

**TOWN OF GROTON FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 9-22-09**

Present: J. Prager (Chair), J. Cochran, M. Flynn, T. Sangiolo, P. DiFranco, V. Jenkins (Town Accountant)

Absent: R. Hughson, J. Crowley

Guests: M. Collette (Town Planner); Planning Board Members R. Capes, G. Barringer, C. Perkins; M. Haddad (Town Manager); A. Elliot (Board of Selectmen)

The meeting was convened at 7:04 PM by the Chair. The purpose of the meeting is to review and take positions on the warrant articles for the Fall Annual Town Meeting. Because there were guests waiting to discuss Article 23, the FinCom advanced that article for consideration. The article requests \$100,000 to fund an update of the Town’s Master Plan and the FinCom has been concerned that the financial justification is incomplete. Ms. Collette provided copies of the 2002 (current) edition of the Master Plan and clarified that, although 10 year reviews are not mandated by law, the Commonwealth Capital Program, which reviews applications for State grant awards, defines a “current” plan as one that is less than 10 years old. There was considerable debate about the consequences of delaying the update, the ability of in-house professionals to contribute to the work to reduce cost, and the need to update all sections of the plan. The FinCom will review the information presented; in addition they requested copies of the Commonwealth Capital Program document and rating scale. Electronic copies of the successful bid proposal have already reached FinCom members. Representatives from the Planning Board and Ms. Collette will return next week for further discussion.

Mr. Haddad reviewed the latest changes to the warrant and budget, and informed the Committee that early information about property values indicates a decrease in valuations, which has the effect of raising the tax rate. Tax rates may increase about 30 cents but this is currently described as a worse case scenario.

The Committee discussed and took positions on the warrant articles. The FinCom’s position on some of the articles has been deferred until more information can be obtained. The results are summarized below; comments are listed after the table. Note that article numbers have been omitted in favor descriptions as the order of the articles may change.

Article Description	Moved	Seconded	JC	PD	MF	JP	TS
Prior Year Bills	MF	PD	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
FY 2010 Budget, Amended	JC	MF	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wage Schedule	TS	MF	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Deposit to Cap Stab	JC	PD	At Town Meeting				
Deposit to General Stab	JC	PD	At Town Meeting				
Country Club Budget	JC	PD	At Town Meeting				
Country Club Appropriation	MF	TS	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Offset Tax Rate	JC	TS	At Town Meeting				
Lost Lake Income Study-Rescind	JC	TS	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lost Lake Sewer-Add W. Groton	TS	JC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Article Description	Moved	Seconded	JC	PD	MF	JP	TS
Center Sewer Reimb Legislation	JC	MF	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Sewer Debt Service Increase	TS	MF	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Personnel By-Law Changes	JC	TS	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
First Responder Injury Coverage	MF	PD	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Charter Amendments (7 articles)	PD	MF	No Position				
Paramedic Training	TS	MF	Y	At TM	Y	Y	At TM
Accept Brown Lane	PD	MF	No Position				
Conservation Purch: Boston Rd	PD	MF	At Town Meeting				
Conservation Purch: Island Pond	PD	MF	At Town Meeting				
Conservation Purch: Lowell Rd	JC	PD	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Master Plan	JC	MF	At Town Meeting				
Extend Sewer: Anthony Dr	JC	MF	N	N	N	At TM	N

Comments from the FinCom during discussion:

- Regarding deposit to the Capital Stabilization Fund. The FinCom would like to review the Capital Plan prior to taking a position.
- Regarding the Country Club appropriation: One member has concerns that funding the Manager's salary during decreased operations is the same as "hiring a consultant" and that this, in combination with the expenditure for the Planning Board's Master Plan, is too much money to spend on consultants. It is further noted that there is no language that indicates that this would be a single "subsidy"; rather, it seems clear that future investments in the Club will be needed.
- Regarding Paramedic Training. There is no guarantee that the individuals who receive the training will stay with the Town. The Committee has financial information but two of the members have not had time to review the numbers, and have withheld their position until town meeting.
- Regarding the Conservation land purchases: Boston Road property and Island Pond Road property. It has been reported that the purchase price for the Boston Road property has decreased. The Committee would like more information about this. The Committee has no information about Island Pond. Ms. Jenkins will ask the representatives from the Conservation Commission to come to the next meeting for further discussion.

The minutes of the meetings held on September 15th and September 21st, were reviewed. Mr. Sangiolo moved, and Mr. DiFranco seconded acceptance of the minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 29, 2009 in the first floor conference room at Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Jenkins, Recording Secretary