

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
1/27/10

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**Meeting Date:** January 27, 2010

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

**Finance Committee Members Present:** John Hanold, Andrew Killeen, Michael Naughton, and Lynn Reynolds.

**Montague Selectmen Present:** Pat Allen, Patricia Pruitt and Mark Fairbrother.

**Others Present:** Frank Abbondanzio (Town Administrator), Bill Letsky (Representative of Virtual Town Hall), Sandy Brown and Jeff Singleton (GMRSD School Committee)

**Mr. Singleton** presented his reasons for the use by the Finance Committee and Select Board of last year's method of the "Affordable Assessment". He urged the Finance Committee to consider continuing to use last year's method for a number of reasons. He stated that when it method was developed that it was planned that it could be used for the future. The Five Year Plan that Mr. Singleton prepared for the Towns and School was based on that method. It was understandable, and simple. Much time was spent in helping others to understand the process and calculations and many votes were taken last year supporting it. He stated that by allocating percentages of "what we have" versus splitting the increase/decrease of Town revenues has the tendency to create unexpected and untenable situations because of unintended consequences.

**Minutes**

FC Moved: To approve the minutes of January 20, 2010.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 1 Abstained

BOS Moved: To approve the minutes of January 20, 2010.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 1 Abstained

**Reserve Fund Transfer & Presentation of New Website Vendor: Virtual Town Hall.** Assessor Barbara Miller asked Bill Letsky to give a presentation so that the Town could select a new vendor for the Town website. The amount of \$3,345 for conversion would be available by closing out a 1999 Special Article for a Legal expense, but only by a vote at a Town Meeting. To enable conversion to begin sooner, Ms. Miller asked that funds be provided now by a Reserve Fund transfer, which can be replenished at a later Town Meeting. It was explained that the need for a new website occurred as an emergency situation when the Town was told by its hosting service that they would no longer host the Town website. If the website lost its hosting service, the website would no longer exist online. This would be a problem for the Tax Collector in receiving timely receipts. Essential functions associated with the website were also not useable and inputting data was very cumbersome. In order to solve this problem, Ms. Miller had researched website providers and determined that Virtual Town Hall as a Town website would better suit the Town both in functionality and price. Hence she asked Mr. Letsky to give a demonstration so that Finance Committee and Select Board members could ask questions of him that she did not have the expertise to answer. Since her request for Mr. Letsky to appear before the Boards, it was determined that the hosting service problem was solved, so that the emergency situation was alleviated. However, this did not remedy

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serious functional issues with the present website. There was discussion about the urgency of the request. Mik Muller of Montague Webworks was present and requested to submit a proposal.

Several members felt that the decision of changing the website design and selecting a new website provider was an important decision and not one to make in haste. Ms. Miller agreed to arrange for both Mr. Muller and Mr. Letsky to make presentations as soon as possible.

FC Moved: To approve the Reserve Fund Transfer, as amended, to transfer \$3,345 from Acct 132-5780 (Reserve Fund) to Acct 159-5348 (Shared Services Website Maintenance)

Vote: 3 In Favor 1 Opposed 0 Abstained

The Board of Selectmen had approved the transfer in a prior meeting.

**Revenue Assumption Updates.** Frank Abbondanzio gave an update on revenue assumptions. He stated that the Town should plan for a 10% cut in state aid for now. He passed out an updated budget scenario spread sheet. All departments have been asked to present budgets for level funding requests and 3% cut requests.

**Preparation for Meeting with DESE –Draft Agenda, Attendance.** Representatives from Mr. Kulik’s office and Mr. Rosenberg’s office and Mr. Wulfson of DESE will be able to attend. Representatives of the Boards of Selectmen and Finance Committees of Montague and Gill along with Superintendent Ladd and representatives of the GMRSD will also be present. The Draft Agenda was accepted by the Finance Committee and Select Board. The School Committee has already approved it. It was agreed that the main focus of the meeting would be to agree on a process to achieve a plan for sustainable future for the School District and the Towns.

**Next Meetings:** February 3, 2010 at 6:00 PM

Adjourned at 8:40 PM

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lynn Reynolds