

February 28, 2008 Finance Committee Meeting, 7:00

Meeting was attended by Terri Ackerman, Lisa Call, Larry Pape, Frank Heineman, Matt Emsley, John Potter, John Kilcoyne, Bob Brown, Bruce Turner, Claire Fisher, Loret Schur, Nancy Perry, Melanie Clark, Evelyn McNamara, Karen Pare, and Dick Sheppard

Terri reported that the initial request from WRSD request a total increase from FY 08 of 4.5%. Larry raised the point that this may look okay, but we need to look at overall budget, including increase in state aid and may be reduced further. We still need a representative from our FinCom to represent Sterling with superintendent's task force. Our cost to Monty Tech has decreased because Sterling has two fewer students attending.

We have no questions for Extension Services.

Loret Schur spoke on behalf of the Personnel board. She wanted to know the best way to contact the FinCom should it need to. Larry volunteered his e-mail to be used as necessary. Terri will act as the go-between our two boards. FinCom will attend the Personnel Boards June meeting to discuss mutual goals and expectations. Loret stated that the board would welcome outside professional help though it has never been in the budget.

Melanie Clark explained the increase in election costs. She is able to take \$2000 from the election expense account and put it into the elections wage account. She will reduce the election expenses by \$1000, making the FY09 election wages account \$7300 and the election expenses budget to \$11,000. Melanie also discussed dog licenses, each is \$8 or \$12 and the town receives a lot more due to the \$25 late fee. There have been a number of court cases as well. The goal is to break even and towns are not allowed to profit from dog licenses. The state is considering a cat license, and Melanie is praying that does not happen.

Bruce reported on the treasurer's budget. Increases are in part, due to mailings, (quarterly and excise taxes), unemployment spike, two claims this year, (one is regarding someone who is still working part time, Bruce is very angry with the IRS), and some legal costs. The biggest increase is with support for new software. Eventually, this software will save money.

Evelyn McNamara discussed the Assessor's budget. She explained that an outside contractor does the re-evaluations. Every three years is re-certified by the state. This does not cost any more, though it is more work for the contractor. The fee is already set. Discussion followed regarding past articles. Larry thought that it was established to have a set amount each year, rather than a spike at particular intervals. Evelyn knows nothing about this. The account, \$60,000 has remained the same since she came on board in 2001. The budget request is not actually a request, we realized. It is existing accounts. She will report back to us.

Karen Pare reported regarding Information Technology. She oversees the need of the Butterick building only at this time. When purchasing licensure for this building, can it be grouped with other town systems/computers? She believes so. It was noted that other heads should be aware of this. FinCom feels Karen's role should be to consult for all departments. Tasks to include purchasing, (always town wide) negotiating, licensing, service person, web design and disaster

planning. As of yet, the town does not have a computer usage license, needs a policy. Matt requested a list of what Karen feels should be done, recommendations for the town, basic requirements and how to bring it together. She noted that she didn't want to step on anyone's toes, who may be servicing other departments already. Dick Sheppard agreed it is best dealing as one entity. We could establish standardized protection, it'd be more efficient and easier to maintain. I.T. budget should include needs of other departments. FinCom feels we should move forward to centralize to be most cost effective.

Terri presented the board with a draft of the description for the Facilities Director. Depending on hours, could this be a half time position. It would be best to start with fewer hours and add as needed. Rather than start at full time and have to reduce later.

Terri also discussed how Sterling is unique in how its DPW board signs off on all Ch. 90 monies. She could not find another community that manages this fund in this manner. Changes may be made to reflect at least some oversight. We will also discuss further new state laws to divide stabilization account.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45.