

Minutes of the Longmeadow Finance Committee

Wednesday October 10, 2007

Fire Department Meeting Room:

Members Present	Y	N
Carla Gunn, Chairperson	x	
Mark Barowsky, Vice Chairperson	x	
James Law	x	
Jim Nittoli	x	
Peter Greenberg	x	
Judd Peskin	x	
Deborah Haas Wilson	x	

Also present was Tom Mazza, Jahn Hart, Sue Bertrand, Paul Santaniello, Ernie Welker, Kathy Grady, Christine Swanson, Geoff Weigand and Eric Madison

Carla began the meeting summarizing the agenda. The committee then asked Tom Mazza to explain the FY2007 end of year figures from the handouts he prepared. The Committee had questions concerning School Choice and the procedures followed when closing the operating accounts and their balances. They also were concerned how the funds are allocated at year end and does this allow a true picture of the actual cost by line item for next year. The next topic was school lunch and the large decrease. Tom stated that the user fees had decreased and that there were additional cost allocated to the fund for utilities and salaries.

The committee then asked if they could see a breakdown of the user fees for athletics and wanted to know how the money was handled by the booster clubs. Tom stated that the boosters clubs handled their own accounts and that they basically decided where the funds are most needed. The committee also discussed transportation liability for the Town concerning the buses to games and the excess capacity that some of the members had witnessed. Tom said he would address this issue with the Athletic Director.

Tom stated that the FY08 Budget may have some shortfalls in utilities and in pupil services due to rising cost. The committee asked Tom to prepare reports from Munis and asked when this would be ready. Tom replied that they were working with the Finance Department to produce detailed reports and possibly customize others with crystal reports.

The next speaker was Sue Bertrand. She explained with much detail that Special education cost were at an all time high and she presented the committee with several handouts explaining the CPR audit and the calculation used for State Reimbursement for Special Education costs. She then gave an estimate of the future cost in order to meet all state requirements and deadlines. She felt that the Town was lacking in the intermediate area, where a child has not been diagnosed as Special needs but need extra attention such as socialism skills. She felt that this would reduce the amount of special needs cases greatly. The committee then asked several questions concerning Special Education costs and the programs needed as well as the goals Sue had for her department.

The committee thanked the School members for coming and proceeded to the next topic, a Reserve Fund Transfer from the Fire Chief. Eric explained that Engine #2 was having some of the same issues that #3 was having and he wanted to be proactive before they needed to spend three times the amount for the repair as they were doing on Engine #3. He stated that these engines normally run for around 15 years and then start to need some major repairs. The request was for 12,500 and he did expect this to allow this engine to run another 5 to 10 years. The committee all agreed that this was the best option and all voted in favor of the transfer.

The next topic was a letter written from a concerned tax payer to have the Finance Committee breakdown the override into line items. The committee stated that they would prepare a letter to recommend but could not possibly breakdown all the components when some of the dollars are based on estimates. The committee again felt that it was the responsibility of the elected Boards to explain the override. The letter written from Mr. Welkner will be attached to the minutes.

Final topic Paul presented a check for 98,639.31 that the Town had collected from a large Tax title. The committee will approve the minutes from 9-16-07 at their next scheduled meeting.

The committee voted to adjourn at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sandra Choquette, Town Accountant