

**Needham Finance Committee  
Minutes of Meeting of May 3, 2010**

The meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by the Chair, Lisa Zappala, at approximately 6:05 pm in the Conference Room at the Newman School.

Present from the Finance Committee: Lisa Zappala, Chair  
Rick Zimbone, Vice Chair  
Matthew Borrelli  
John Connelly (arrived 6:40)  
Richard Reilly  
Michael Taggart (arrived 7:40 at Town Meeting)  
Richard Creem  
Richard Lunetta  
Steven Rosenstock

Also Present: Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager  
David Davison, Assistant Town Manager – Finance Director  
Patricia Carey, Director, Park and Recreation  
Brian Nadler, Chair, Park and Recreation Commission  
Jane Howard, Chair, Community Preservation Commission  
Dan Gutekanst, School Superintendent

**Citizen Requests:** There were no citizen requests to address the Finance Committee

**Approve Minutes of April 14, 2010**

MOVED: By Mr. Reilly that the Finance Committee approve the Minutes of April 14, 2010. Mr. Borrelli seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 7-0. (Mr. Connelly and Mr. Taggart had not yet arrived.)

**Discuss and Vote as Appropriate: Any Amendments to Annual Town Meeting Warrant or Special Town Meeting Warrant**

Mr. Rosenstock stated that it appeared that Article 31 regarding the appropriation to the CPC would need amending only if Article 28, appropriating \$57,500 for the preservation of artifacts, does not pass. Mr. Davison pointed out that Special Town Meeting Article 10 regarding the purchase of land also affects Article 31. He noted that there is a chance that STM Article 10 would be voted before ATM Article 31 came up. However, he suggested that if Article 31 came up first in the schedule, then there should be a motion to postpone consideration of Article 31 until after Special Town Meeting.

Mr. Zimbone relayed that he had attended a Planning Board meeting where they made changes to the Planning Board zoning articles before voting to recommend them. The Finance Committee earlier voted to recommend approval subject to the approval of the Planning Board. However, Mr. Zimbone reported that the Planning Board's changes involved issues such as measurements that would not have affected the Finance Committee's vote.

Ms. Zappala stated that Wingate has the option to purchase the property involved in the zoning articles, but that they have not yet actually purchased it. There is a possible issue that if a non-profit were to buy the property, then the property would not be subject to tax. She said there has been talk of a possible deed restriction. Mr. Davison added that such a restriction might not be enforceable.

### **Other amendments**

Ms. Zappala stated that there were no other anticipated amendments to Town Meeting articles. She said she was unsure if the Finance Committee should vote the cash capital article again, with the specific line items. Mr. Creem stated that it would not hurt to have a confirmatory vote.

Mr. Davison stated that someone is planning to come forward with an amendment to Article 17, for the Property Tax Assistance program for seniors. The article calls for an appropriation of \$15,000. Last year, when the program was initiated, the discussion was that the town intended to match donated funds. \$15,715 was donated, and the motion seeks to fully match that amount. Ms. Zappala stated that it could be approved if the money were pulled out of the Senior Corps funding. Mr. Davison stated that it cannot be argued that the town doesn't have \$715, and that a source of such funding could certainly be found by the November Special Town Meeting. Mr. Creem commented that the budget is fully balanced right now. Mr. Davison agreed that if there had been earlier notice, he could have asked town departments to find the money. The Selectmen had not agreed to amend the article.

Ms. Zappala stated that the Committee could take 2 positions: either that in a difficult economic environment, the \$15,000 is a close match, or alternatively, agree to fund the additional \$715, taking money from the senior corps. Mr. Rosenstock stated it could also be argued that the program was funded with \$1,000 to open it last year, plus an additional \$15,000 for a total of \$16,000, which could arguably meet the town's obligation. Mr. Davison stated that the argument had been raised before, but the initial \$1,000 has already been distributed, and cannot reasonably be considered as part of the same year's funding. Mr. Davison also noted that the senior corps funding may be voted before this comes up, so taking money from that article to fund this discrepancy would not be possible. He suggested that the committee not fight the additional money. Mr. Zimbone stated that this issue has been looked at before, and there is no guarantee that the program will be funded at the requested level. He did note, however, that this is merely \$715. Mr. Rosenstock stated that the Finance Committee is not the proponent and cannot technically change this article.

Ms. Zappala stated that at this point, if the money is added to fund the additional \$715, the amount must come from overlay. The Finance Committee cannot go along with the additional request just to be agreeable. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that she expects the Selectmen to stay firm on the appropriation of \$15,000, and not to support the amendment. Mr. Creem stated that the Finance Committee should not recommend adoption of the amendment if the Selectmen do not support it.

**Discuss and Vote as Appropriate May Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 10: Appropriate for (CPA) – Purchase of Land**

Mr. Nadler reported that the Town Manager finalized the deal on the property in question, and that a purchase and sale agreement was signed with a purchase price of \$650,000, which was below the assessed value. The Town started with an offer of \$620,000 but \$650,000 was the seller's bottom line. He stated that the property was a high priority property for Park and Recreation to allow access to Walker Pond for boating, skating, fishing. They intend to add picnic tables, to remove the existing fence, and to take trees down to open the outfield and create a regular size baseball field, plus some youth soccer or multi-purpose fields.

Ms. Howard stated the \$800,000 in the warrant was there to hold the space, and that the requested appropriation has been reduced to \$767,500. The CPC used \$32,500 from its Administrative budget as a deposit with the purchase and sale agreement. Ms. Carey stated that it will cost approximately \$50,000 to demolish the house, remove the oil tank, septic system, and asbestos. She stated they will also need money to remove the old fence and trees near the house, and to add new fencing. Ms. Fitzpatrick stated that there is a need for regrading. Mr. Rosenstock asked if there had been an analysis of the additional cost to maintain the additional fields. Ms. Carey stated the additional cost is simply for additional mowing, and is small, as there are already fields there, and the machinery is already on site regularly to mow the existing field. In response to a question from Mr. Borrelli, Ms Carey stated that irrigation is not planned for these fields.

MOVED: By Mr. Rosenstock that the Finance Committee recommend adoption of Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 10: Appropriate for CPA- Purchase of Land as amended, in the amount of \$767,500. Mr. Zimbone seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by a vote of 7-0. (Mr. Connelly and Mr. Taggart had not arrived.)

**Finance Committee Updates**

Dr. Gutekanst stepped into the meeting to report that the he had hoped to discuss union issues, but School union had not ratified a contract, and he has nothing to report. Mr. Zimbone asked about the modular issue. Dr. Gutekanst stated that the School Committee had just voted to withdraw ATM Article 34 requesting funding for the Mitchell modulars.

Mr. Zimbone reported that at a school liaison meeting, they talked about alternatives such as moving all the preschool and pre-K children out of Mitchell to Pollard, where the Newman students will be, or redistricting, or placing modulars at a school with sprinklers already in place. He stated they want to review the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report for FY2010, but that would not be finished until later in May. He said they discussed the consultant's report on the transportation issue (Annual TM Article 25) anticipating a cost savings of up to \$115,000 or \$120,000 annually. That savings does not reflect revenue from possible fee-

based activities. Mr. Reilly asked about maintenance costs of the new vehicles. Mr. Zimbone responded that those costs were all factored in. Mr. Zimbone noted that there has been extremely good cooperation with the School Committee.

Ms.Zappala stated that the Minuteman superintendent cannot make it to Town Meeting tonight, so Article 20 will be postponed until the following night of Town Meeting. Belmont voted down the proposal to fund the study, but agreed that they would support it if the study were conducted before the architect was hired.

Mr. Bulian came in to report that the Selectmen did not want to dispute the \$715 in Article 17. However, they are concerned about setting precedent. However, the Selectmen understand that there was an intent to match the funds raised, and that the \$15,000 was an oversight. Mr. Zimbone noted that it would have saved a great deal of trouble if this conversation had happened earlier. Ms. Zappala stated that the additional money must come from the overlay reserve. Mr. Creem added that the overlay reserve comes from the tax levy and, as such, the amendment is consistent with the main affirmative motion..

MOVED: By Mr. Rosenstock that Annual Town Meeting Article 17, Appropriate for Needham Property Tax Assistance Program be amended from \$15,000 to \$15,715. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. No vote was taken.

MOVED: By Mr. Creem that in the event a motion to amend Article 17 in the amounts stated in Mr. Rosenstock's motion is brought forth, and the Selectmen vote to approve, then the Finance Committee approve such motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-0. (Mr.Taggart had not arrived.)

Mr. Creem asked whether the committee wanted to note with the motion that in the future this type of issue should be raised earlier in the process. Ms. Zappala stated that it would be better not to do that publicly. Mr. Rosenstock stated that the balancing of such a request is always subject to the availability of funds.

### **Suspend**

MOVED: By Mr. Zimbone that the meeting of the Finance Committee be suspended, to be reconvened as necessary during the course of Town Meeting. Mr. Borrelli seconded the motion. The meeting of the Finance Committee was suspended by unanimous vote 8-0 at approximately 6:55 pm. (Mr. Taggart arrived at approximately 7:40 pm.)

### **Adjourn**

MOVED: By Mr. Zimbone to adjourn the meeting of the Finance Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lunetta. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote: 9-0 at approximately 10:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Mizgerd,  
Executive Secretary