

ARLINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
7:30 PM O'NEILL ROOM COMMUNITY SAFETY BUILDING
2/25/08

ATTENDEES:

McGaffigan*		Dunn*	Phelps	Mahoney
DeCoursey*	Connors*	Simmons*	Bayer*	
Tosti*	Foskett*	Deyst*	Ronan*	
Ferrara*	Franclemont*	Jones*	Olsen*	
DuBois*	Howard*	Fanning*	Carman*	Turkall*

* Indicates present

VISITORS: Stephen Harrington, Superintendent Nate Levenson, School Committee Members Jeff Theilman, Ron Spangler

MINUTES of 2/20 approved as corrected. Unanimous.

ART 26 SIDEWALK SNOW REMOVAL: Harrington, using illustrated handouts, described the snow drifts left by street plows that block curb cuts all over town. He views this condition as a serious safety hazard. He proposes to amend the current bylaw that requires abutters to clear their sidewalks. He did not provide suggested wording. He also suggested that DPW clear 10 mi of sidewalks & curb cuts along Mass Ave, Broadway, and connections to schools. Using data from Lexington, he thinks this would cost \$20k/yr. He has discussed this proposal w/ John Bean but received no cost estimate. Members asked numerous questions & expressed doubts about both feasibility & cost. The Chair thanked Harrington for a complete & well organized presentation.

BUD 20 EDUCATION: Levenson walked the committee through 28 printed viewgraphs which describe the source of a \$1.25m school budget deficit and the steps he is recommending to the School Committee to reach a balanced budget within the limits of the 5 yr plan. Members had received a draft budget by mail a week earlier. The deficit derives from a salary increase of about 6% (because 2/3 of the staff is below max & enjoy annual 3% steps) and a SPED increase of \$1.3m. He proposes to use several one time "cash management" actions to increase revenues. He proposes to increase fees & rents, get more corporate grants, and buy fewer supplies. He has taken steps to reduce SPED costs, though the effect in FY09 will be modest. He proposes to cut 6 staff at AHS, and 5 staff in grades 3-6. Class size will grow on average about 1 student but there is wide variation about this average. Theilman stated that the School Committee has taken a survey to gauge public preferences among the possible cuts and may ask the Superintendent to modify his proposal accordingly. A long and detailed Q&A session followed. Levenson answered all questions patiently & in detail. Parents may use open enrollment to place children in smaller size classes but must provide transportation. The circuit breaker law is not fully funded and the eligibility threshold (now \$36k) keeps rising. METCO, which costs \$450k, is good for education and marginal cost is thought to be low. More drastic fee increase may be considered. The next 5 yr plan might include a separate ceiling for SPED but within the education budget. He is afraid to adjust district lines to balance school loads and believes that the effect of such changes is temporary. He would rather promote moving health insurance to GIC rather than reopen negotiations w/ union on copays.

COMMITTEE Schedule of hearings:

On 2/27 Town Manager on Town Budgets.

On 3/3 Capital Planning Committee on Capital Budget.

On 3/5 Moderator on Warrant timing, Minuteman Tech

On 3/10 Permanent Town Building Committee on Thompson School.

RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$276,706.28

Peter B Howard Secretary 2/26/08 Revised 2/27/08

cc FinCom Members, Selectmen, Town Manager, Comptroller, Library File, Town Web Site
FinCom Web Site

VOTE SUMMARY – Articles

# 1/28	# 2/4	# 2/20	Title	Date Heard	Date Voted	Status (Unlisted votes were unanir
18	5	17	Bylaw Amend 1,1,2, Open Warrant			
27	7	19	Bylaw Amend Afford House Trust			Foskett reported 2/11
20	14	26	Bylaw Amend Snow Removal	2/25		
21	15	27	Bylaw Amend 1,18 Mtg Notices	2/4		Tabled Tosti to discuss w/ BoS
63	39	40	Increase Accidental Death Benefit	2/4	2/4	Favorable action
64	40	41	Extend Benefits	2/4 2/20	2/4	No Action Dunn to write comment
62	41	42	Pension Adjustments	2/4	2/4	Favorable action
66	43	43	Transfer to OPEB Funds			ACRB
65	42	43	Transfer OPEB Funds	2/4	2/4	Tabled. Report from Maher, Treas
		44	Transfer to Retiree Health Care Fund			
68	44	45	Borrowing for OPEB	2/11		
67	45	46	Pension Obligation Funds	2/11		
45	47	48	Positions reclassification			Phelps to present
43	48	49	Collective Bargaining			
44	49	50	Future Collective Bargaining			
46	51	52	Budgets			
47	52	53	Capital Budget			Hearing 3/3 8:00
	54	55	Swimming Pool	2/6	2/6	Favorable action \$0
55	55	56	Sewers			
56	56	57	Water			
48	57	58	Rescind authority to borrow			
50	58	59	Minuteman Tech			DeCoursey to schedule
51	59	60	Town Celebrations			Twn Man
53	60	61	Committees & Commissions			hearing if last year approp not OK
		62	TAC Appropriation	2/20	2/20	Fav Action not to exceed \$15000
52	62	63	Miscellaneous			Twn Man
28	63	64	Town Water Bodies			Hearing in mid-March
70	64	65	Harry Barber Service Program			hearing if last year approp not OK
69	66	66	Local Option Taxes			
72	67	67	Tip Fee Stab Fund			
58	68	68	Tip Fund Money Appropriation	2/6	2/6	No action
73	69	69	Cemetery			
74	70	70	Overlay Reserve Surplus			
75	71	71	Stabilization Fund			
76	72	72	Free Cash			
59	73	73	Medicare Part D Reimbursement	2/6	2/6	No action 9-2
	74	74	CRB Report	2/6 2/11	2/6 2/11	Favorable Action Para 1 & 3 Requ
57	75	75	Services to Non-Profits	2/6	2/6	No report 9-1 Encourage followth
60	76	76	SPED	2/6	2/6	No action

VOTE SUMMARY-Budgets

#	Title	Date Heard	Date Voted	Amount	Vote Unlisted votes were unanimous
1	FinCom	2/11	2/11	10778	
2	Board of Selectmen	2/20	2/20	398558	
3	Town Manager				
4	Personnel				
5	Information Technology				
6	Comptroller				
7	Treasurer				
8	Postage				
9	Assessors				
10	Legal	2/20	2/20	460047	
11	Town Clerk				
12	Registrar of Voters				
13	Parking				
14	Planning				
15	Redevelopment Board				
16	Zoning Board of Appeals	2/11	2/11	23311	
17	Public Works	2/11	2/11	6831546	15-0-1
17a	Street Lights	2/20	2/20	418893	
18a	Community Safety Admin				
18b	Police				
18c	Fire				
18d	Support				
19	Inspections				
20	Education	2/25			
21	Library	2/20	2/20	1898988	
21b	Veterans				
21c	COA				
22a	Health & Human Services				
23	Retirement				
24	Insurance				
25	Reserve Fund	2/20	2/20	450000	
W&S					
Rec					
Rnk					
COA					
Youth					