

**MINUTES  
OF THE  
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2010  
7:00 P.M.**

**SANDWICH TOWN HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM  
34 QUAKER MEETINGHOUSE ROAD**

Present: Glenn Pare', Bill Diederling, Tom Hickey, Paul Sylvia, Paul Kilty, John Vibberts, Ellen Yaffe and Courtney Bridge

Absent: Chip Cheney

Also Present: Town Manager George Dunham; Selectmen Chairman John Kennan and members Linell Grundman and Jim Pierce; Town Accountant Doreen Guild, Library Director Richard Connor and Jeanie VanderPyl of the Library Trustees; School Committee Chairman Bob Simmons, Superintendent of Schools Mary Ellen Johnson; Business Manager Michelle Austin; Mary Stanley SCT

**ITEM #1**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ITEM #2**

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

No minutes presented.

**ITEM #3**

**LIBRARY FY'11 BUDGET REQUEST AND RAMIFICATIONS**

Library Director Richard Connor gave an overview of the budget noting that they have been working very hard with the Town Manager to try to prevent layoffs. The request for FY' 11 in the amount of \$866,210 reflects level funding of the FY' 10 appropriation. State Aid is cut substantially. Two positions will be lost and the Library will be closing on Sundays. These are expensive hours to be open. Requesting an increase of \$20,952 which would allow the Library to not cut any personnel.

Ms. Yaffe noted that the Library is making the best with what it has.

Mr. Connor mentioned that \$20,952 would give the Library back the two positions and if we had the resources we would open ½ day on Sunday.

Mr. Diederling, for clarification, noted that we are not talking about cutting two people & Sunday hours...they are all the same.

Mr. Connor – correct.

Brief discussion on trust funds at the Library.

Mr. Connor noted that they plan to do some fund raising through the Friends of the Library. The Friends of the Archives will help fund the Archives.

Ms. Yaffe asked...if the Library values the Sunday hours, could savings be found in the books, training or periodicals line item?

Mr. Connor noted that there could be; however, we do have certain qualifications to meet for the State. By law the Library has to increase the books and periodicals line item.

Mr. Diederling had some questions about salary increases in the budget. Ms. VanderPyl and Mr. Connor explained that it is longevity and contractual items.

Mr. Dunham, noting that Mr. Connor will be retiring soon, mentioned that the Library is what it is because of Richard Connor direction over the years.

Mr. Connor mentioned that it has been a pleasure to work with everyone here also.

**ITEM #4**

**School Department FY'11 Budget**

To be presented later in this meeting.

**ITEM #5**

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Dunham gave an overview and update of Projected Revenues and Expenses – FY'11 (Selectmen Supported 2/25/10 – Draft – 3/23/2010; FY'11 Budget Totals; FY'11 Recommended General Government Budget – Summary of Significant Non-Personnel Related Budget Changes; Brief history of the Hoxie House and Dexter Grist Mill account; summarized a March 15, 2010 e-mail from Senator Murray's Office regarding Chapter 70 funding (schools) and Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA); Mass. Dept. of Revenue/Division of Local Services, FY2011 Local Aid Estimates (FY'2010 Cherry Sheet Estimate) (FY'2011 Governor's Budget ((House 2)) (Difference); FY2011 Local Aid Assessments (FY'2010 Cherry Sheet Estimate) (FY2011 Governor's Budget ((House 2)) ( Difference); Projected Revenues and Expenses FY'11 (Selectmen Supported 2.25.10 – Draft – 3/23/2010; Snow & Ice Account update.

-Overview of FY'11 Budget Issues to Resolve for Annual Town Meeting-

Mr. Kilty noted that there are several things on the list that are usually cleared up by this time in the budget process such as Capital Improvement Planning Committee issues.

Mr. Dunham mentioned that State Aid is a hard thing to guess.

Ms. Yaffe suggested that we should not hope for anything more than what we are currently planning on in State Aid.

Mr. Kilty suggested that the Committee consider the numbers as they are and if the numbers from the State come in differently we can make the adjustments at a Special Town Meeting in the fall.

Ms. Yaffe suggested, referencing Item #3 on the list of issues to resolve for The ATM – should the Health Insurance appropriation be reduced by another \$150,000 based on current projections and Item #7 a & b regarding a debt exclusion for two items (Should \$100,000 be appropriated for a more comprehensive examination and analysis of the Wing School etc. and \$50,000 for long-term planning for the Oak Ridge and Forestdale wastewater treatment plants) which will not be requested in May for the building maintenance items recommended by the Capital Improvement Planning Committee, noted that item 7 a & b could be funded with the \$150,000 from Item #3.

Mr. Pare' agreed with Ms. Yaffe's suggestion.

Mr. Kilty asked what happened to the public safety study.

Mr. Pare' noted that the public safety study could still happen, just over a longer term.

Mr. Kilty doesn't know if it makes sense to spend \$150,000 on the Wing School study. Doesn't think it is a practical thing to do.

Mr. Pare' mentioned that that is exactly the issue the study would address. .

Mr. Vibberts noted that long term plans need to address whether the Wing School has a future as a school. Not in favor of a forensic study on the Wing School.

Mr. Diederling suggested putting the \$150,000 projected savings from the Health Insurance appropriation (Item #3) into the Stabilization account.

General discussion.

**ITEM #4**

**SCHOOL DEPARTMENT FTY'11 BUDGET PRESENTATION**

Superintendent of Schools Mary Ellen Johnson offered an overview and gave a slide presentation of the School Department budget noting that they need a 6% increase every year just to do the same things each year.

Some contracts are still being negotiated or won't be up until next year.

The **Special Education** budget was discussed. Some extra vans were purchased which is a cost savings compared to using outside vans to transport students. The Schools are trying to not only survive but thrive in this economic situation. Resources are being put into the class room. Teachers are being hired instead of secretaries. That is how we keep our class sizes down. There are a number of things the School Department takes care of in house. There have been a number of reductions made in personal development and supplies budgets and teacher's support personnel. There is a need for a 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at the Forestdale School. The virtual high school is being offered. Brief overview of MCAS, the Spinnaker Program and technology initiative.

Brief discussion of the technology initiative.

Business Manager Michelle Austin noted that utilities are being budgeted much higher than in the past because gas and electricity will be going up.

Mr. Sylvia mentioned that he has questions on the utility numbers. It seems to be a budget that is over budgeted. Where does the money go? Mr. Sylvia asked about a history and a running estimate of previous years. Ms. Johnson noted that instead of contracting out certain services the School Department take care of more things in house. Over all there are reductions. Brief discussion on School Department retirees, general staff reductions and some employees are moved into other positions within the system. Mr. Diederling asked the Schools to provide the Finance Committee a budget vs. actual for '05-'09. Has the energy budget been used as a reserve fund to take from later as needed? Ms. Bridge noted that the Spinnaker program is very creative. Ms. Johnson offered that they are now meeting the needs for 13 children; there were only 7 children in the program last year.

**ITEM # 5**  
**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT CONT.**

Warrant Articles May 3, 2010 (GHD Draft 3/23/2010) – Overview of the Financial articles. It was noted that, with regard to Article #9 – FY'11 Golf Department Operating Budget, Golf Director John Johnson will be at next week's meeting.

April 5 is the next Capital Improvement Planning Committee regular meeting.

Articles #19 – 22 are Community Preservation Act articles which have all been approved by the CPA.

It was noted that the Finance Committee must vote the budget with the next two weeks.

Mr. Vibberts thanked the School Committee for coming in tonight and noted, when we get the specifics we asked for we can continue our discussion.

Mr. Pare' noted that this year's budget presentation by the School Department was much clearer than past budgets but we have no authority over how they spend their money.

Mr. Vibberts noted...but infinite curiosity.

Mr. Hickey mentioned that he has a concern about their utility budget. It seems to be far more money appropriated than they need.

Mr. Hickey noted that the Community School was not discussed tonight. How is it doing now in comparison to years in the past?

With regard to the Community School audit, Mr. Kilty mentioned that he would like some information on it.

It was noted that the School Department audit is paid from out Accounting Department. The Community School funds its own.

Mr. Diederling mentioned that the School Department budget presentation was much clearer than in the past but the slide show presentation is not clearer.

**ITEM #6**  
**ADJOURNMENT**

**9:33 p.m.**

**\*MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE BY MR. KILTY. SECONDED BY MR. VIBBERTS. VOTE – UNANIMOUS.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane M. Hanelt  
Secretary

Approved:\_\_\_\_\_