

JOINT BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

8/25/10

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Meeting Date: August 25, 2010

Called to Order: 6:02 PM

Finance Committee Members Present: John Hanold, Andrew Killeen, and Michael Naughton

Board of Selectmen Members Present: Chris Boutwell and Pat Allen

Others Present: Frank Abbondanzio (Town Administrator), Carolyn Olsen (Town Accountant), and Mark Stevens (Tree Warden)

Minutes

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of July 28, 2010.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Board of Selectmen Moved:

To approve the minutes of July 28, 2010.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Reserve Fund Transfer for the Tree Warden

The Town's bucket truck did not pass the safety inspection on the bucket, so work had to be contracted out. The line item for tree planting and removal was budgeted at \$6,000 and over \$4,000 has already been spent.

Several members questioned whether the failure of the bucket truck to pass inspection, and hence the resulting expense of contracting out work, might have been foreseen, and perhaps prevented. The Tree Warden's answers did not provide a clear answer.

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve a reserve fund transfer to the Tree Warden's budget, line item 001-5-299-5243, in the amount of \$5,000.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Follow up on August 5, 2010 Special Town Meeting

Since Town Meeting declined to approve a supplemental appropriation for the Gill-Montague Regional School District, the next step is a District Meeting which the School Committee has set for November 15, 2010.

Report on August 10, 2010 meeting between the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Technical Committee.

The Technical Committee met with Christine Lynch and Jeff Wulfson from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. A number of things are being worked on, including review of the assumptions used in the committee's plan for fiscal stability and an examination of the district's per-pupil expenditures. Mr. Naughton noted that this plan depends on commitments from both funding levels from the state and

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budget limits from the Gill-Montague Regional School District and no commitments have been received. It is possible that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's pending evaluation of the Gill-Montague district may include suggestions on district spending.

Update of Federal Stimulus Money for Education

Mr. Abbondanzio reported that the Gill-Montague Regional School District is slated to receive an additional \$396,251 in Chapter 70 for Fiscal Year 2011 as a result of the Federal Stimulus funding. This amount is enough to cover the current budget gap, provided that the additional Chapter 70 funds don't have to be used for specific purposes. More information should be available tomorrow. There is concern about building one-time funding into the base budget.

Board Stipends for Fiscal Year 2012

Mr. Hanold noted that stipends were sharply cut a few years ago and would like the finance committee to consider increasing them to fit in better with practice in other local towns. Mr. Hanold offered a proposal to increase the stipends for the Boards of Selectmen, Health and Assessors to \$1,500 per person per year.

Mr. Killeen gets the heart behind the suggestion, but his inclination is to push back a little bit given the current economic climate and said that it is probably not the time to be increasing the stipends.

Mr. Naughton agrees theoretically with Mr. Killeen but is sympathetic to Mr. Hanold's proposal. Mr. Naughton's main concern is whether it is appropriate to increase stipends now when serious budget cuts may be needed for Fiscal Year 2012.

The decision was made to suspend this discussion and reconsider in February or March when a better sense of the Fiscal Year 2012 budget is known.

Listing of Documents and Exhibits

- Reserve Fund Transfer Request from the Tree Warden.
- FY11 Chapter 70, Revised August 2010, District Summary
- Mr. Hanold's survey of Board Stipends.

Next Meetings:

September 8, September 22, October 6, and October 20

Tasks for future meetings:

- Meet with the Capital Improvements Committee to jointly determine which expenditures will be special articles and which will be part of the operating budget, as well as what items will go to them for consideration.
- Assign tasks for in-depth compensation study
- Reconsider changes to Board Stipends in February or March

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Adjourned at 7:30PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Carolyn Olsen