

Minute of the Longmeadow Finance Committee  
Fire Meeting Room  
Date: March 26, 2008

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 Ernie Welkner, Christine Swanson, Geoffrey Weigand, Rob Aseltine, Paul Santaniello, Robin Crosbie.

Carla began the meeting reviewing the agenda for the night. The meeting then started with Peter asking how much has our Health Insurance and retirement benefit increased. Paul said that the current and future trend continues to increase at a steady rate and the new rates were expected in April. He also stated that the Health Insurance has increased at least 7% per year or more over the last 5 years and that the Retirement benefit has also increased at 10% per year or higher.

The FC then reviewed the Warrant and began to discuss the Articles that needed to have a recommendation from the FC. They started with Article #3 Jim Law wanted a detailed accounting for the funds and their use. He stated that they needed the # of students, whether they were in/out of district costs, any new program cost, and the detail on the \$110,000 that was not designated at this time and anticipated costs for Special Education in 2010. The committee all agreed to table this till the next meeting.

Article #4 Snow & Ice deficit Jim N. motion to approve Mark second all in favor.  
Recommended

Article #5 Tri-ennial revaluation Jim N. motion to approve Mark second and all in favor.  
Recommended

Article #6 Shortfall for carpet & Tile for Williams Middle School. Mark wanted to know why the project was overspent and how did this happen. Paul explained that the work was completed without the contract being fully signed and that most of the overage was due to unanticipated asbestos removal. Recommended

Article #7 FY2009 Operating Budget and Moderator and Select Board Salaries. Jim N raised the issue that the School had met the Budget Strategy numbers for expenses in their FY2009 Budget and that the Town did not. Paul P. raised the issue that school did not meet the revenue projected numbers and therefore would only be down from their

wants budget by 160,000. Jim N. stated that there was a 377,000 savings in Benefits. Robin explained to the committee that the Town had been very conservative and tries to put back positions that were cut last year. She also stated that they had stayed around 3 to 4% last year. She stated that the Town will have to decide what they feel are essential services and how they feel their tax dollars should be allocated. Ernie Welkner asked the FC Committee to consider putting the Audit position back in the budget. He said it was an essential piece to internal controls. Jim L asked that the committee also consider the HR person. The charter has changed many aspects of the HR department and has added many responsibilities to the Town's side that was previously handled by several school employees. He felt that this position was essential. Deborah felt that we needed a long range plan to continue operations and what are essential services. Mark agreed and wanted to know what the increases were in Water & Sewer. Robin responded by saying that there was one new position and money in maintenance for catch basin cleaner which would prove to be a very useful and actually fix the problem rather than push the problem to another area. Mark motioned to recommend on the floor Deborah second. All in favor.

Article #8 Funds set aside from override for future budget gaps. Jim N. made a motion to recommend or not on the Town floor, Mark second and all members were in favor of the motion.

Article #9 Revolving Fund for Schools. Jim N motion to approve, Mark second and all in favor. Recommended

Article #10 Chapter 90 authorization. Peter motioned to approve Jim L. second and all in favor. Recommended

Article #11 was discussed in much detail concerning the Capital projects. Mark wanted to know why maintenance water & sewer items were placed in capital. Paul Santaiello stated that this was capital and only the start of a much larger project and should not be in the operating budget. Chapter 59 21CN explains Water & Sewer and the manner in which the funds can be used. Paul also explained that the funds appropriated for the vehicles would be reimbursed to the fleet reserve. Mark and Jim N. wanted to know why the funds were not coming from the water and sewer undesignated funds. Paul explained that the funding may be changed at a later date to make sure that the cost are shared by all water & sewer users. Mark then changed the subject to address the Town Communication item and wanted to know if all the radios would be compatible. Peter also wanted to know why the radios were so expensive and Deborah wanted to know why not use cell phones. Robin responded by saying that cell phones were not always reliable and in some areas do not work; she also stated that the radios were intercompatible and would be used by all departments. They would allow all emergency responders to speak to each other on the same band. This system not only addresses Public Employees communication but allows for immediate communication for the first responders.

The discussion then went to the amount and items on the capital plan. Mark and Carla felt that maintenance in both Town and Schools had been neglected for years and the

capital article was addressing some of these issues. Carla and Mark both felt that the Town's infrastructure was very important and we needed to support the Capital Article. Jim N felt that the later articles on the school roofs should be part of this article and not put on separately as debt exclusions. He felt that this was an added burden to the taxpayer especially after they just approved an override. He also felt that if the roofs were so important that they should be in capital rather than the risk of the debt exclusion not passing. Deborah mentioned that she did not feel comfortable recommending the splash pad given the fact that we are looking at a shortfall in 2010. She felt that the committee had the obligation to set priorities and needed to make decisions that prepared the Town for the future. Carla felt that the Capital Committee had really worked hard to make what they felt were needed items and that the FC could only recommend or not. She felt that Capital and operating money were two issues and should be treated as such. Paul Santaniello stated that the splash pad was a quality of life issue and also saved money versus repairing the kiddie pool at Greenwood. He also stated that residence complained about the crowding at Bliss Pool. After much discussion Jim I. motion to approve Mark second and the vote was a tie. No Recommendation.

Article #12 Repay Ambulance Fund. Jim L motion to approve Jim N. second and all in favor.  
Recommended

Article #13 Repay Reserve Fund for Emergency repairs to Glenbrook Heating System. Jim L. motion to approve Jim N. second and all in favor. Recommended

Article #14 Radio Communications from Ambulance Fund. Mark motion to recommend on floor Deborah second and all in favor.

Article #15 1/4 of cost for a Front End Loader from Water Fund. Mark motion to recommend on floor Deborah second and all in favor.

Article #16 1/4 cost of a Front End Loader from Sewer Fund. Mark motion to recommend on floor Deborah second and all in favor.

Article #18 Engineering & Design on Maple Road to Longfellow Drive. Mark motion to approve Jim N. second and all in favor. Recommended

Article #19 Sewer Funds to evaluate the condition of the North Interceptor from Emerson to Western Drive. Jim N. motion to approve Peter second and all in favor.  
Recommended

The committee asked what other water & sewer projects were expected in the near future and Robin stated that they still needed to work on Mill Road for the tree roots and an upgrade for the Sewer Station total projected cost around 400,000

Article #20 Debt Exclusion for Longmeadow High School Roof. Mark motioned to recommend on the floor Peter second and all were in favor.

Article #21 Debt Exclusion for Greenwood Center Roof. Mark motioned to recommend on the floor Peter second and all were in favor.

Article #22 Community Preservation for administrative costs. Robin stated that these funds were for future endeavors and would only be spent if needed. Mark motioned Peter second. The vote was 3 yes 2 abstained and one no vote. Recommended

Article #23 Community Preservation Funds for rehabilitation to Community House. Robin stated that the balustrade did need to be replaced and was a safety issue. Mark motioned to approve Deborah second and all in favor. Recommended

Article #24 Community Preservation Funds for Town vital records. Jim N. motioned to approve Deborah second and all in favor. Recommended

Article #25 Community Preservation Funds for COA Patio. Jim N. motioned to approve Deborah second and all in favor. Recommended

Article #26 Community Preservation Funds for COA Outdoor game tables. Jim N. motioned to approve Deborah second and all in favor. Recommended

Article #27 Community Preservation Funds to preserve historical images. Jim N. motioned to approve Mark second and all in favor. Recommended

Article #28 Community Preservation Funds for preservation and restoration of Streetlights in Colony Hill. Robin stated that we did not know for sure who owned the lights. The FC said they wanted more documentation before a final decision. Peter motioned to table Jim L second, Jim N abstained and others agreed to table.

The committee voted to adjourn at 11:15 p.m. and the next scheduled meeting is April 2, 2008 at 7:00.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Sandra Choquette, Town Accountant