. Ken Szajda asked why such a huge drop in worker's comp -- numbers came from Mary Bousquet. Paul LeBeau said that Mary is checking the numbers. Ken asked why the \$20,000 in Professional Services? Jared Adams said he has to carry money somewhere for wage rates. Ken Szajda said we have gone through one phase. Jared said that at this time, the water system is in good operating condition -- so he is hoping to be able to rest well #5. Ken Szajda reminded the Water Dept. that they need to look at the revenue side of the budget and get the dept. into fiscal order. The Water Dept. is concerned with demands that new building will bring for water. The increase in rates is causing a decrease in demand - which affects the water surplus account. The surplus needs to be increased. With the system is in good operating, Ken Szajda suggested that they not take on anything new for a couple of years and try to build the water surplus account up. For example, perhaps do only maintenance on system. Ron Sharpin said that the only capital expenditures until 2018 are vehicle replacements. Michell Zeamer questioned why replacement of water mains is listed under on-going expenditures - recurring might be a better word. She also asked about the project with the sound waves to test water pipes. It came back that most of pipes should be replaced. They then questioned the validity of the tests. They were found to be reliable but the dept. did not have the money to have it tested any further. Pipe replacement should be piggy-backed with road replacement - but should have the survey done at the same time. Ken Szajda asked why the Water Dept. is going forward with hiring a new superintendent if there is the possibility of forming a DPW. The Water Dept. will talk further with the Board of Selectmen - the 2 departments need to get on the same page. The dept. has an operations increase of \$60,000 in FY14, but had a drop in FY13. Personnel shows an increase of \$44,000. Ken tried to reconcile the spreadsheet with the budget lines. Ken Szajda asked why is there a \$60,000 increase in operations? Ron Sharpin said he forgot to go back and increase the benefits for the new person and the new superintendent in the spreadsheet - should be \$199,000. Ken suggested they redo the spreadsheet. Ken Szajda asked if there's any idea when some of the new building will come online. Charlie Kaslow suggested that the Planning Board should have some idea. On revenue side, look at how a rate increase reflects in the revenue. As rates go up, how much does consumption go down? Jay Leary asked if total gallons pumped is up or down from last year? The answer was "down" this year. How close to pumping limit are we? How close are we to pumping the limit in a year? Where are we in the lost water - down to about 14%. Jay asked if they have set a range for the Superintendent's salary. Jared thinks it will be more than Ron's salary. Salary will be dependent on the qualifications of the individual. Michelle Zeamer asked if applicants have water experience. According to Jared, about 2/3's have tight ties to water. They need certain certifications. They can work under someone else's licenses.

FinComm discussed how to complete the schedule of budget hearings. They decided to meet April 2. Michelle Zeamer said that Ann McCobb does not have the Sharp's numbers yet. They

need them before the 11th of April. Charlie Kaslow asked Paul LeBeau if there were any grade changes in the draft warrant in Sec.29. The answer was no.

Michelle Zeamer, seconded by Charlie Kaslow, made a MOTION to approve a Reserve Fund transfer to the Council on Aging org.# 01541, obj. #53202 in the amount of \$675.00. Passed 5-0-0.

At 10:30 PM, Michelle Zeamer, seconded by Charlie Kaslow, made a MOTION to end the open session and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the sale, lease, acquisition or valuation of real property, which the chair made the determination that public discussion may have an adverse effect on the town's position. A roll call vote was taken: Michelle Johnson: yes; Michelle Zeamer: yes; Charlie Kaslow: yes; Dan Alfred: yes; Ken Szajda: yes. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted:
Faith Antonioli, Secretary

Date Approved: April 18, 2013