

Minutes of the Longmeadow Finance Committee
Wednesday March 12, 2008
Greenwood Center & 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	

The first part of the meeting was held at Greenwood for the Select Board and School Committee meeting. Some finance members attended. The discussion began with Mr. Scibelli asking questions to Robin and Paul concerning the FY09 Budget and increases in certain line items and any new positions. The finance members left at 8:00 to begin their scheduled meeting at the Fire Station Meeting room.

Carla began the meeting summarizing the agenda. She then asked for visitor comments. A Longmeadow parent wanted the Committee to understand that a cut in Special Education would mean less service to an existing program that was understaffed and that the State mandated many of the Special Education programs and goals. She also stated that she felt that if the money was transferred from regular education that it would only add to the existing hostility towards Special Education students. Mark replied by saying that the Committee was well aware of the mandates and had appropriated sufficient funds in Fiscal 07. Carla then explained that the School Committee would decide where the cut would be made if any and that the Town Manager could only give a bottom line amount to cut.

The next subject was Center School Exterior painting. The committee was waiting for a Reserve Fund Request from Mike Wrabel.

The committee then began reviewing the FY09 Proposed Budget by the Town Manager. Mark asked several questions concerning the water, sewer, highway and fire department accounts. Specifically what was causing the increases and how many new positions were being added. Jim Nittoli brought up the fact that the Committee should be reviewing to make sure that the FY09 Budget submitted was supporting the Budget Strategy Committees proposal for the override that was approved by the Town. Jim wanted to make sure that both School and Town were in compliance with the estimated numbers given in November for the override. Robin Crosbie and Paul arrived at the meeting around 9:00 p.m. and the committee continued their discussion concerning the Budget Strategy Proposal and whether or not the Town and School meet their objectives. Robin stated that the Town had met their objectives and within the last two years has maintained a very low increase in the annual growth percentage. The Committee was concerned that the overall budget exceeded the expectations of the Budget Strategy Committee forecast and with the rising Special Education Costs we would be facing another override in 2010.

Paul also explained that from November till now revenue assumptions have decreased and this would add to the differences between what the Budget Strategy Committee forecast and what is happening currently. We also have to deal with the rising cost of fuel. The committee decided to review the budgets again and have further discussion at their next meeting on March 19th.

The committee voted to adjourn at 11:30 p.m. and the next scheduled meeting is March 19, 2008 at 7:00.

Respectfully Submitted,
Sandra Choquette, Town Accountant