

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Joint Session with Finance Committee
Minutes of March 22, 2010

Chairman Mark Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:05PM. Finance Committee members present, in addition to Chairman Lyons, were Holger Luther, Heidi Bond, Kathy Hartman, Trudi Perry and Paul Dierze. Board of Selectmen members present were Chairman Martha Morrison, Richard Gandt, Karen Dow and Laura Powers. Selectmen Luther was not present. Of the Selectmen's staff, Town Administrator Virginia Wilder and Board Secretary Donna Rich were in attendance. Finance Committee's Secretary Erica Clay was also in attendance. Other persons present during all or part of the meeting were Moderator John Kinhan, Elementary School Committee members Jeff Evaul, Jeanine Cunniff, Rosemarie Lucey and Susan Archer, Tri-Town School Union representatives Dr. Bernie Creeden, Steve Greenberg, Tri-Town Transcript reporter Brendan Lewis, Superintendent of Highway Dave Bond, Library Trustee Jennifer Baker, Masconomet School Committee member Ken Vogel and citizens Mark Gudaitis, Heidi Fox, Kathleen Curran, Herb Harvey, Sarah Guido, Maureen Jackman, Terry Ledger and Daniel Shugru.

Minutes:

Chairman Lyons presented the minutes of the Finance Committee; Heidi Bond made a motion to approve the draft of the minutes of the March 8, 2010 meeting, seconded by Trudi Perry; so voted: 5-0, Holger Luther abstained. Heidi Bond made a motion to approve the draft of the minutes of March 15, 2010 Finance Committee meeting, seconded by Trudi Perry; so voted: 6-0.

Reserve Fund Transfer Request:

Chairman Lyons presented a Reserve Fund Transfer for repairs to the Library necessary due to storm damage. Holger Luther motioned to authorize the Reserve Fund Transfer for purposes stated in the amount presented, seconded by Paul Dierze; so voted: 6-0 by the Finance Committee.

Budget Reconciliation Discussion:

Chairman Lyons explained that the purpose of the joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen was to balance the budget. Mr. Lyons explained that the handout made available was a working document for discussion during the meeting and was constantly changing with new information being received hourly. Mr. Luther stated that the deficit was at \$187,713, with a 5% anticipated cut from the State on the Town side and a 4% cut to Masconomet Regional School District. The Masconomet School District State aid cut represents \$63,249 to the Topsfield assessment. Chairman Lyons then began the discussion of a potential Proposition 2 ½ override question to be placed on the ballot and asked Chairman Morrison what approach of the Board of Selectmen was moving toward. Chairman Morrison noted that there had been preliminary discussion of two override questions, one representing capital items and one representing operating items. Mr. Lyons noted that, in order to balance the budget, the Masconomet assessment would need to be included. Members discussed the fact that the State cuts in local aid and Chapter 70 had created a hole in the revenues, in effect resulting in a deficit in the Town budget. Mr. Luther brought up areas to consider in reduction to the budget: Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk could have a reduction in wages, Tri-Town Council and HAWC could be eliminated and a decision could be made to utilize funds from Free Cash. Discussion continued regarding the articles in the draft 2010 Warrant. Throughout the meeting different financial options were discussed in an attempt to balance the budget.

The meeting was then opened to comments from members of the audience. Dave Bond, Superintendent of Highway, requested that the Boards make careful consideration when looking for override items and not to place the Highway Roads and Sidewalk budget items on override.

Jeff Evaul, Elementary School Committee Chair, reported that the Elementary School level funded their budget, as opposed to a level service budget. To do so they deleted one kindergarten class, one sixth grade class and ½ a librarian. Mr. Evaul also noted that presently there are 68 houses on the market and no doubt they will be purchased by families with elementary school level children. They requested not to be put on an override.

Ms. Bond explained that the Police budget is not level funded but rather shows an increase. The increase is primarily due to officer's medical issues and coverage for their positions, as well as an anticipated retirement. To compensate for these increases and create a level funded budget, the department could remove the 12AM-8AM shift. It was agreed, that for the public safety exposure this would create, the shift should not be removed.

At 8:36PM Holger Luther made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kathy Hartman; so voted: 6-0- Finance Committee members.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Rich, Secretary
Selectmen's Office

Approved as written at the May 24, 2010 Board of Selectmen's meeting.

<p>Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law,' G.L. 39, § 23B, the approval of these minutes by the Board constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Board as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.</p>
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