

Finance Committee Meeting
March 15, 2007
Dennis Town Hall, Large Hearing Room
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Attendees Finance Committee: James Plath, Peter McDowell, William Crowell, Robert Prall, Ted Dumas, Michael Brennan, Rachel Baroni.

Attendees Board of Selectmen: Jane Otis, Paul McCormick, Sheryl McMahon, Heidi Schadt, Town Administrator Robert Canevazzi and Assistant Town Administrator Sandra Fife.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Municipal Buildings Reserve Fund Transfer

Steve Estey explained that he is requesting \$5400 for renovations to the kitchen and bar at the Dennis Pines Club House Restaurant. The renovations will include a new floor in the bar and kitchen.

Michael Brennan stated that he is not comfortable approving this request as this amount is unknown.

Steve Estey stated that more funds may be needed to cover the cost. He added that he doesn't have an exact number at this time, but electricians and plumbers are expensive.

Motion:

Peter McDowell moved to approve the reserve fund transfer request in the amount of \$6600. William Crowell seconded. The Finance Committee voted 7-0-0. The motion was carried.

Library Budget (610)

Robert Canevazzi recommended the following cuts from the library budget: \$2958 from line item 5100 (salaries), \$300 from 53460 printing, \$5000 from 53800 and \$ 1220 from 54210 for total budget in the amount of \$ 423,977.

Library Director Shirley Barron presented the budget. She stated that this budget includes five libraries. This budget presentation is not linked to goals and objectives. The libraries are not just books any more. The library services include social, internet access and recreation needs for the year round community and visitors. The Town may not be growing, but the demand for library services are. The need for library services has increased by 24%. Ms. Barron then went onto review the library budget.

The Finance Committee discussed reducing products and staffing at the library.

Jane Otis stated that the needs of the seniors are changing and we need to support this request.

Tish Murphy, Children's Librarian, stated that she has seen younger and younger children coming to the library. Children will come into the library and download a book onto their MP3 Player.

Motion:

Peter McDowell moved to approve the Library Budget in the amount of \$423, 977. Bill Crowell seconded the Finance Committee voted 7-0-0. The motion was carried.

Golf Department Budget (640)

Robert Canevazzi proposed the following budget cuts; \$51,722 from salaries & wages from line item 51200 and \$6860 from 52400 improvements.

Golf Director, Dennis Penner, presented the Golf Dept. budget. A reduction in salaries would mean a cut in rangers and services to the public. We have made great strides in improvements to the courses. The results show, that revenue is up at the courses. If we reduce improvements, this would be taking a step back.

Bill Crowell asked the Golf Dept. to explain the loss of services if the salary cuts are made.

Golf Pro, Russ Champoux, stated that there will be no cold drinking water on the courses. The golf carts will be cleaned after each use, and the pace of play will be dramatically slowed down. These are services that separate one course from another. Play is up at Dennis Courses due to these amenities. The Town will have upset and thirsty customers.

Michael Cummings stated that it would be sad to see the horticulturist go, as he is responsible for all of the flowers at both courses.

Michael Brennan agreed with Michael Cummings.

The Finance Committee and Russ Champoux then discussed the benefit of the position of the Assistant Golf Pro.

Dennis Penner stated that the fee increases will make up the revenue.

The Finance Committee then discussed repairs and maintenance to the well and pump.

Jim Plath asked the Selectmen if they would reconsider using funds from an existing article to make repairs to the well and pump.

Sheryl McMahon stated that the Selectmen could reconsider and reappropriate those funds for a similar purpose.

There was a consensus from the Finance Committee to move the \$13,860 for repairs to a new article.

Peter McDowell questioned the \$1000 clothing allowance for the Golf Pro. He stated that several other Cape Cod golf courses do not provide a clothing allowance or the specific amount of shirts that are issued.

Robert Canevazzi stated that he does not agree with Mr. McDowell.

Russ Champoux stated that in the private sector many Golf Pros receive free merchandise from vendors. Keep in mind that since these are municipal courses and we have to consider ethics. Naturally the Pro Shop will benefit from the promotion of the merchandise that he is wearing.

Peter McDowell asked if the Golf Pro has the option of earning additional funds through his employment. Mr. McDowell also asked the Golf Pro to explain what it is that he does.

Russ Champoux explained that he teaches. This is a service that he performs. He teaches women and beginners. The Town does benefit from the fact that he promotes the products in the Pro Shop.

Jim Plath stated that if the terms of this contract have changed, then the Finance Committee is not aware of the changes.

Sheryl McMahon stated that the details were discussed in Executive Session.

Jim Plath stated that the Finance Committee would like to see those minutes when they become available.

Jane Otis stated that if the attendees would like to discuss this in more detail, it should be done during another session

Peter McDowell stated that that the salary issue is part of this budget.

Robert Canevazzi stated that we are going to stay with the line items of the budget.

Motion:

Peter McDowell moved to strike the words Golf Pro from line item 53800. Bill Crowell seconded.

Bill Crowell and Jim Plath both stated that they would like to see the Executive Session minutes.

Motion:

Bill Crowell moved to table the previous motion. Michael Brennan seconded.

Jim Plath stated that the Finance Committee needs to vote the previous motion. The Finance Committee voted 1-6-0 (PM). The motion was carried not to strike the words Golf Pro from line item 53800.

Motion:

Bill Crowell moved to tentatively reduced \$1000 from item 53800, \$13,860 from item 52400, \$3,724 from item 51000, \$625 from item 51410 and \$2,961 from item 51300 for a total budget in the amount of \$1,708,335. Michael Brennan seconded. (There was no roll call vote.)

Police Department Budget

Robert Canevazzi proposed budget cuts from the following line items: \$9,600 from 51100, \$57,288 from 51200, \$2,500 from 51420, \$5,000 from 53000, \$1,000 from 53400, \$400 from 53440, \$500 from 53460, \$1,000 from 55100 and \$2,000 from 55800.

Police Chief Michael Whalen provided a Power Point slide show that highlighted the budget and accomplishments within the Police Department. Chief Whalen stated that he had already reduced the temporary wages before the Town Administrator made his budget cuts. He mentioned that there will be many maintenance contracts with the new police facility that will need to be budgeted. Chief Whalen stated that he had to add \$5000 to technical services as officers will need to take exams. The employees do pay for these exams, but we do have to account for the expenses. The Police Station will need new laptops, printers and servers. Chief Whalen explained that no additional people or services have been hired. He added that as margins get tighter, there are no safety nets or cash available. He also explained that handguns and shotguns will need to be replaced through the weapons trade-in program. Chief Whalen went on to review the accomplishments within the department. The Police Chief then reviewed the line items in the budget. Chief Whalen explained that the bike patrols are very important. The bike patrols were responsible for 13 arrests and reduced the calls for service because the patrols perform proactive work. The Police Chief reviewed the overtime budget and fringe benefits.

Jim Plath asked what would happen if the Governor doesn't fund their match of the Quinn Bill.

Robert Canevazzi explained that the Town will still need to pay it, as it is contractual.

Chief Whalen reviewed the expected costs associated with the maintenance contracts for the new police facility.

Jim Plath asked Chief Whalen if he could work with \$15,000 instead of \$18,000 for the maintenance contracts.

Chief Whalen stated that he has spoken with the contractors and these numbers are real close to what he needs in order to maintain this investment.

Jim Plath suggested funding the exams with free cash with a warrant article.

The Finance Committee and Chief Whalen recommended the following cuts; \$1000 from item 52400, \$3,300 from 52400, \$5,000 from item 53000, \$1,000 from 53400, \$400 from item 53440, \$500 from 53460, \$1,000 from 55100, \$1,000 from item 55800.

Motion:

Bob Prall moved tentative approval of budget 100216 in the amount of \$3,945,216. Ted Dumas seconded the Finance Committee voted 7-0-0. The motion was carried.

Reserve Fund Transfer for Veterans' Services

Jim Plath read a memo from Veterans' Representative Sidney Chase requesting \$20,000.

Chief Whalen requested the Finance Committee to consider the budget (292) Animal Control. Chief Whalen stated that there were no recommended budget cuts to this budget.

Motion:

Bill Crowell moved to approve the Animal Control budget in the amount of \$82,920. Ted Dumas seconded. The Finance Committee voted 7-0-0. The motion was carried.

Motion:

Peter McDowell moved approval of the \$20,000 reserve fund transfer for veterans' services. Ted Dumas seconded. The Finance Committee voted 7-0-0. The motion was carried.

Capital Items Discussion

Sheryl McMahon referred to a spread sheet that she had given to the Finance Committee. She explained that the Board of Selectmen are proposing to add the items listed on the sheet back into the operating budget. There has been additional discussion about adding recurring items like police cruisers, computers, drainage and building maintenance back into the operating budget as well. The expenses total \$646,000. Selectman McMahon proposed to fund the expenses with debt exclusion in the amount of \$508, 630. The Town would gain roughly \$40,000 when calculated with a declining interest rate. This would allow the Town to purchase \$500,000 in capital purchases.

The Selectmen have voted for one time debt exclusion. Sheryl McMahon stated that she has been very conservative with these funds.

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11: 15 P.M.

Motion:

The Finance Committee voted to adjourn 7-0-0. (There was no formal motion.)