

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MINUTES TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2010  
JOINT MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE  
APPROVED**

**Present:** Peter Cunningham, Chairman; George Dillon, Jr., Vice Chairman; Anna Eliot, Clerk; Joshua A. Degen

**Absent:** Stuart M. Schulman

**Finance Committee:** Jay Prager, Chair; J. Cochran; J. Crowley, Mike Flynn; Rick Hughson; Valerie Jenkins, Town Accountant

**Also Present:** Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Patrice Garvin, Executive Assistant. Susan Horowitz, Board of Health

*Mr. Cunningham called the meeting of the Board to Order at 7:00 p.m.*

Mr. Haddad asked the Boards to take a few minutes to hear Dr. Susan Horowitz, is Chair of the Board of Health, concerns over recent comments regarding minutes for the Board of Health. Dr. Horowitz noted that the Board of Health was decimated last year by the decision to layoff the full time assistant. Further, the Board of Health had just been relocated to smaller quarters within the Town Hall. Dr. Horowitz did not believe that one of her Board members should be required to take minutes and that funding should remain for administrative help in this area. Mr. Prager stated that it was not FinCom's decision to cut the Board of Health position, and added that FinCom members in the past took minutes. Mr. Cunningham strongly supported funding the hours indicated for the Board of Health.

Mr. Haddad updated the boards regarding the changes that he had made to the FY11 budget to date.

- An estimated increase in new growth of approximately \$47,000
- An estimated decrease in motor vehicle excise tax of \$50,000
- An estimated reduction in snow and ice deficit of \$93,000
- An increase in the NVRT School budget of approximately \$52,000
- Reallocation of Fire stipend to fire wages, saving approximately \$18,000
- A four percent reduction to local aid.
- Reduction in Nashoba Board of Health County Assessment of about \$4000
- Reductions in miscellaneous appropriations (extra hours, travel, health, weeds & lakes) that amount to about \$20,000
- Reduced abatement deficits of about \$10,000

Mr. Haddad reminded the boards that currently the budget is 174k under the levy limit. The estimated tax rate has been reduced to \$15.93 per thousand currently as opposed to \$16.04 as of December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Haddad explained that the Personnel Board has recommended no Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for by-law employees based on their review of the Social Security Administration's annual cost adjustment (0%). Mr. Haddad provided information detailing the effect of this 2% increase for 20 by-law employees, which totals about \$26,000. Mr. Haddad noted that it was unfair to penalize a segment of employees who can't be in a union.

Mr. Dillon asked for clarification regarding the health insurance 4.5% increase given that premiums are increasing nearly 11%. Ms. Jenkins explained how the health insurance was calculated and expressed her concern with having no vacancies to budgeted fall back on in FY11. Mr. Dillon asked if the Town Manager and the Finance Committee were considering adding funding for open slots to the FY11 budget. The Town Manager had no opposition to this, but the Finance Committee preferred to rely on the Reserve Fund.

Discussion ensued regarding value of showing tax payers that the Town understands the difficult economic times. Mr. Degen felt that by giving the 2% COLA it was a bonus to employees. Mr. Haddad stated that all four unions receiving a 2% COLA and he applied the same 2% to by-law employees. There was continued debate about negotiation strategy for future union contracts based on the by-law employees, most of whom are managers, foregoing raises, as opposed to increasing health insurance cost share. Ms. Eliot called for a vote on the COLA for by-law employees. Mr. Dillon suggested tabling the vote until the next regular scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Eliot stated that asking department heads to increase contributions to health insurance and to not receive a COLA was hitting them twice.

*Mr. Degen moved to set the Cost of Living Adjustment for FY11 for by-law employees at 0%. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Motion defeated 2-against (Ms. Eliot, Mr. Cunningham), 1-yes (Mr. Degen), 1 abstention (Mr. Dillon)*

The Finance Committee voted to unanimously support the Personnel Board's recommendation of a 0% COLA for by-law employees.

Mr. Haddad discussed the potential of an override for the Schools. The town has received an override request for \$1.814 million dollars. Mr. Haddad says this translates to \$1.17 on the tax rate and increase of \$468 in taxes for a property valued at \$400,000. Mr. Haddad noted that there is a deadline of March 31, 2010 to confirm the override amount with the School Committee.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Mr. Dillon moved to adjourn at 9:00pm. Ms. Eliot seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.*

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Anna Eliot, Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_ respectfully submitted,  
Patrice Garvin  
Executive Assistant to the Town Manager

Date Approved: 4-5-2010