

**Board of Selectmen with Finance Committee  
July 13, 2010 - Meeting Minutes**

**Select Board members present:** Al Springer, and J. April Stein (arrived at 7:30 PM.) **Absent:** Chairman Elaine Puleo,

**Finance Committee members present:** Chairman Patrick Callahan and members: William "Bill" Wells, Rus Wilson, George Arvanitis, and Lori Tuominen. **Absent:** Marie "Weezie" Houle, and Gary Hirshfield. **Also present:** Town Administrator Rebecca Torres and Administrative Secretary Leslie Bracebridge

**Meeting opened at 7:00 PM**

**Topics**

**1. Year-end Transfers:**

- Sources of FY 11 Free Cash:
  - \$55,000 from a one-time tax property sale.
  - Return of expenditure balances is conservatively \$140,000; it could be higher.
- Coupled with the \$489,892 in unused FY 10 Free Cash, it is estimated that the certified free cash for FY 10 will come in between \$700,000 and \$750,000.
- Free cash combined with the \$332,638 in Stabilization (includes the May 1, 2010 Annual Town Meeting addition of \$30,000) will bring the town's total cash in at over \$1,000,000.
- Encumbrances and carry-overs on the FY 10 budget are conservatively over \$200,000 (including such things as the solar panels, the up-coming audit, some legal fees and other outstanding bills.)
- A number of tests still need to be covered from the \$45,000 in the Hazardous Waste Clean-up line making it closer to \$40,000 in reality.
  - That line may take a big hit when the hazardous soil digging starts.
  - The line is being used cautiously as there will be final reports and closeout activity.
  - The \$40,000 will be needed if digging under the fire station is required.
- If the 3% sales tax is approved in November, local aid will get slashed mid-year.

**The Finance Committee unanimously voted to rescind their reserve fund transfer vote of June 22 and in its place approve revised reserve fund transfer amounts of:**

**\$1,388.89 for the Town Administrator's salary line,  
\$3083.15 for elementary school transportation,  
\$2,769.95 for snow removal expenses, and  
\$7,916.20 for health insurance for a total of  
\$15,158.19.**

**The Finance Committee unanimously voted to approve other account transfers of:**

**\$ 466.16 from police department operating to police cruiser maintenance,  
\$5,000.00 from Amherst-Pelham Regional school line to elementary school transportation,  
\$5,000.00 from snow removal wages to snow removal expenses,  
\$4,941.00 from veteran's benefits to veteran's programs, totaling  
\$15,412.03.**

**The Select Board unanimously voted to approve the same other account transfers of:**

**\$ 466.16 from police department operating to police cruiser maintenance,  
\$5,000.00 from Amherst-Pelham Regional school line to elementary school transportation,  
\$5,000.00 from snow removal wages to snow removal expenses,  
\$4,941.00 from veteran's benefits to veteran's programs, totaling  
\$15,412.03.**

**The combined approved reserve fund transfers: \$15,158.19  
and other account transfers: \$15,412.03  
totaled: \$30,570.22.**

## **2. Regionalization Study Committee's June 29 final report and meeting in Amherst:**

- Leverett does not want to change from Union 28 and is not forming a study committee.
- Shutesbury is open-minded to change and has a study committee.
- Pelham has a study committee but hasn't reached a conclusion.
- Amherst has no committee and does not want to regionalize.

**Outcome of the meeting:** Each town will decide what it prefers to do in-house and send that information back to the region through each regional school committee representative. The Amherst-P Regional School Committee will decide whether or not to create a new regionalization study committee.

- There is a push to get something useable in the near future.
- The report recommends going forward; it has more details than the Power Point presentation.
- Some of the better ideas didn't relate to the regional school, so how do you propose them? Becky:
  - Sees a committee made of three or four members of various boards from each of the towns.
  - The committee needs to be more autonomous.
  - Shutesbury's model study committee helps free up the thinking beyond the elementary school.
  - The report only focused on the administrative costs. We need something more dramatic than the 2% savings of the administration costs.
  - And maintain quality education for Shutesbury's children.
  - People resist change. There has to be change.
  - Shutesbury's study committee will bring in experts in the field.
  - It's the amount of money that goes to salaries that costs, we need to stop giving out step raises an addition to the 3% raises.
  - Towns balance budgets on the backs of teachers at the expense of kids.
  - It's a complicated issue.
  - 60% of the town's budget is spent on education.
  - When Becky was first on the Finance Committee, there was no state aid. Now the town is "hooked" on state aid.

## **3. The unleaded gas pump at the Highway Department leaks during use. Repair or replace?:**

- The current "Gas Boy" pump is no longer made and no replacement parts are available.
- \$700 has already been spent trying to repair it.
- Additional repairs of between \$1300 and \$1,500 are needed.
- A new pump and pedestal would cost between \$6,000 and \$8,000.
- A meter that measures gas use by each department is not in use right now because it doesn't fit the current pump.
  - i. Previous town audits state that such a meter is desirable.
  - ii. A new pump could be selected to match the available meter.
- Funds could come from Finance Committee reserves or from a future town meeting vote.
- A solution is needed as soon as possible.
- Estimates on repair and/or replacement will be in tomorrow.
- Becky will talk more with the Highway Superintendent and the Fire Chief tomorrow.
- The proposed replacement pump is a commercial grade pump as opposed to "farm-grade".
  - i. Do we need a commercial grade pump for just the Highway pick-up and the Police and Fire Chiefs' vehicles?
  - ii. All the other vehicles (trucks) use the diesel pump, which is working fine.
  - iii. Not much research has been done into prices of other smaller "farm-grade" units.
- Could a used pump be found on Ebay or elsewhere?

### **Conclusion:**

- 1. More information is needed.**
- 2. The last thing wanted is another gas spill.**

- 3. The danger of combustion is not an issue as the vehicles that would use it are currently being refilled at area gas stations until the pump is repaired or replaced.**

**Selectmen unanimously voted to authorize use of the Town Hall lower level Select Board meeting room by a Parkinson's Support Group on Fridays between 1 and 2:30pm.**

**The next Finance Committee meeting will be Tuesday September 7<sup>th</sup>** (skipping August and otherwise in keeping with the regular first Tuesday of the month schedule.)

Though committee reorganization for the coming year was on the Finance Committee agenda for tonight, in the absence of "Weezie" and Gary, **Patrick volunteered to stay on as Finance Committee Chairman through September, at which time the committee will reorganize its officers for the coming year.**

**The next Select Board meeting will be Tuesday July 20.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Bracebridge  
Administrative Secretary