

Finance Committee

Meeting minutes – April 15, 2010

Present: **Committee Members:** Chris DeSimone (Chair), Chris Johnson (Vice Chair), Michael Landino, Alan Leao Jr., Holly Seiferth, George Zacharakis

Absent: Melissa Tzanoudakis

Guests: David Scott (Police Chief), Peter Shattuck (Deputy Chief of Fire Department, Highway Superintendent, Tree Warden), Lois Libby (Town Clerk), Joseph Hallisey (Board of Selectmen member)

Also present: Thomas Wilson (Town Accountant)

Chris DeSimone called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Business: Chris DeSimone started the meeting with discussing Article 6 Police Cruisers of the Annual Town Meeting. David Scott noted that the original request was for \$60,000.00 for 3 police cruisers but that had been amended to \$40,000.00 for 2 police cruisers. Chris DeSimone questioned what vehicles were being replaced. David Scott replied that two line cars were being replaced – a 2004 and a 2008. Chris DeSimone noted that the vehicles were run for 20 hours per day. David Scott added that one hour of idling was like a vehicle driving for 33 miles. George Zacharakis commented that the statistics of how much these cars were utilized were staggering. George Zacharakis noted that all seven vehicles used to get replaced over a three year period, but they were behind a year now. On a motion from Michael Landino, seconded by Chris Johnson, Article 6 Police Cruisers of the Warrant list on the Annual Town Meeting was put into motion as it is written in the article to be recommended to be discussed and voted on. It was approved by a vote 5(Aye)-1(No) and 0 abstained.

Chris DeSimone brought up Article 3 FY2010 Snow Removal Costs of the Special Town Meeting for discussion. George Zacharakis questioned why there were extra costs in 2010. Peter Shattuck replied that they always went over in previous year's snow budgets. In 2010 they used more salt than expected due to the types of storms – there were many smaller storms which they used more salt for. Chris DeSimone questioned what the line item R&L-Const, Snow, Lawn Equipment was for. Thomas Wilson answered that line item was for equipment, not snow removal. Peter Shattuck added that line item was for the Rent & Lease Equipment. George Zacharakis asked if there was money left over in the 2010 budget, would that excess come back to the town. Peter Shattuck replied that it would, but added that there were some projects that the excess money might get used for before the end of the fiscal year. Chris DeSimone questioned if the excess could just be a transfer to the reserve account rather than the town meeting having to do a cash transfer. Thomas Wilson replied that was an option. Peter Shattuck added that another issue was the \$2,500.00 that was left in the supplies account. George Zacharakis asked how things like gas were doing. Peter Shattuck replied that everything else was doing well. On a motion from George Zacharakis, seconded by Chris Johnson, Article 3 FY2010 Snow Removal Costs of the Warrant list on the Special Town Meeting was put into motion as it is written in the article to be recommended to be discussed and voted on. It was approved by a vote 6(Aye)-0(No) and 0 abstained.

Chris DeSimone brought up Article 16 Clerks Fees of the Annual Town Meeting for discussion. Chris DeSimone questioned if all of the fees were increasing. Lois Libby replied that yes, almost all have doubled. Lois Libby noted that the town has been behind times and this brings them right on course with the other towns in the area. Lois Libby also noted that it has been 20 years since the clerks fees have increased. Chris Johnson asked if the fees that are now \$10.00 if they were \$5.00. Lois Libby replied that they were. Chris DeSimone commented that the fees seemed to be fair fees. On a motion from George Zacharakis, seconded by Chris Johnson, Article 16 Clerks Fees of the Warrant list on the Annual Town Meeting was put into motion as it is written in the article to be recommended to be discussed and voted on. It was approved by a vote 6(Aye)-0(No) and 0 abstained.

Chris DeSimone brought up Article 11 New Fire Truck of the Annual Town Meeting for discussion. Chris DeSimone commented that the selectmen did not want it unless it was going to be outside of the tax levy – a 10 year bond probably. Chris DeSimone noted that they would need to wait for the final article to be written before they could vote on it.

Chris DeSimone brought up Article 7 Book Fine Money of the Annual Town Meeting for discussion. Chris DeSimone started a discussion about revenue raising and departments keeping the revenue. Historically there have been two in Pepperell and some other towns – the Conservation department and the Libraries. There was a discussion.

Chris DeSimone moved the meeting to discuss the addition of \$14,000.00 to the Law Department budget – Consulting Services (100-15100-52307). This request came from John Moak, Town Administrator. Chris DeSimone explained that this was for the Cable Advisory Legal Services for the 2011 negotiation for a 1 year contract that would be needed to fill the gap before the new contract with Charter was finalized. On a motion from Michael Landino, seconded by Chris Johnson, to increase the Consulting Services for the Law Department budget (100-15100-52307) was put into motion to be recommended to be discussed and voted on. It was approved by a vote 6(Aye)-0(No) and 0 abstained.

On a motion from Michael Landino, seconded by Chris Johnson, to increase the Secretary budget for the Finance Committee budget was put into motion to be recommended to be discussed and voted on. It was approved by a vote 6(Aye)-0(No) and 0 abstained.

Chris DeSimone moved the meeting to discuss the Enterprise Accounts and who audits them. Holly Seiferth questioned if they knew who would be joining the transfer quorum in Ashby. Chris DeSimone replied that he did not know; adding that the transfer station history started with \$80,000.00 in their budget when they were initially funded and it took two years to get it out. Alan Leao Jr. wondered how their tag sales worked. Chris DeSimone noted that Peter Shattuck runs the transfer station and bag tag sales were run very strictly. Holly Seiferth added that the bag tags were cash sales and could be bought at specific points in town such as Donelan's. Michael Landino questioned if the three Enterprise Accounts were common in other towns. Thomas Wilson replied that the water and sewer were common and some towns had transfer. Michael Landino questioned what made them Enterprise – being self sustained? Thomas Wilson replied that was correct. George Zacharakis commented that he noticed that their budgets were very high so that meant their excess would go into free cash. Chris DeSimone replied that several years ago the town worked with them to come up with ways to increase revenues without increasing rates for rate payers.

Upcoming Meetings: Tuesday, April 22, 7:00pm

Adjournment: On a motion from George Zacharakis, seconded by Chris Johnson, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm and it was approved by a vote 6(Aye)-0(No) and 0 abstained.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynne Henderson