

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
JANUARY 25, 2011

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, Tom Meehan, Jay Leary, Jim Crews, Gordon Johnson, Pam Zicko and Mark Schultz.

Pam Zicko, seconded by Gordon Johnson, made a MOTION to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2010 meeting. Passed 6-0-1 (J. Crews abs).

Jim Crews, seconded by Mark Schultz, made a MOTION to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2011 Open Session meeting. Passed 4-0-3 (J. Leary, P. Zicko, T. Meehan abs.)

Mark Schultz, seconded by Gordon Johnson, made a MOTION to approve, but not release the minutes of the January 11, 2011 Executive Session. Passed 4-0-3 (J. Leary, P. Zicko, T. Meehan abs.)

The Board of Assessors presented their FY12 budget. Board members Phil Waterman and Peter Barbieri, as well as Town Assessor Kathy Pierce, presented. The budget comes in at \$179,273 which is level funded. The adjustments in the budget from FY11 were to eliminate the part time clerical position and a slight adjustment in services. Jim Crews asked about the pay increases and was told that the number reflects the .9 increase taking place in March. Gordon Johnson asked about communications and commented that they had expended only \$341.00 of the \$1500 budgeted. There is a slight bump up in the professional services line because more work will be done internally. Peter Barbieri commented that there will be an increase of about \$6000 or \$7000 in FY13 because the commercial revals are due. Kathy Peirce said that the Dept. has been falling behind about 300 parcels per year. The state requires parcels be re-evaluated every 10 years. Pam Zicko asked how many hours of clerical they are losing by eliminating the part time position and was told about 200 hrs. Kathy or Linda Clifford, the assistant assessor, will have to cover that time in the office. Jay Leary asked how they could catch up with the parcels they are behind on. Kathy said that the state usually gives them another year if they see that an effort is being made on the part of the town. She said that they need to do 1000 parcels a year, with some being done by outside people, but usually only get about 600 done a year. Jay also asked about the stipends the Board of Assessors receives and was told that they receive the money for the many hours put in and their involvement in the weekly operations of the office and the valuations. Each member contributes work that saves hiring from outside. When asked about the overlay, Kathy said that there are risks with court cases that are out of their control. There is an issue with wireless technology involving Verizon. Ken Szajda asked how many inspections board members do on a yearly basis and was told that they don't usually go into individual homes, they go into neighborhoods. The Assessors contract 300 parcels out per year and Linda Clifford has been doing 300; about 600 parcels per year are done. Kathy said that the Dept. would need 2 years of 1000 inspections to catch up and would cost about \$9000. When asked how many parcels have not been seen in the last 10 years, the Assessors said they will let the FinComm know and also present a plan to FinComm.

Lesley McDonnell presented the FY12 budget for the library, which is level funded. She said that there are no changes to the number of staff hours; several employees will be getting step raises based on the old wage table. The library will be open the same number of hours and will make certification. Custodial is level funded; energy and utilities is down from \$29,000 to \$25,500; there is a slight increase in communications; professional development funds 4 meetings a year, in line with job titles. Lesley cut from grounds/buildings to cover salary increases – unexpected expenses went from \$4000 to \$2400. She also cut office supplies \$500. She has used state aid for salaries, but if the state cuts back on aid, she could have a problem. Lesley could work on Saturdays' and save \$1100. Jay Leary asked about the MAR and Lesley said she feels confident that the Library will get a waiver from the state. She has to meet the hours and books requirement to get the waiver and the budget meets that. Jim Crews asked if cutting from buildings and grounds is a realistic cut. Lesley acknowledged that it is an old building (25yrs.) and you just never know, but that most problems couldn't be fixed with \$4000, as budgeted in FY11. She said she has 2 options of where she could go next if she had a big problem: to let the children's librarian go and have a lower paid person take some of her hours (which was discussed last year and unnecessary with the passage of the override) or to cut the 24hr. a week staff to 20hrs. a week, which would be her preference. Ken Szajda is concerned with energy and utilities when looking over the past expenses and the fact that fuel costs are going up. Mark Schultz asked about the impact of tablets and Lesley said that the library is going in that direction and they do count as books for certification process. Lesley also brought a copy of a roof estimate. The 2 flat sections have just been repaired and paid for, but there is still the rest of the roof that will need to be dealt with at some point. There has only been one problem and that was at the entrance to the building which has only leaked once. This would be a capital project, addressed during Fall Town Meeting, unless it became an emergency situation. Jay Leary suggested a second opinion on the roof condition.

Craig Denman presented the FY12 budget for the Auxiliary Police. He had no problems level funding the budget. He reported that the services of the Auxiliaries provided a savings of \$119,910.25 to the town. He thanked the FinComm for the \$2000 for the Academy training and said they have received grants and donations. Pam Zicko asked if there was anything they needed. Craig said that he was looking into disability insurance policies for members.

Paul LeBeau presented the Veteran Services budget for FY12, which is level funded. The budget is made up of 2 parts – a \$6600 stipend for the agent and a \$10,000 benefits account. The benefits account is unpredictable. It has been nominal the last few years. Paul said that the run rate may get close to the \$10,000 for FY11; but there are 3 cases that may not carry over into FY12. The money spent on benefits is reimbursed 50% by the state on the cherry sheet.

Paul LeBeau presented the Street Lighting budget for FY12, which is \$4000 less than the level funded guideline. Paul said that \$6600 should be sufficient. The town pays amortization costs based on the age and type of fixture.

Paul LeBeau presented the Solid Waste budget for FY12. The budget consists of collection service (trash and recycling), bulk items at the curb, tipping fee and the annual hazardous waste day. With the collection services, also comes the cost of stickers, leaf collection, recycling bins and services at Marshall Street. The budget number is \$1,042,000, which is under guideline, and based on a 3% CPI increase for contracted services. Paul said that this figure will probably be revised down before town meeting, being closer to \$1,017,000. He added that the recycling rate for the town is at 46%.

At next week's meeting, the following budgets will be presented: Planning Board, Building Inspector, ZBA, BOH, Motor Vehicle Fuels and Snow & Ice. A supplemental meeting with the School Committee has been scheduled for February 10, at 8:00 pm, to review the year-to-date budget. FinComm would also like the Town Accountant to come to a meeting in February, possibly the 8th, to report on year-to-date expenditures in the various depts.

At 9:30 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: February 15, 2011