

TOWN OF GROTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 3/29/11

Present: J. Prager (Chair), M. Flynn, G.Green, P DiFranco, R. Hargraves. V. Jenkins (Town Accountant, recording), P. Dufresne

Absent: S. Webber, J. Crowley

Guests: Members of the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, DPW Director, Mr. Platt from the Prescott School Reuse Committee

Documents Available: Draft Budget from FY 2012, latest update (3/29/2011)
ATM Warrant FY 2012, latest update (3/29/2011)
Reserve Fund Transfer: Municipal Buildings

Mr. Prager called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Budget Review: Parks Department: Mr. Haddad noted that he and Mr. Black met earlier today regarding the issues with the Parks Department and its failure to produce three quotes for costs greater than \$5000. Mr. Haddad has required the Parks Department to comply with all procurement requirements and will review the quotes himself. The Town Accountant will receive copies of quotes, and will alert the Town Manager to invoices received that may indicate costs that should have procurement documentation. Town Manager's Salary: Mr. Schulman of the Board of Selectmen explained that the increase in the Salary Line item included a "placeholder" for a performance-based increase for Mr. Haddad. The Selectmen have not decided how much this increase will be, but it will not exceed the amount of the "placeholder". Capital Budget-Baler: Mr. Delaney, the DPW Director, explained the proposed regional recycling center to be located in Groton, and confirmed that without the baler it would be difficult to process all the material estimated to be delivered to Groton. The FinCom still has questions about the self-sufficiency of the operation, including labor needs, covering capital costs such as the baler, and viability of current volume estimates. Mr. Delaney will provide more information. Capital Budget-Rough Mower: Mr. Haddad explained that he had found a mower that can be obtained through a five year lease, at a cost of about \$11,000 per year. Wage and Salary Classification Scale: The Scale represents the ranges within which non-union employees can be paid; as well as the stipends for non-full time appointed or temporary positions. There is no increase over last year for Cost of Living. The FinCom then took final positions on the warrant that had been pending the above information:

Article 4 (Wage and Classification Scale): Mr. DiFranco moved, and Mr. Hargraves seconded support for article 4. The motion carried unanimously.

Article 5: (Budget): Mr.Hargraves moved, and Mr. Flynn seconded support for the budget. The motion carried unanimously.

Capital Budget: Rough Mower: Mr. Hargraves moved, and Mr. DiFranco seconded funding the equipment using a five year lease with an annual cost of about \$11,000. The motion carried by majority vote, with 4 in favor and 1 against.

Capital Budget: Baler: The FinCom will continue to defer consideration until Town Meeting.

The FinCom heard from Mr. Platt of the Prescott School Re-Use Committee regarding the need for funding to complete their recommendation for the use of the building. He noted that the Committee felt strongly that some financial data would be important to their final recommendation. Some members of the FinCom felt that the Committee should be able to do summary financial data on their own, and that, further, to pay for a financial analysis would be contributing to the costs a developer should be carrying. Mr. Hargraves felt that a professional opinion would be valuable, especially in the case of the building staying within Town use, rather than sold to a developer. Mr. Hargraves moved that the FinCom should reconsider its prior vote of no support; this was seconded by Mr. Flynn. The motion to reconsider carried by a vote of 4 in favor and 1 opposed. The FinCom will defer this reconsideration until just before Town Meeting.

The FinCom reviewed remaining questions on Article 17: Transfer of town owned land to the care of the Conservation Committee. Ms. Jenkins reported that she had researched the question of the Conservation Fund covering the costs related to the taking of the land into foreclosure; and the related question of why the parcels had not been auctioned to the public by the Treasurer. A local by-law requires that any town-owned land be offered first to the Conservation Commission. The by-law does not indicate that the ConsComm should cover any charges for conveyance. The FinCom suggested that the Selectmen review the by-law. Mr. Hargraves moved, and Mr. Flynn seconded, support for the transfer of land. The motion passed with a vote of 3 in favor and 2 opposed.

Mr. Hargraves moved and Mr. Flynn seconded reconsideration of Article 15A: Community Preservation application for the Housing Trust. The FinCom had unanimously supported, in a prior vote, the funding of a housing development at 134 Main Street. He felt that the financial analysis was not complete, and that there was not enough information regarding the return on the investment. Mr. Haddad noted that the development team had refined the information, and that a return of approximately 33% of any profit could be expected by the Housing Trust. It is unclear when this percentage would be applied. The FinCom voted unanimously to reconsider their prior vote once more information is available. The Committee has deferred the vote until just before Town Meeting.

Mr. Delaney presented a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$25,000 to repair the first floor and crawl space at Legion Hall. Written quotes will be sought and were available for the FinCom to review at this meeting. The quotes range from a low of about \$16,000 from the Town's DPW itself, to about \$23,000. It is not practical for the Highway Department to perform the work, due to manpower

constraints. Mr. Hargraves moved and Mr. Flynn seconded support for the transfer, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Hargraves moved, and Mr. DiFranco seconded approval of the minutes of March 21, 2011. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Next Meeting: April 25 2011 at 6:00 PM at the Middle School (just before Town Meeting)

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Jenkins, Town Accountant, Recording