

**Needham Finance Committee  
Minutes of Meeting of June 20, 2012**

The meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by the Chair, Richard Reilly, at approximately 7:00 pm in the Selectmen's Chambers at the Town Hall.

Present from the Finance Committee:

Richard Reilly, Chair; Rick Zimbone, Vice Chair

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

Also Present:

David Tobin, Town Counsel

David Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Finance

Dan Gutekanst, Superintendent of Schools

Marianne Cooley, School Committee Liaison

Michael Greis, School Committee Liaison

**Citizen Requests**

No citizens requested to speak.

**Minutes of Prior Meetings**

MOVED: By Mr. Zimbone that the Minutes of May 30, 2012, be approved as circulated. Mr. Creem seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0 (Mr. McNeill had not yet arrived.)

**Requests for Reserve Fund Transfers**

Legal Department

Mr. Reilly stated that the Legal Department is requesting an additional \$12,000. Mr. Tobin stated that when he made the prior request for additional funds, he did not realize the extent of the cable related expenses. He received a bill for \$6,300 after the last meeting. He expects another \$4,000 will be needed in June. He stated that there is further work needed in June with respect to the litigation regarding the discharged fire fighter. He stated that he expects a Motion for Summary Judgment, but is not sure of the timing. He stated that he could delay work on the case, though he does need to continue document searches. Mr. Zimbone expressed concern about the increasing legal budget over the past years, and asked if the costs could be mitigated. Mr. Tobin stated that he would need to think about that. Mr. Zimbone asked Mr. Tobin to follow up. Mr. Davison noted that in most cases the Town is a defendant, and the legal costs cannot be avoided. There was discussion about the possibility of arbitration in certain cases.

MOVED: By Ms. Zappala that the Finance Committee approve the request for a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$12,000 to increase budget line 13B from \$230,000 to \$265,000. Mr. Zimbone seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

### School Department

Dr. Gutekanst stated that this is an extraordinary request which would implement the next phase of the 1:1 tablet initiative. Moving forward will provide information for teaching and for developing the capital plan. Ms. Zappala stated that it was important to understand why a Reserve Fund Transfer is needed. She stated that the liaisons discussed the schools' current year budget. She stated that this year's budget will not be fully expended, but the FY13 budget is very tight, especially for Special Education costs. The FY12 remaining funds will be used to pre-purchase SPED tuitions, but the FY13 budget may still be short. They had originally hoped to use FY12 money to pay for the iPad pilot, but the Schools recently found out that the incoming kindergarten class will be bigger than expected, and also that the FY13 SPED expenses will strain the budget. Mr. Zimbone confirmed that the liaisons had a long discussion and determined that this request for funds has merit.

Mr. Reilly asked for an explanation why the request increased from \$45,000 to \$60,000. Dr. Gutekanst stated that they have expanded the program to provide iPads to certain High School staff and curriculum advisors that develop programs at Pollard. The additional money will provide 25-30 more iPads. Dr. Gutekanst stated that he spoke to the Town Manager about the request. Mr. Reilly asked if there is a formal structure to exchange information with other school districts using this technology. Dr. Gutekanst stated that they share information through a group called Mass. CUE (Computer Using Education) which keeps a database. He stated that there are also technology collaboratives, groups of superintendents, and curriculum and math professionals.

Mr. Lunetta asked if they considered forgoing some of the planned technology replacement for the additional \$15,000. Dr. Gutekanst stated that they discussed that option, and that it would be possible, but the computers being replaced are old and truly need replacement. To the extent possible, they will be redeployed. Mr. Lunetta praised the iPad approach, but stated that the Schools need to work toward a plan when they no longer replace equipment. Dr. Gutekanst stated that is the current plan. They do not replace desktop computers, but instead use less expensive laptop computers. Mr. Creem asked about experiences in peer communities and the expected useful life of the iPads. Dr. Gutekanst stated that they do keep in touch with other Towns using them, but others have only been using iPads for a year at most. Mr. Creem asked what the next step would be if the pilot is successful. Dr. Gutekanst stated that they are unsure where they are going, and that the pilot is needed to determine that. He stated that they are seeking information that is not specific to the technology, and that they need to be flexible. They need to see how technology can complement the rest of school life.

Mr. Davison confirmed that the Reserve Fund turn-back will be approximately \$86,000 if this transfer is made.

MOVED: By Mr. Zimbone that the Finance Committee approve the request for a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$60,000 into the designated accounts. Mr. McNeill seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0.

Mr. Zimbone asked Dr. Gutekanst where records regarding hazardous waste at the Hillside site could be found. Dr. Gutekanst stated that he believes that the Director of Facilities Operations and the Principal of Hillside would have those records, and that he would confirm.

### **Nominations, Vote for FY 2013 Chair, Vice Chair**

Mr. Zimbone stated that he and Ms. Zappala would like to nominate Mr. Reilly as Chairman for FY 2013. Mr. Reilly accepted the nomination.

MOVED: By Mr. Zimbone that the Finance Committee approve Mr. Reilly as Chairman for Fiscal 2013. Mr. Lunetta seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0-1. Mr. Reilly abstained.

Mr. Zimbone stated that he and Ms. Zappala spoke with Mr. Reilly as well. They nominated Mr. Lunetta as Vice Chair.

MOVED: By Mr. Zimbone that the Finance Committee approve Mr. Lunetta as Vice Chairman for Fiscal 2013. Mr. Creem seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0-1. Mr. Lunetta abstained.

### **Finance Committee Updates**

Mr. Zimbone stated that he submitted his name for the RTS Ad Hoc Super Committee, and was interviewed by Selectman Dan Matthews. He stated that the Board of Selectmen will make the appointment next week.

Mr. Reilly handed out and discussed a list of issues he expected would be the principal issues that the Committee would be dealing with in Fiscal Year 2013.

### **Adjourn**

MOVED: By Mr. Zimbone that the meeting be adjourned, there being no further business. Ms. Zappala seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0, at approximately 7:50 p.m.

Document: Finance Committee Issues

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Mizgerd  
Executive Secretary/Staff Analyst

*Approved September 5, 2012*