

Finance Committee ~ Minutes of Meetings
Tuesday, July 16, 2002
Fairbank Senior Center
7:30pm

Present: Michael Grosberg Co-Chair, Tracy Billig Co-Chair, John Nikula, Don Hutchinson, Bob Jacobson, Martha Ragonas, Larry Rowe, Sheila Stewart. Also present: Kerry Speidel, Finance Director, & Robin Porcella, Recording Secretary

Opening remarks from Co-Chairs

Co-Chairs Tracy Billig and Michael Grosberg opened the meeting at 7:35pm. Michael Grosberg informed the committee that he and Tracy Billig have met with the Board of Selectmen Chairman Larry O'Brien, John Drobinski, and Pauline Paste, LSRHS. The meeting was held to introduce themselves, and talk about the budget process.

Bob Jacobson informed the committee that he and Sheila Stewart would be meeting with John Ritchie tomorrow. They are expecting to just hear what John Ritchie has to say with respect to the budget process.

Item 1: Approve Minutes from June 25, 2002 meeting

Michael Grosberg asked the committee to take a moment to read over the minutes of the June 25th meeting and mention any concerns that they might have.

VOTED: Move to approve the minutes from the June 25, 2002 meeting. Motion made by John Nikula and seconded by Bob Jacobson. On vote, motion carries 9 in favor and 0 opposed.

Item 2: Update on LSHS Construction Project

Kerry Speidel, Finance Director, informed the committee that Jack Ryan was not available to attend the meeting.

Don Hutchinson stated he thought Jim Carlton should be invited to attend the meeting when Jack Ryan is available. Co-Chair Michael Grosberg said he would call Jim and invited him to the meeting.

John Nikula asked if the town will be getting "Green Money" that was mentioned in the Boston Globe today. Don Hutchinson informed the committee he knows a little bit about this. He told the committee that money had to be committed in order to receive money, and that there are 7 to 8 projects that can be completed in order to receive the money. Don also informed the committee that the town has applied in the past for this money, and that the money is used to help defray the cost of the project. He stated the he believed the amount of the money awarded was about one third of the cost of the project.

Item 3: Review of Letter to Depart Heads – re: Budget Process Guidance

- **Editing of letter – Suggestion for Changes**

Mike Grosberg informed the committee that he and Tracy Billig worked on the rough draft of this letter. They then showed it to the Finance Committee, who made a few changes to it.

Martha Ragonas asked if on Milestone #5 if it is possible to change the date to December 1. Tracy Billig informed Martha that in past years, the date was Dec 31. Larry Rowe stated he would like to see the date remain December 15, and if there are issues the change it to December 1 next Fiscal Year.

Michael Grosberg asked if the committee thought Milestone #3 should be kept in the letter or sent out separately. Martha Ragonas thought it would be a good idea if Milestones #2 & #3 could be combined into one since they have the same deadline date.

Michael Grosberg and Tracy Billig informed the committee that they would revise the letter and email to everyone, and then present it to the Selectmen, the Town Manager, and both school superintendents.

- **Distribution of Final Liaison Listing**

John Nikula asked for clarification on discussions between Department Heads & Liaisons. His concern is that the past Town Manager, Steve LeDoux, did not want liaisons discussing issues with Department Heads without going through the Town Manager first. Kerry Speidel informed the committee that this is not the case with current Town Manager Valente.

- **Communication to Department Heads in advance of mailing**

All liaisons were asked to inform their respective Department Heads about the mailing of the letter.

- **Review of DRAFT Financial Forecast**

Kerry Speidel informed the committee that this is a preliminary forecast, and that the same format was used as last year. She informed the committee that they should try to find a format to use, but they are allowed to use the same that she & Town Manager Valente use. She also informed the committee that this worked great for the last Town forecast, but not as well for the schools, because in her opinion, it was viewed a town cost center model, rather than a town-wide model.

Bob Jacobson stated that he would like to see a copy of the forecast be sent with the letter to the Department Heads. Larry Rowe agreed with Bob Jacobson that the forecast should be sent to the various departments.

Don Hutchinson asked how does the forecast correlate with Milestone #4. Kerry Speidel informed them that they would not, since the forecast was completed before the letter. She stated that she would prepare a model to go along with the committee's budget instruction letter.

Item 4: Review Second Draft of Finance Committee Goals for FY03

Michael Grosberg read over the list of goals discussed at the last meeting: listen to voters, be more independent, communication, and listen & approve budget. He stated that he would email a copy of the goals to everyone, to be discussed at a future meeting.

Item 5: Update from liaisons on Town Departments

Michael Grosberg informed the committee that this would be a new agenda for all future meetings.

Item 6: Other Business and Follow-Up Items

- **Police recap on questions from prior meeting**
Kerry Speidel informed the committee that the Police Department provided the documentation in the packet in response to the committee's request. She informed the committee that this was all that was sent to her upon her request for more information regarding the Line-Item Transfer No.02-40 that was presented to the committee at the June 25, 2002 meeting. Kerry Speidel informed the committee if they had any questions on the spreadsheet, that the liaison to the Police Department should contact Chief Lembo.
- **Percentage of increases of Union Contracts vs. CPI**
Kerry Speidel informed the committee that this was prepared at the request of Don Hutchinson. Kerry Speidel stated that she used the Northeast Urban CPI-U, rather than the Boston Metro CPI-U as a comparison.
- **Other pertinent Town Business**
No other Town business was discussed
- **Necessary agenda items for next meeting**
Michael Grosberg, Co-Chair asked the committee to think of anything that they would like added to the agenda for the next meeting. If the members think of anything they should inform either Co-chair or Kerry Speidel.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 9:25pm.