

**Needham Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting of November 8, 2010**

The meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by the Chair, Rick Zimbone, at approximately 6:30 pm in the Conference Room at the Newman School.

Present from the Finance Committee:

Richard Zimbone, Chair; Matthew Borrelli, Vice Chair

Members: John Connelly, Richard Creem, Richard Lunetta, Richard Reilly, Steven Rosenstock, Lisa Zappala

Also Present:

David Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Finance

Citizen Requests

No citizens requested to speak.

Discuss and Vote as appropriate issues relating to Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Mr. Zimbone stated that there were several amendments to articles planned to be brought before Town Meeting. There would be an amendment to add an emergency preamble to Article 9. Article 14 was being amended to change the funding source. The MWRA assessment came in slightly higher than expected, so the original article sought to cover the additional funding needs from the Sewer Fund retained earnings. However, the state has not certified the retained earnings, so the amendment would appropriate the funds from Sewer Fund receipts instead. There is no revenue impact to the change. Mr. Davison noted that if this amendment does not pass, the state Department of Revenue will require the Town to call another Special Town Meeting to make this change.

Mr. Zimbone stated that there are also two proposed amendments to Article 11, in addition to one from the Board of Selectmen that identifies the location of the proposed senior center at the Heights MBTA Commuter lot.

Finance Committee Updates

Mr. Rosenstock asked about the November 6 departmental budget request meetings. There was discussion of the DPW and DPF hearings, and how the Town Manager is examining the budgets in great detail and requiring departments to base budgets on past actual spending.

Suspend

MOVED: By Mr. Rosenstock that the meeting of the Finance Committee be suspended, to be reconvened as necessary during the course of Town

Meeting. Mr. Borrelli seconded the motion. The meeting of the Finance Committee was suspended by unanimous vote 8-0 at approximately 6:46 pm.

Reconvene

MOVED: By Ms. Zappala that the Finance Committee reconvene for purposes of discussing proposed amendments to Town Meeting warrant articles. Mr. Connelly seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0 at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Mr. Zimbone stated that there was a proposed amendment to Article 11 by John Fountain that would change the amendment proposed by the Board of Selectmen by striking language identifying the site from the Needham Heights/MBTA Commuter lot to identify the site for the construction of a senior center to Greene's Field abutting the Stephen Palmer property. Mr. Rosenstock stated that he does not support the amendment because there is still no financing plan, though the site does have future potential since it provides sufficient area for expansion.

MOVED: By Mr. Creem, for purposes of discussion, that the Finance Committee adopt the motion to amend the proposed amendment to Article 11 to change the site from MBTA Heights lot to Greene's Field, as proposed by Mr. Fountain. Ms. Zappala seconded the motion. The motion was disapproved by a vote of 1-7, with Ms. Zappala in favor of the amendment.

Mr. Zimbone stated that the second proposed amendment to Article 11 by Sam Bass Warner would insert the language "at the Emery Grover Building or at the MBTA Heights lot" and return the issue to the Board of Selectmen to hold a summit and make a choice between the two sites. Mr. Creem stated he does not support the way the amendment is crafted, though he does support the Emery Grover site for the senior center.

MOVED: By Mr. Creem, for purposes of discussion, that the Finance Committee adopt the Mr. Bass Warner's motion to amend Article 11. Ms. Zappala seconded the motion for the purpose of discussion. The motion was disapproved by a vote of 0-8.

Suspend

MOVED: By Mr. Creem that the meeting of the Finance Committee be suspended, to be reconvened at 7:00 pm on November 10 at the Newman School. Mr. Borrelli seconded the motion. The meeting of the Finance Committee was suspended by unanimous vote 8-0 at approximately 11:15 pm.

Reconvene

MOVED: By Mr. Rosenstock that the Finance Committee reconvene for purposes of discussing issues relating to Town Meeting warrant articles. Mr. Borrelli seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 7-0 at approximately 7:07 pm on November 10, 2010. Mr. Connelly returned at 7:10 pm.

Mr. Zimbone stated that there were concerns with the proposed change to increase the Snow and Ice Removal budget by \$200,000 in Article 13. Under state law, towns can deficit spend for snow and ice removal as long as that year's budget is not lower than the snow and ice budget of the previous year. Thus, if the snow and ice budget is increased, the Town will need to keep the budget at that level going forward.

Mr. Zimbone also discussed an issue regarding Article 9. Town Meeting voted earlier in the proceedings to approve \$375,000 for the proposed project at Pollard School based on the information presented. However, the School Department determined that an additional \$75,000 plus \$42,000 is actually needed to complete the work that Town Meeting authorized. Instead of reopening Article 9, that money could be allocated from another place by changing the proposed amendments to the operating budget through Article 13 which has not yet been considered. Thus he proposed that the snow and ice budget not be changed, and that \$117,000 be added to the School Department budget. The remaining \$83,000 would be added to the Reserve Fund. He suggested that the Finance Committee consider increasing the snow and ice removal budget in the FY 2012 budget. Mr. Rosenstock asked how much of the \$117,000 would be used for improved access to Pollard. Mr. Zimbone stated that all of it would be for work on the modulars. Mr. Zimbone said it would be also possible to move all of the \$200,000 to the reserves and move it later.

MOVED: By Mr. Rosenstock that the Finance Committee approve of the proposed amendment to Article 13 removing the increase in the Snow and Ice Removal budget, and adding \$117,000 to the School Department budget and increasing the Reserve Fund by \$83,000. Mr. Creem seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 8-0.

Adjourn

MOVED: By Mr. Reilly to adjourn the meeting of the Finance Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lunetta. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote: 8-0 at approximately 11:05pm on November 10, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Mizgerd,
Executive Secretary

Approved December 8, 2010