

**Needham Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting of May 9, 2012**

The meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by the Chair, Richard Reilly, at approximately 6:35 pm in the Great Plain Room, at the Town Hall.

Present from the Finance Committee:

Richard Reilly, Chair; Rick Zimbone, Vice Chair

Members: Richard Creem, Richard Lunetta, Gary McNeill, Steve Rosenstock, Lisa Zappala

Also Present:

David Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Finance

Articles Discussed

Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Article 22: Pesticide Free Zone on Land Owned or Managed by Town of Needham

Special Town Meeting:

Article 1: Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement: Police Union

Article 2: Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement: Police Superior Officers

Citizen Requests

No citizens requested to speak.

Annual Town Meeting Article 22: Pesticide Free Zone on Land Owned or Managed by Town of Needham

Mr. Reilly stated that Mr. Zimbone had researched possible financial implications of the article. Mr. Zimbone stated that he found a report on the internet by Charles Osborne, who has been quoted by the proponents of the article. There was a cost comparison of conventional versus organic field maintenance on high school fields over five years. The study showed that at first, the conventional method is cheaper, but the cost flips after year 2. In years 3, 4, and 5, the natural organic is less expensive. Mr. Zimbone stated that as he looked at the data, he found that the study included the costs of irrigation, which are generally lower for organic fields. He stated if the water costs were backed out, the costs of conventional field maintenance are 10% cheaper. Mr. Zimbone noted that the Town used Integrated Pest Management (IPM), not the full conventional methods. He noted that many universities nationwide have done research on IPM programs which are designed for effective field maintenance with minimum health risks. Mr. Zimbone stated that Needham uses almost all organics and uses pesticides only as a last resort. He stated that he recommends against the adoption of the article as amended.

Mr. Reilly stated that the article would apply only to 25 acres of Town fields out of 88 acres, as the others are all organic. He stated that there is a difference of only \$0.04 per acre, exclusive of

water costs, but it translates to \$44,000 per year, which is material. Mr. Zimbone stated that the Town's current maintenance plans work toward minimal water use.

Mr. Zimbone stated that he also expects a motion to refer this issue to the Board of Selectmen for further study. Mr. Reilly stated that concerns have been expressed that the amended article does not require any citizens on the committee it creates. Mr. Rosenstock pointed out that the article creates a committee with a goal of implementing an organic land management plan, not just to evaluate the potential of such a program. Mr. Davison noted that the Town already does what the article suggests that it should do. Mr. Lunetta asked if the committee created by the article would need to come to the Finance Committee for funds once it made a plan. Mr. Reilly stated that they would not; the changes could be implemented within current budgets. Mr. Rosenstock stated that the new committee would not be concerned with finances at all.

Mr. Creem stated that the Finance Committee should not acquiesce to any motion to defer unless it cleanly refers the issue to the Board of Selectmen. If there are strings attached, he thinks the Committee should not accept that.

MOVED: By Mr. Creem that Finance Committee recommend against the adoption of Article 22, Pesticide Free Zone on Land Owned or Managed by Town of Needham, as proposed to be amended. Mr. Rosenstock seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

MOVED: By Mr. Creem that in the event there is an unqualified motion to refer back to the Board of Selectmen, that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of that motion. Ms. Zappala seconded the motion.

Mr. Rosenstock stated that he was not sure that the Committee should take a position on a motion to refer. He questioned whether there are any financial implications. No vote was taken on Mr. Creem's motion. Mr. Rosenstock suggested an amended motion.

MOVED: By Mr. Rosenstock that if there is a motion other than an unqualified motion to refer the issue to the Selectmen, then the Finance Committee should recommend against such motion. Mr. Creem seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 1: Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement- Police Union; and Article 2: Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement- Police Superior Officers

Mr. Reilly stated that the unions had voted to support both agreements. Mr. Lunetta stated that the Personnel Board had not yet voted.

MOVED: By Mr. Zimbone that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of both Special Town Meeting Articles: Article 1: Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement: Police Union and Article 2: Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement: Police Superior Officers, subject to the approval of both agreements by the

Personnel Board. Mr. Lunetta seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

Recess

MOVED: By Ms. Zappala that the Finance Committee recess the meeting and to reconvene as necessary during the course of Town Meeting. Mr. Rosenstock seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0. The meeting was recessed at 6:54 pm.

Adjourn

MOVED: By Mr. Rosenstock that the meeting be adjourned, there being no further business. Mr. Zimbone seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0, at approximately 11:05 p.m.

Documents: Annual Town Meeting Warrant, May 7, 2012, and proposed amendments; May 14, 2012 Special Town Meeting Warrant.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Mizgerd
Executive Secretary/Staff Analyst

Approved May 30, 2012