

Minutes of the Longmeadow Finance Committee
Wednesday December 6, 2006 @ 7:00 PM – Longmeadow Fire Department

Members Present:	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Judd Peskin - Chairperson	x	
Carla Gunn - Vice Chairperson	x	
Mark Barowsky	x	
Steven Marantz		x
Gerry Nolet		x
Suresh Samant		x
Deborah Wilson	x	

Audit Committee (7:00 – 8:15): Chair Paul Adornato, Vice Chair Peter Landon, Secretary Ernest Welker, Lawrence Egan, Glenn Rosenberg

Capital Planning Committee (7:00 – 8:15): Chair Mark Gold, Secretary Roger Wojcik, Ned Steiger

School Dept Representatives (8:15 – 9:15): Superintendent E. Jahn Hart, School Committee Member Geoff Weigand, Acting Pupil Services Director Sue Bertrand-Grant

Also Present: Paul Pasterczyk, Christopher Kulig

The Audit Committee was present to discuss Mark Abrahams' report of the School Department's administrative and financial policies as well as inform the Finance Committee of their future agenda and priorities.

The Audit Committee stated that they were very concerned by the Abrahams report and wanted to make sure that the recommended changes were implemented. They will request a copy of the formal, adopted policies from the School Department and follow up to make sure that they are being implemented. Paul Adornato stated that the Audit Committee would also be reviewing the financial policies of the Treasurer/Collector and Town Accountant as well as the policies and procedures governing the Water, Sewer, and the Ambulance funds. The Audit Committee will also be in regular contact with the Capital Planning Committee to offer assistance in long-range capital planning for the Town.

Mark Barowsky asked the Audit Committee how they planned on making sure that their agenda was in sync with the Select Board. The Audit Committee views itself a valuable resource that is not being used to its fullest potential. Peter Landon responded that although there is currently a communication gap, they plan on using public notices, formal correspondence and the ten minute open session of Select Board meetings to gain greater exposure in the community.

(Exit Audit Committee and Capital Planning Committee)

Representatives from the School Department (listed above) were present to discuss the Special Education functions provided by Longmeadow and also discuss the financial impact of this department on the FY07 budget.

Acting Pupil Services Director Sue Bertrand-Grant provided handouts that detailed many of the programs offered under the umbrella of Pupil Services. The information contained FY07 budget data as well as estimated costs for the current year.

At the time of this meeting, the SPED deficit is projected to be \$460,000 in a worst-case scenario. This number is based on Longmeadow losing all of its pending tuition settlements. Ms. Bertrand-Grant stated that approximately 30% (\$1.8M) of the Pupil Services budget is consumed by out-of-district tuition for only 16 students. Mark Barowsky asked whether these funds could be put to better use by expanding Longmeadow's SPED programs. Ms. Bertrand-Grant stated that these costs are so high because these 16 students are extreme cases requiring multiple individuals to provide around-the-clock care in a specialized environment. Besides direct costs, Longmeadow would incur a drastic increase of indirect costs including liability insurance, facility upgrades, and specialized program development.

The conversation then transitioned to the consolidation of the School finances with the Town's Finance Department. Superintendent Hart stated that they were experiencing "growing pains" beyond what was expected, but overall things were moving forward. The School Committee's chief concern was the new software's (MUNIS) inability to produce an exact replica of the budget report to which they had become accustomed. It was noted by Finance Director Paul Pasterczyk that a detailed FY07 budget had not been received until 11-22-06 and work was ongoing to find a solution to this issue.

Consolidation between the School Department and the DPW were "not going well" currently according to School Committee Member Geoff Weigand. Meetings between DPW Director Mike Wrabel and Superintendent Hart were ongoing.

(Exit School Department representatives)

Chairman Judd Peskin requested permission from the Finance Committee to draft a letter to Town Manager Robin Crosbie and the Select Board regarding an instance at the November 28, 2006 Special Town Meeting. The Town Manager answered a question directed to members of the Finance Committee without giving them a chance to respond. He felt it was inappropriate for the Town Manager to answer questions directed to the Finance Committee without consulting them or giving them a chance to address the question first. The Committee consented to his request.

The Finance Committee voted 2-1 (Gunn abstained) against the concept of forming an "Executive Committee" comprised of 2 members each of the Select Board, Finance Committee, and School Committee.

Finance Director Paul Pasterczyk distributed a proposal by Unison to purchase all of the cellular antenna licenses from the Town for a single lump sum. Mr. Pasterczyk is looking to form a committee to investigate the proposal.

The Committee set their next meeting for Wednesday, January 10, 2007.

The Committee voted to accept the minutes from the meeting of November 15, 2006 as presented.

The Committee voted to adjourn at 9:44pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Pasterczyk
Finance Director

Christopher Kulig
Town Accountant