

**Needham Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting of November 7, 2011**

The meeting of the Finance Committee was called to order by the Chair, Matthew Borrelli, at approximately 6:34 pm in the Highland Room, Town Hall.

Present from the Finance Committee:

Matthew Borrelli, Chair; Richard Reilly, Vice Chair

Members: John Connelly, Richard Creem, Richard Lunetta, Gary McNeill, Steven Rosenstock, Lisa Zappala, Richard Zimbone

Citizen Requests

No citizens requested to speak.

Approval of Minutes: October 19, 2011 and October 26, 2011

Mr. Creem stated that he had submitted changes for the minutes of October 19, 2011 that had not yet been circulated.

MOVED: By Mr. Connelly that the Minutes of October 26, 2011 be approved as distributed. Mr. Creem seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 7-0-2, with Ms. Zappala and Mr. Lunetta abstaining.

Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Mr. Borrelli reported that Article 6 was being withdrawn.

Mr. Creem stated he had spoken with residents who were concerned with Article 14 and the plan to finance the Senior Center within the levy. In light of the fact that members of the Committee had previously stated they would be more comfortable with a plan to finance the Senior Center with a debt exclusion, he posed a question: whether the Committee would support a motion by a member of the Committee to amend the article so that half would be financed within the tax levy, and half financed through a debt exclusion. He stated that he had heard people saying that the Schools would be blamed if the Senior Center is not approved. He said he had spoken with the Moderator who would be amenable to having a Finance Committee member leave the table and sit with the Town Meeting Members to make a motion, and asked the opinion of the other members.

Mr. Reilly stated that if such a motion passed, and then the override vote failed, that would leave the Town nowhere. Mr. Rosenstock stated that the motion would slow the project and delay the ability to get contracts signed. He added that one issue raised earlier was that a delay of the project would cause additional costs due to winter weather. Mr. Connelly stated that if the article is passed as it stands, the Town is ready to start pre-qualifying subcontractors and contractors. Mr. Rosenstock stated that the Town will still have debt service available even with the Town Hall, PSAB and Senior Center projects. He noted that there are upcoming expected major

projects at Hillside, Mitchell and Pollard Schools which are all expected to be funded through override. He stated that he is comfortable with the proposed Senior Center financing, and sees no reason for a delay.

Mr. Reilly stated that the Finance Committee is on record as recommending adoption of the article and should not shift. He stated that if the article is voted down, then he would be comfortable backing the 50/50 approach in order to save the project. Mr. Borrelli stated that it is outside the purview of the Committee to suggest the different approach. He stated that is a policy decision for the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Zimbone noted that Article 14 needs a 2/3 vote to pass because it is funded with debt which makes passing more questionable. If it doesn't pass, then anything is fair game. He stated it was his understanding that the Board of Selectmen would put the debt exclusion on the ballot as quickly as possible if it does not pass at Town Meeting. Ms. Zappala stated that there is no omnibus article to bring the Senior Center back if it fails. She added that if an amendment is put forth, that must be voted before the article. She does not think that the Finance Committee should recommend something different from what was voted. She stated that a Committee member could step away as a Town Meeting member, but that they would still be viewed as a Finance Committee member.

Mr. Zimbone stated that the only thing the Committee should say to such an amendment would be that putting 50% of the cost outside of the levy would give the Town more contingency money. That would be a factual statement, without any need for a Committee vote. Mr. Connelly stated that the Committee has been analyzing the financing plan for weeks and should focus on the article before us. It would not look good for any Committee member to make such a motion. Mr. Borrelli stated that the Committee had months of discussion on the current proposal and should not make a decision on such a matter based on a ten minute discussion before Town Meeting.

Mr. Creem stated that he agreed with everything that was stated. However, it was his understanding that the Finance Committee would have had the opportunity to discuss all the financing options and reach a consensus. Instead, the Committee was presented with one proposal to support or not. He feels the project may have been jeopardized by this approach. Ms. Zappala stated that when the Committee vehemently wants to make its opinion known, the Committee has a vote and makes itself heard. She added that it is good to discuss issues so the Committee can know where other members stand, whether or not there is a vote.

Suspend

MOVED: By Mr. Zimbone that the meeting be suspended and reconvened as necessary during the course of Town Meeting. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 9-0 at approximately 7:05 pm.

Adjourn

MOVED: By Mr. Zimbone that the meeting be adjourned, there being no further business. Mr. Reilly seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 9-0, at approximately 11:55 p.m.

Documents: November 2011 Special Town Meeting Warrant

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Mizgerd
Executive Secretary/Staff Analyst

Approved December 14, 2011