

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

6/23/10

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Meeting Date: June 23, 2010

Called to Order: 6:02 PM

Finance Committee Members Present: John Hanold, Andrew Killeen, Rob Allen, Lynn Reynolds and Michael Naughton

Others Present: Carolyn Olsen (Town Accountant), Christopher Boutwell (Selectman)

Minutes

FC Moved: To approve the minutes of June 2, 2010.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 2 Abstained

Revisions to Open Meeting Law

Ms. Olsen distributed a handout describing changes to the definition of deliberation and emphasized that it will now be a violation of the open meeting law to express an opinion via e-mail on a matter under the Finance Committee's jurisdiction.

GMRSD Budget Update

The Town of Gill approved the requested FY11 GMRSD assessment. The GMRSD School Committee met last night and discussed the budget. The School Committee voted to come back to Montague with the same budget/assessment amount requested at the Annual Town Meeting. Montague now has 45 days to schedule a Special Town Meeting to consider the School Committee's proposal.

Mr. Naughton suggested the Finance Committee reconsider their recommendation to Town Meeting and noted that if the Finance Committee decides to support a compromise, there must be logical rationales for the support.

An objection to a compromise is that the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will no longer be in control of the District and some people feel very strongly that DESE involvement should continue.

Mr. Naughton will bring suggestions for a compromise to the meeting on July 14th. The Board of Selectmen will be invited to this meeting.

Planning for FY2012 Budget

Mr. Hanold asked if there was any interest in pursuing consolidation or re-design tasks, internal or external to Montague.

Mr. Naughton: We should be asking the more general question of the Board of Selectmen as to how they think FY12 is going to work rather than waiting for the Town Administrator's budget package in the fall. Do we want to continue to fund the town operating budget without using reserves? Do we want to reduce the amount of reserves used for continuing special article purposes? We need to get serious with the Selectmen about FY12 goals for use of reserves. Then we ask about looking at redesign.

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Mr. Allen: We have to look at department level or slightly below to determine what services are delivered and then give the Town Administrator or the Selectmen the Finance Committee's priorities. Also, as we look at the future budgets, I would like to see us focus during budget hearings on what changes, especially improvements and new ideas, have transpired.

Mr. Boutwell suggested the alternative of the Finance Committee going to a Selectmen's meeting with our ideas rather than having the Selectmen come to Finance Committee meetings.

Ms. Olsen asked that committee members send her their suggestions and questions regarding consolidation or re-design tasks by July 14th. Ms. Olsen will do some preliminary work to get additional information and see if ideas such as using FRCOG services are viable. All ideas will then be presented for discussion at the July 28th meeting.

Mr. Hanold noted possible Cost of Living Adjustments to stipends should be discussed and considered prior to the beginning of the FY12 budget process. Mr. Hanold offered to do the groundwork on this.

Mr. Hanold asked if the Finance Committee should wait for the Capital Improvements Committee's recommendations or give them our total funding recommendations at the beginning of the budget process. It was decided to request that the Town Administrator provide the Finance Committee with copies of the requests that go to the Capital Improvements Committee.

Listing of Documents and Exhibits

Changes to Open Meeting Law

Finance Committee Agenda Item: Forward Planning

Next Meetings:

July 14, July 28, August 11, August 25, September 8

Adjourned at 7:25 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Carolyn Olsen