

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES- DRAFT

Meeting Date: 4 June, 2007

CALL TO ORDER

The Meeting was called to order at 6:50 P.M. in the Band Room, Amherst Regional Middle School.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Alice Carlozzi (chair), Paul Bobrowski, Kay Moran, Brian Morton, Douglas Slaughter, Andrew Steinberg

OTHERS PRESENT

John Musante (Finance Director/Treasurer), Jere Hochman (Superintendent of Schools), Elaine Brighty (School Committee), Larry Kelley, Vincent O'Connor.

COMMITTEE AGENDA

1. Regional Schools assessment/overrides/use of reserves
2. June 6, 2007, Special Town Meeting: Recommendation for Article 2, Golf Course Privatization (Kelley)
3. Minutes of May 16, 23, and 31, 2007, meetings if time permits
4. Next meeting date

COMMITTEE ACTION

No action was taken to change the recommendation on the regional schools budget voted in the meeting of May 23rd 2007.

Moran moved to recommend Article 2 of the June 6th Special Town Meeting. The motion was seconded by Steinberg and passed 6-0 with one person absent.

The next meeting date was set for June 6th 2007 at 7pm in the Amherst Middle School Band Room.

DISCUSSION

Carlozzi asked the committee if it wanted to change its previous position regarding the Regional Schools Assessment and Budget. Musante stated that the Regional School Committee will recommend a 3% Budget and that the Pelham Town Meeting had voted a 3% Budget and Assessment. Musante also stated that although the Pelham Town Meeting has a Special Town Meeting scheduled for 6/13/2007 to finalize its budget, it would be unlikely that they would reconsider their previous vote on the Regional Schools Assessment and Budget. Carlozzi suggested that staying with our current recommendation would inform Pelham and the Regional School Committee about our current financial difficulties. Bobrowski stated that staying with the 2% assessment gives both the Regional School Committee and Pelham an opportunity to change their positions if they wanted. Morton asked that if Amherst Town Meeting votes for a 2% assessment but is compelled by the other towns in the Region to pay at the 3% assessment level

would Amherst Town Meeting have to reconsider its vote in order to match the 3% assessment level. The consensus answer to the question was no.

Bobrowski asked what the overall financial situation would be like next year. Musante responded that the overall budget, keeping the reduced service levels of FY08, would be about \$1.5 million short in revenues. Morton stated that the situation will be worse next year and that Finance Committee originally wanted 1% but should at least respect the 2% assessment in the spirit of cooperation amongst the Regional Schools communities. Steinberg asked if amending the motion to make the additional assessment above 1% contingent on an override was an option we wanted to consider. Bobrowski stated that a mention of a contingent override could be made as a possible solution but that we should not make the amendment. Consensus of the committee to keep its recommendation of May 23rd remained.

Kelley presented his article for the June 6th Special Town Meeting. Kelley stated that it is an advisory article and that the terms suggested would allow for more bidders to submit proposals. Also, he felt that the view of the finances of the Golf Course since the refusal of the one bidder to the Request for Proposal to operate the golf course would undergo a paradigm shift since any expenditure beyond revenues would be compared to the guaranteed income the bidder was offering. Steinberg expressed concerns about player costs rising and the efforts to attract local players if the control of the course was out of Town control. Bobrowski stated that the Town could resume control of the course after the 3 years of the contract. Moran asked about the risks assumed by the Town under such an arrangement, particularly if the management company were to go out of business. Steinberg stated that the Town would resume control if the management company went out of business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 P.M. Approved 7/11/2007

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Slaughter
Acting Clerk