



Finance Committee

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2009 @ 10:00 am
Larkin Hall, Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies
Called to Order: 10:08

Membership:

P	E	U	Name	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thomas Coen, Chair	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ruth Gilbert, Vice Chair	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Robert Vetrick	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Virginia Ross	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thomas Thurston	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walter Winnowski	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Frederic Biddle	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Philip Gaudiano	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ann Maguire	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gabrielle Hanna, Alternate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(Open), Alternate	<input type="checkbox"/> Voting

(Note: **P** = Present **E** = Excused **U** = Unexcused)

Also Present:

Paul Gavin, Assessor	Linda O'Brien, Treasurer
Barry Stephen, Collector	David Bedard, Selectman
Beau Jackett, Director MIS	Michelle Jarusiewicz, Community Housing Specialist
Frank Vasello, Chairman, Cultural Council	Alex Heilala, Finance Director
Brandon Motta, Recreation Dept. Director	Debra DeJonker-Berry, Library Director
Mick Rudd, Library Board of Trustees	Pam Hudson Employee Benefits Director/Town Manager Secretary

Order of Business:

1. To review the Budget for Div. II, Finance.
2. To review the Budgets for Div. V, Public Services.
3. To review Other Division Budgets as time permits.
4. To consider minutes of previous meetings as time permits.
5. To consider ant other business that may legally come before the Finance Committee.

Budget Reviews

Dept. - 141 Assessor - Presented by Paul Galvin

In response to questions from Miss Ross and Miss Gilbert, Mr. Galvin estimated that abatements for new affordable housing in FY 10 would total about \$70,000. The item isn't budgeted, because of state rules that base abatements and exemptions on the three previous years' experience.

Motion # 1: Recommend Dept. 141 Budget in the amount of \$191,123.

Motion By: Ruth Gilbert		Second By: Virginia Ross	
For: 9	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Recuse:

Dept. - 145 Treasurer/Collector - Presented by Linda O'Brien, Barry Stephen

Miss O'Brien noted that interest and principal payments for The Town had decreased by one-third following the retirement of a 1993 general-obligation bond.

Motion # 2: Recommend Dept. 145 budget in the amount of \$180,393.

Motion By: Tom Thurston		Second By: Phil Gaudiano	
For: 9	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Recuse:

Dept. - 710 Debt Service - Presented by Linda O'Brien

Ann Maguire said the Committee should seek to make sure that future projects are funded as debt exclusions, where possible (a levy-limit increase that would disappear when the project was paid off). Mr. Coen noted that to transform debt from a general-fund line-item to a debt exclusion would require approval at Town Meeting.

Motion # 3: Recommend Dept. 719 budget in the amount of \$1,613,271.			
Motion By: Virginia Ross		Second By: Tom Thurston	
For: 9	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Recuse:

Dept. - 820 Tax Title - Presented by Linda O'Brien

Miss Gilbert said that because the real estate market is so sluggish, it's important to "be more aggressive" in collections. The Town's claim to property tax title is senior to other creditors.

Motion # 4: Recommend budget for Tax Title Dept. 820 in the amount of \$24,000.			
Motion By: Ann Maguire		Second By: Virginia Ross	
For: 9	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Recuse:

Dept. 136 - Information Systems - Presented by Beau Jackett

The proposed increase has largely to do with an upgrade of laptop computers used in Town government. FY2010 is year one of a planned 3-year gradual replacement lease: 3 years, \$36,000, 120 laptops (40 per year).

Motion # 5: Recommend budget for Dept. 136 Information Systems in the amount of \$266,868.			
Motion By: Ann Maguire		Second By: Walt Winnowski	
For: 9	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Recuse:

(The meeting was recessed for lunch at 12:03pm, and resumed at 1:05 pm. Miss Gilbert rejoined the meeting at 1:15 pm. Miss Ross rejoined at 1:25 pm.)

Dept. 174 Housing Office Presented by Michelle Jarusiewicz, Community Specialist

Motion # 6: Recommend budget for Dept. 174 in the amount of \$59,740.			
Motion By: Gabrielle Hanna		Second By: Ann Maguire	
For: 7	Against: 0	Abstain: 1	Recuse:

Dept. - 182- Economic Development Presented by Michelle Jarusiewicz

Motion # 7: Recommend budget for Dept. 182 Economic Development in the amount of \$6,836.			
Motion By: Fred Biddle		Second By: Walt Winnowski	
For: 8	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Recuse:

Dept. 673 - Cultural Council – Presented by Frank Vasello

Motion # 8: Recommend budget for Dept. 673 Cultural Council in the amount of \$2,000.			
Motion By: Ann Maguire		Second By: Gabrielle Hanna	
For: 8	Against: 1	Abstain: 0	Recuse:

Dept. - 910 Retirement/Benefits/Insurance - Presented by Alex Heilala

Ann Maguire said that The Town might consider changing the current health plan, which requires a 20% employee co-payment (except for single-payer plans), inasmuch as the item is no longer subject to collective bargaining. A shift to a 25% co-payment would yield \$150,000 in savings, Miss Heilala said.

The committee discussed arrangement in peer towns such as Harwich, which attempted to self-insure, and Mashpee, which requires 50% employee co-payments.

Miss Gilbert said she wished The Town’s unions would consider allowing higher co-payments “instead of layoffs” resulting from the budget shortfall. She and Mr. Thurston said The Town Report should explicitly state health benefits in listing compensation for Town employees.

This discussion resulted in THREE CONSECUTIVE motions:

Motion # 9: Recommend budget for Dept. 910 Retirement / Benefits / Insurance in the amount of \$5,010,934.			
Motion By: Ruth Gilbert		Second By: Ann Maguire	
For: 9	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Recuse:

Motion # 10: Formally ask the Town Manager to start discussions with employee unions to of the current co-payment formula for health insurance, in light of current economic conditions.			
Motion By: Ann Maguire		Second By: Ruth Gilbert	
For: 9	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Recuse:

Motion # 11 : Amend year-end statement to employees to explicitly reflect health insurance and other benefits.			
Motion By: Tom Thurston		Second By: Virginia Ross	
For: 9	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Recuse:

Dept. 630 - Recreation Dept. - Presented by Brandon Motta

Mr. Coen said the department was in “a tough position” because the Board of Selectmen would essentially zero out the budget by proposing it to voters as a Prop. 2 ½ override item.

“I share your frustration,” Miss Ross said to Mr. Motta. “You know the reason the Board of Selectmen might have picked your budget is that they knew it would be passed by the consensus of the town.”

The Committee moved to table discussion and recommendation until the budget was formally presented as an override question.

Motion # 12 : Table discussion of budget for Dept. 630.			
Motion By: Ann Maguire		Second By: Tom Thurston	
For: 9	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Recuse:

Dept. 610- Library - Presented by Debra DeJonker-Berry, Library Director; Mick Rudd, Board of Trustees

The Committee discussed several areas of possible savings: for example, reducing open hours, and free internet service.

Miss Berry said that the economic downturn had made the Town Library more of a sanctuary for residents, educationally. She and Mr. Rudd also said that Library Services were essential in other ways that weren’t always readily apparent. For example, its public restrooms are expected to be more heavily used since nearby Town Hall is closed for repairs. “We’re open seven days a wee because people use (the Library) seven days a week,” she said.

Funding for the library from public and private sources also resists changing policies for short-term savings, she said. For example, Internet and computer service relies partially on restricted donations.

“If we pull back on services it makes it a lot harder for us to go out and raise money,” said Mr. Rudd. “It will make it hard for us to recruit volunteers. I just don’t see the economy in this.”

In response to questions from Mr. Coen and other Committee members about energy savings from reduced hours, Ms. DeJonker-Berry said that might also endanger the library’s state certification. She added that it was the library’s duty to set policy on operating hours.

“I don’t think anyone on this committee is looking to put you in the position of decertification”, Miss Gilbert said. “I would like to get a handle on savings from a one-day-a-week closing of the library” in the library and energy portion of the Department of Public works budgets.

Mr. Coen said he didn’t think the overall savings would be meaningful. “Even if we were to close two days it doesn’t amount to a hill of beans,” he said.

Motion # 13: Recommend budget for Dept. 610 Library in the amount of \$306,571.			
Motion By: Tom Thurston		Second By: Virginia Ross	
For: 8	Against: 0	Abstain: 1	Recuse:

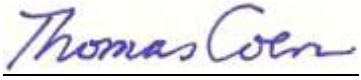
Dept. - 156 General Gov’t. Administration - Presented by Alex Heilala

Motion # 14: To eliminate budget for Annual Employee Appreciation Dinner.			
Motion By: Fred Biddle		Second By: (none)	
For:	Against:	Abstain:	Recuse:

Discussion focused on the most economical replacement of the main photocopier in Town offices. The proposed budget now reflects a transfer from the reserve fund.

Motion # 15 : To recommend the budget for Dept. 156 in the amount of \$75,620.			
Motion By: Ruth Gilbert		Second By: Tom Thurston	
For: 9	Against: 0	Abstain: 0	Recuse:

Next Meeting:	February 17, 2009
Adjourn:	3:02 pm
Minutes by:	Frederic Biddle

Approved by  on June 5, 2009
Thomas Coen, Chair