

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
11/18/09

Page 1 of 2

**Meeting Date:** November 18, 2009

**Called to Order:** 6:00 PM

**Montague Finance Committee Members Present:** John Hanold, Lynn Reynolds, Michael Naughton, Marge Levenson and Rob Allen

**Montague Selectmen Present:** Patricia Pruitt, Mark Fairbrother, and Patricia Allen (arrived at 6:04 PM)

**Others Present:** Frank Abbondanzio (Town Administrator), Carolyn Olsen (Town Accountant)

**Minutes**

BOS Moved: To approve the minutes of November 4, 2009.

Vote:  2  In Favor  0  Opposed  0  Abstained

FC Moved: To approve the minutes of November 4, 2009.

Vote:  5  In Favor  0  Opposed  0  Abstained

**Ethics training:** Reminder to acknowledge hand-out, return certification after test completion.

**Special Town Meeting** – Scheduled for 6:30 PM Tuesday, December 15, 2009 at the TFHS Theater

1. Reduce WPCF Budget – Carolyn Olsen explained that, while doing preliminary work for the tax recapitulation and comparing FY09 revenues to what would be needed for FY10, she noticed that the estimated revenue would have to be much higher than could reasonably be collected. The reason for this is that the residential sewer rates are calculated using an average flow from the last few years. This flow has been steadily decreasing. When the actual billing was calculated on the current flow, the receivable amount turned out to be substantially less than the original estimated revenue. After discussing the issue with Bob Trombley, WPCF Superintendent, it was agreed that while we might be able to make arguments to the state justifying the higher estimated revenues, it would be better to reduce the budget since Mr. Trombley found that solid waste expenses are coming in lower than expected. Since the Department of Revenue has to approve the information for the WPCF Enterprise fund as part of approving the tax rate, it makes sense to take care of this as soon as possible.

FCMoved: To recommend reducing the WPCF budget to balance expected revenues to the budget, with a corresponding reduction in budgeted user fees.

Vote:  5  In Favor  0  Opposed  0  Abstained

2. Replenish Reserve Fund.

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
11/18/09

Page 2 of 2

FCMoved: To recommend to Montague Special Town Meeting that \$11,760 be appropriated from Free Cash to the Reserve Fund 001-5-132-5780-000 to restore funds committed to repair of Montague Center Library.  
Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

3. Recommend funding source for additional GMRSD Appropriation

Mike Naughton feels the Finance Committee has no choice but to recommend because to do otherwise is to open ourselves to a legal challenge that we are not likely to win.

FCMoved: To recommend to Montague Special Town Meeting that any supplemental appropriation for the FY10 assessment from the Gill-Montague Regional School District be funded from the town's Education Stabilization. [Actual amount to be determined after final budget and assessment calculation is received from the District.]  
Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**FY11 Budget**

- There was a lengthy discussion of possible options for wage assumptions and budget scenarios for the FY2011 budget.
- It was decided that the budget packets to go to departments will assume step increases but no Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs), and that 2 to 3 different scenarios would be requested reflecting different funding levels.
- Budget packets are likely to go to departments around mid-December with a due date the second week in January. Budget hearings will be held starting on January 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Marge Levenson asked that an override be an option for the FY2011 budget.
- The consensus was that a meeting with staff to brainstorm different options would be helpful.
- Mike Naughton suggested that since this year the GMRSD is interested in using the concept of an affordable assessment, it would be good to be proactive about what we mean by an affordable assessment and to get them an actual number as soon as possible.
- Carolyn Olsen suggested that the committees meet just prior to the Special Town Meeting to vote on this. If no agreement is reached, we will meet on December 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Pat Allen suggested using the first two January meetings to brainstorm options for handling the worst case scenario.
- There was a general discussion on what departments to meet with at which point in the process.

**Ad hoc Town-G-M committee report update:** Tabled until January 6<sup>th</sup>.

Adjourned 7:36 PM

Respectfully submitted:  
Carolyn Olsen