

**West Newbury Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
Monday, March 21, 2016**

FinCom members joined the Selectman at 7:00 p.m. to participate in discussions regarding the Demolition Bylaw and the addition of a School Resource Officer to the budget.

Finance Committee Meeting

FinCom reconvened to the second floor hearing room. Chairman Codair called the Finance Committee to order at 8:25 p.m. in the second floor hearing room of the 1910 Building with Mr. DeLena, Mr. McGrath, Mr. Phillips, Mr. Winch, and Ms. Grammer present. Mr. Bertino was also present.

There being no public comment, the Committee considered its agenda.

Chairman Codair suggested a review of some of the adjustments thus far made to the budget. Ms. Grammer questioned Mr. Bertino as to the amount of Free Cash currently available. Mr. Bertino replied \$1.7 million is available. Funds for the current Articles would add up to \$800,000.00 which would bring Free Cash down to \$950,000.00. He remarked, most likely, not all of the Articles will pass. Mr. Bertino replied the town is using Free Cash to pay down the vehicles. Mr. Bertino stated Articles normally are paid from Stabilization but, rather than “put in” and “take out” funds, the town will pay off the vehicles with Free Cash.

Review of Budget Changes

Board of Assessors

Increase in Board of Assessor’s Salary

The requested increase of \$3,000.00 to the Board of Assessor’s salary was voted down by the Board of Selectmen.

Public Safety

Police Department

Addition of a School Resource Officer to the budget

With the addition of the School Resource Officer to the budget, salaries and wages are up \$63,000.00. Mr. Bertino added the actual amount would be \$75,000.00 with the inclusion of benefits and health care.

Mr. McGrath queried as to the salary level of the new officer. Mr. Bertino replied if the officer, such as a reservist was hired, they would be required to attend the 12-week academy while being paid. Chairman Codair asked Mr. Bertino why the SRO was not submitted as an Article. Mr. Bertino suggested Articles are generally one-time expenses. FinCom further requested it as a segregated line item.

Harbor Master

Increase of \$2,000.00

Mr. Bertino stated the Selectmen had asked him to add funds back into the account. Mr. Bertino reported the town was considering an agreement with Haverhill to lease to pump boat and in return pump out boats of West Newbury residents. The excise collected would be passed on to Haverhill.

Public Safety Dispatch

Overtime budget decreased by \$5,000.00

Mr. Bertino suggested the decrease was the recommendation of the Selectmen.

Education

Page School Phase II

Mr. Bertino reported at the end of Phase II, there will be a 2.5% increase from last year.

Whittier Regional Technical High School

Mr. Bertino stated the Whittier School Committee will meet on March 28 or 31 to set the budget. He continued by saying there are five West Newbury students currently attending Whittier. It appears there will be an approximate increase per student of 2.5%.

Essex Agricultural and Technical High School

Mr. Bertino reported there are no Pentucket students listed on the Cherry Sheet.

Department of Public Works

Ms. Grammer stated there appeared to be some increases in salaries from the requested to the approved budget. Mr. Bertino reported the department does not add in the COLA. Mr. McGrath inquired as to the number of salaried personnel. Mr. Bertino replied there are three people: the Director, a Building and Grounds Forman, and a Janitor. Chairman Codair noted the Snow & Ice Allotment was decreased by the Selectmen. The Highway, Trees & Sidewalks has increased. Mr. McGrath remarked costs are linked with the prices of asphalt and petroleum.

Conservation Commission

Increase in salary for the Conservation Agent

The Selectmen voted down the request.

Council on Aging

Increase in hours of the Director

The Selectmen voted down the request. Ms. Grammer was interested in Mr. Bertino's thoughts on the decision. He replied the work is budgeted and the town cannot overspend. Chairman Codair added some of the work could be delegated to volunteers. Mr. Bertino added there is a protocol to increasing hours. The Chairman of the Department should meet with FinCom regarding the increase in hours of an individual. The increase would be forwarded to the Town Meeting and Selectmen for a salary Bylaw vote. Mr. McGrath commented Ms. Woodbury is the Director for the Council on Aging. West Newbury does not have a Town Manager and therefore there is no one to keep track of hours. Mr. Bertino also stated the word "Overtime" is a hot button. Chairman Codair explained the newly formed Friends of the Council on Aging is in the process of raising funds. Members may be able to assist the Director in some tasks. Mr. DeLena inquired if there were an ad hoc for raises. It would be helpful if there were a Board to provide a form to review people. Mr. Bertino remarked there are newly established guidelines providing a mechanism to move within a position. He believes it is important to create a step system and thereby preventing the need for individuals to ask for a raise increase. Currently, there is no Human Resources or Personnel Manager to maintain evaluations. Chairman Codair asked if Ms. Woodbury will receive a COLA. Mr. Bertino replied she would.

Ms. Grammer inquired why some funds reflected a balance of \$1.00. Mr. Bertino replied the reason was to maintain the option of transferring funds into an account, if necessary.

Veterans

The assessment may decrease. Mr. Bertino stated line \$19,000.00 is the Veteran's share of the overhead. The Veterans Services has entered a consortium with nine other towns. Mr. Janes is the West Newbury Representative.

The Committee voted to approve the budget, 6-0-0.

Library

Increase in COLA

Mr. Bertino stated there was a turnover at the library this year. One individual retired and a new person was hired at a higher rate.

Recreation

Increase in Field Maintenance and Bandstand Expenses

Mr. Bertino reported there are three season field open and there is hope to increase bandstand activities.

Historical Commission

Chairman Codair invited comments. Mr. McGrath suggested he would like to see them receive \$2,000.00. Ms. Grammer stated a good portion of the CPA funds go to the Page School. Mr. McGrath reported, in 2010, one quarter of the CPA budget was devoted to a new boiler at the Page School. Chairman Codair agreed \$2,000.00 for the Historical Commission is a good beginning.

As FinCom reviewed the items, Chairman Codair stated some of the budgets items are uncontrollable.

Board of Selectmen

The Committee voted to approve the budget, 6-0-0.

Board of Assessors

Mr. Bertino stated the Board of Assessors had dropped their initial salary request found on Line 33.

Regarding raises for the Chief Assessor and the Assistant, both Ms. Grammer and Mr. DeLena suggested it was difficult to decide in either direction without the background of an employee review.

The Committee voted to approve the budget, 6-0-0.

Finance Department

The Committee voted to approve the budget, 6-0-0.

Town Clerk/Town Counsel

The budget was submitted to Mr. Bertino with only the addition of the COLA. *The Committee voted to approve the budget, 6-0-0.*

Conservation Commission

The Committee voted to approve the budget, 6-0-0.

Planning Board

The Committee voted to approve the budget, 6-0-0.

Board of Appeals

The Committee voted to approve the budget, 6-0-0.

Public Safety

Police Department

School Resource Officer

Mr. McGrath suggested there are some loose ends with regards to the duties of the SRO. Chairman Codair remarked it would like to see pass and stated she was in favor of adding \$63,000.00 plus benefits to the police budget. In the future, Mr. McGrath stated it would be most likely, the Police Union may push for a full-time second officer on the midnight shift. Although it is a possibility for future discussion, it was decided to vote for the addition of the SRO.

The Committee voted to approve the addition of an SRO to the budget, 6-0-0.

Human Services

Board of Health

FinCom was in agreement with the $\frac{2}{3}$ increase to the Health Agent's salary and the increase to that of the Administrative Assistant. *The Committee voted to approve the budget, 6-0-0.*

Council on Aging

FinCom agreed with the Selectmen there would be no increase in hours for the Director.

The Committee voted to approve the budget, 6-0-0.

Library

The Committee voted to approve the budget, 6-0-0.

Historical Commission

FinCom agreed with the expense increase of \$2,000.00. *The Committee voted to approve the budget, 6-0-0.*

FinCom Business

FinCom will review the Articles next week. Ms. Grammer suggested the FinCom Booklet for the All Town Meeting will need to be completed on the April 21, 2016.

Upcoming Schedule

The next meeting of the Finance Committee is scheduled for Monday, March 28, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.

The Committee meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisa J. Grammer
Recording Secretary