

## Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

13 September 2011

Held in COA Center Butterick Building

Attendees: Larry Pape, Matt Emsley, Bob Brown, John Kilcoyne, Frank Heinemann

Absent: Lisa Call Mike Murphy

-Meeting called to order at 7:00PM

-Reviewed status reports: Reserve Account is at \$100,000 (no transfer during July or August)

FY2012 budget will see an extra \$42,399 in local aid due to a one time reversion bill passed by the state. With this new aid, the estimated average tax bill will now be \$4,483 (1.52% over FY2011) versus previous estimate of \$4,497

-New Health Insurance Legislation: Committee reviewed 3 August 2011 memo from Town Administrator to Board of Selectmen on this subject and briefly discussed the process (town acceptance of the law, timeline, committee formation, hiring of consultant and actions decisions required, etc.) and possible impacts on Sterling. Committee will continue to seek updates from Town Administrator on this activity.

-FY2013 Budget Process, Timetable and strategy: Committee reviewed proposed calendar based on FY2012 timetable used. Committee would like to see warrant closing date moved out closer to annual meeting date (somewhere around mid-April) to address citizen concerns raised in this year's process. Committee would also like to have Sterling WRSD committee reps come to our November meeting to discuss FY2013 budget process and strategy/concerns. Concern continues to be expressed regarding cessation of Federal Stimulus funds and WRSD resulting requests from the member towns. Strategy will be to again strive for flat average tax bill taking into account possible savings from new health insurance law adoption and actions. Further discussion revolved around possible "high ticket" items (Senior Center, 1835 Old Town Hall, GASB45, Capital items, etc.) and their impact on the town budget. Committee was also made aware of Facility Managers request to meet with them at some point in the near future to discuss facilities budget.

-Members moved to join BOS in session to discuss Master Grant proposal involving Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) and participation in the Montachusett Visioning Council (MVC). In concept the committee supports the need for a town Master Plan, but would like clarity on what exactly the Master Plan proposed in the MVC process would include. The committee is also concerned that the town should only undertake such an action if the plan is actually used versus simple "put on the shelf". The committee proposed adopting some type of on-going process analogous to the budget

process or capital 5 year plan process to ensure on-going review and use of such a Master Plan. Committee returned to COA Center for the remainder of its meeting.

-Citizen request for audit action: Committee reviewed and discussed response/action to address letter from Claire Stidsen to the Finance Committee requesting a "financial investigation of the office of Town Treasurer". The committee appreciates Claire's concern in light of the departure of the Treasurer and the desire for an audit. The Committee feels that the annual audit process, if initiated post haste, can best address this concern given the timing closely coincides with the departure. The committee will request via the Town Administrator and Chairman of the Board of Selectmen to request the town's auditors to commence their FY2011 Fiscal Audit as soon as possible and be cognizant of, and take into account, the Treasurer's departure. Larry will send a letter to Claire stating this as well as contact the Town Administrator and BOS Chairman to make the request.

-Association of Town Finance Committees (AFTC) annual meeting 15 Oct. 2011: Committee was made aware of the upcoming AFTC meeting and discussed possible attendees. Latest date to submit names is 10 October 2011. Members will let Larry know if they plan to attend.

-Personnel Board: Frank Heinemann gave a brief update on latest action of the Personnel Board and indicated that they are looking for any comments on revision #5 of the Time and Attendance Policy and revised Time Sheets. Larry will send a response indicating we are fine with both as long as both have been reviewed and approved by Atty. Collins.

-Future meetings: Committee agreed to meet on 11 October 2011 and 8 Nov. at 7 pm.

-Meeting adjourned at 9:02pm