

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
4/28/10

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Meeting Date: April 28, 2010

Called to Order: 6:01 PM

Finance Committee Members Present: John Hanold, Andrew Killeen, Marje Levenson, Rob Allen, Lynn Reynolds and Michael Naughton

Montague Selectmen Present: Pat Allen, Patricia Pruitt and Mark Fairbrother.

Others Present: Frank Abbondanzio (Town Administrator) and Carolyn Olsen (Town Accountant)

Minutes

FC Moved: To approve the minutes of April 21, 2010.
Vote: 4 In Favor 0 Opposed 2 Abstained

BOSMoved: To approve the minutes of April 21, 2010.
Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Public Forum

Ms. Levenson suggested implementing a system of checks and balances to ensure proper publicity of any future public budget forums.

Mr. Hanold asked if there were any new suggestions for changes to the operating budget.

Mr. Killeen thinks that ongoing special articles should be funded from taxation, and that since this would result in a deficit on the town side of the budget, this might lead to reconsideration of what the town can afford for a GMRSD assessment.

Mr. Allen would like to put forward the option of an override to town meeting to cover both the town and the school deficits.

Mr. Naughton thinks it's too late too seriously consider Mr. Killeen's suggestion for FY11 and too early to consider it for FY12, and feels the same is true of Mr. Allen's suggestion. Mr. Naughton added that both of these items should be discussed after the FY11 budget is final, with decisions made before we start deliberations for FY12.

Mr. Hanold proposed reducing the current requested budget for the new Planner's salary and moving the requested \$8,200 for computer expenses into the operating budget. Mr. Hanold noted that we need to plan ahead for both capital expenditures and items like information technology management, and that we have not been planning for changes in the information technology infrastructure. This is his reason for asking for consideration of moving the computer capital expenses into the operating budget.

It was noted that appropriations that cover non-specific purchases, such as the appropriations for computer equipment or the DPW "discretionary fund" benefit the town by appropriation as special articles. Since unused balances in operating budget appropriations close out at the end of

the fiscal year, there might be an inclination to make purchases in order to not lose the funds. When these appropriations are special articles, unspent balances carry forward to the following fiscal year, allowing more prudent purchasing.

Planner Salary

Mr. Abbondanzio noted that the advertising for the Planner position does not mention a salary range. The intent was to have the flexibility to hire within the range based on the experience of the applicants, but he noted that it is unlikely that someone would be hired above mid-range.

Mr. Hanold stated that we've been very austere with the rest of the budget and to not carry that into this area would be an aberration. Mr. Hanold noted that the final decision on the salary is up to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Hanold also suggested that the Planning position offered some flexibility in defining the scope of job duties and expectations in a more conservative manner to justify a lower salary.

Mr. Abbondanzio does not see going above mid-range, and we may end up hiring at the lower end but he would like the flexibility to go to mid-range. Mr. Abbondanzio would feel comfortable with a budget at step 9.

Ms. Pruitt takes the suggestions about the financial situation to heart, but feels Mr. Hanold is off target in suggesting a reduction in staff duties. Ms. Pruitt feels that the Planner position is vital.

Mr. Naughton asked if the Planner was a union position and subject to the same opportunities for step increases as other employees. The position is in the union, and Mr. Naughton noted that this eliminates flexibility for future increases for a well qualified employee.

Mr. Allen cautioned that hiring someone highly qualified at a low wage is likely to result in turnover as soon as the economy improves. The danger of limiting where we are in a range is that you could miss out on someone who is really qualified but who is not willing to come down to a lower step.

Mr. Naughton agreed that it is not appropriate for the Finance Committee to micromanage,, but we do make recommendations on the budget, which includes the salary for a new employee, and we would be remiss not to consider this.

Mr. Hanold added that the Finance Committee has discussed Cost of Living Increases, Step Increases, cutting staff hours, having furloughs, etcetera, and so to say that the Finance Committee has no say in this matter makes no sense.

FC Moved: To recommend a beginning salary for the new Planner not to exceed Grade 9 Step 9 (52,331.67) and for the budget request to be adjusted accordingly.

Vote: 3 In Favor 3 Opposed 0 Abstained

FY11 Special Articles

Mr. Killeen offered amendments to several of the following motions to change the funding source from Stabilization to Taxation, but none were seconded.

Mr. Naughton observed that Taxation was fully used and would not be available in the absence of budget reductions elsewhere.

FC Moved: To recommend appropriating \$113,000 for the repair of the Sheffield School Roof, to be funded from Borrowing.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOSMoved: To recommend appropriating \$113,000 for the repair of the Sheffield School Roof, to be funded from Borrowing.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FC Moved: To recommend appropriating \$8,200 for the purchase of computer equipment, software, and related expenses, to be funded from Stabilization.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOSMoved: To recommend appropriating \$8,200 for the purchase of computer equipment, software, and related expenses, to be funded from Stabilization.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FC Moved: To recommend appropriating \$35,000 for the purchase of a police cruiser, to be funded from Stabilization.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOSMoved: To recommend appropriating \$35,000 for the purchase of a police cruiser, to be funded from Stabilization.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FC Moved: To recommend appropriating \$75,000 for the purchase, lease and/or repair of DPW Equipment, to be funded from Stabilization.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOSMoved: To recommend appropriating \$75,000 for the purchase, lease and/or repair of DPW Equipment, to be funded from Stabilization.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FC Moved: To recommend appropriating \$54,055 for the second year of lease payments for 2 six wheeled dump trucks, to be funded from Stabilization.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOSMoved: To recommend appropriating \$54,055 for the second year of lease payments for 2 six wheeled dump trucks, to be funded from Stabilization.

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Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FC Moved: To recommend appropriating \$3,500 for the purchase of playground equipment and materials for Highland Park, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOSMoved: To recommend appropriating \$3,500 for the purchase of playground equipment and materials for Highland Park, to be funded from Taxation.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FC Moved: To recommend appropriating \$91,725 for the FY11 Colle budget, to be funded from Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriation.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOSMoved: To recommend appropriating \$91,725 for the FY11 Colle budget, to be funded from Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriation.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FC Moved: To recommend a single article to authorize the Treasurer to borrow in anticipation of grants.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOSMoved: To recommend a single article to authorize the Treasurer to borrow in anticipation of grants.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FC Moved: To recommend reauthorizing a revolving fund for the Hazardous Materials Response Planning Committee (a.k.a. the SARA Title III Committee).

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOSMoved: To recommend reauthorizing a revolving fund for the Hazardous Materials Response Planning Committee (a.k.a. the SARA Title III Committee).

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FC Moved: To recommend appropriating \$1,845,654 for the FY11 WPCF Operating Budget, to be funded with \$215,720 from taxation and \$1,629,934 from Sewer User Fees.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOSMoved: To recommend appropriating \$1,845,654 for the FY11 WPCF Operating Budget, to be funded with \$215,720 from taxation and \$1,629,934 from Sewer User Fees.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FC Moved: To recommend appropriating \$36,540 for the FY11 Airport Operating Budget, to be funded with \$6,277 from taxation and \$30,263 from Airport User Fees.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

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BOSMoved: To recommend appropriating \$36,540 for the FY11 Airport Operating Budget, to be funded with \$6,277 from taxation and \$30,263 from Airport User Fees.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FC Moved: To recommend appropriating \$627,633 for the FY11 FCTS Assessment, to be funded from taxation.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOSMoved: To recommend appropriating \$627,633 for the FY11 FCTS Assessment, to be funded from taxation.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

FC Moved: To recommend appropriating \$7,157,247 for the FY11 Town Operating Budget, to be funded from taxation.

Vote: 6 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOSMoved: To recommend appropriating \$7,157,247 for the FY11 Town Operating Budget, to be funded from taxation.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting

Mr. Hanold asked that any suggested changes to the format or content be e-mailed to him as soon as possible. He will try to have a draft available for the next meeting.

Next Meetings:

- May 5 GMRSD final budget vote due, Wording on Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting, how to fund any GMRSD assessment required above the affordable assessment level
- May 12 Votes on GMRSD, Final Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting
- May 19 Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting to printers
- May 26 Mail Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting
- June 5 ATM

Adjourned at 7:43 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Carolyn Olsen