



TOWN OF TEWKSBURY

TOWN HALL
1009 MAIN ST
TEWKSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS 01876

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Thomas L. Cooke, Chairman
David Aznavoorian, Vice Chair
Damin Sutherby, Clerk
Ralph Ford
Raymond Lisiecki
David McGinness
Kelly Brooks

Meeting Minutes for April 30, 2013

1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:17 p.m. by Thomas Cooke, Chairman, at the Tewksbury Police Headquarters. Present were David Aznavoorian, Raymond Lisiecki, and David McGinness. Also present were Richard Montuori, Town Manager, Karen Kucala, Finance Director, and Melissa Johnson, Recording Secretary.

Ralph Ford, Damin Sutherby and Kelly Brooks were not present.

2) School Department Budget FY2014 and Capital Outlay Budget Warrant Articles

Present was Jeffrey Sands, School Business Manager, Dr. John O'Connor, Superintendent of Schools, Dennis Francis, School Committee and Lisa Pucci, School Committee.

Mr. Cooke noted that he received a revised School Department budget on April 8, 2013. The School Committee approved the School Department budget on or about March 27, 2013.

Dr. O'Connor explained that there was an approximate \$214,550.00 shortfall in the School Department's FY14 budget. Mr. Sands noted that the gap is mostly due to the new items at the new high school such as maintenance and technology costs. Mr. Sands reviewed how he closed the shortfall gap and the changed within the FY14 budget:

- a) Staff Salary Savings – There was recently a turnover in staffing and 3 people left. As a result, there salaries have been replaced with a lower step salary saving approximately \$31,000.00.
- b) Legal Fees – Mr. Sands noted that the legal fee costs fluctuate and it can be hard to project an exact amount. This was evaluated and decreased from \$110,000.00 to \$90,000.00.

- c) Student Parking Fees – The cost for student parking is typically \$200.00. This was reduced to \$50.00 during construction. The cost is being brought back up to \$150.00.
- d) Copy Center – Mr. Sands explain that there have been requests made to keep the copy center open an additional 4 weeks resulting in an increased cost of \$10,000.00.
- e) Unemployment - Mr. Sands noted that there have not been any layoffs so he has reduced this number by \$15,000.00.
- f) Circuit Breaker Offset – increased by \$16,000.00

Mr. Sands noted that he also met with Mr. Montuori to see if he could help. Mr. Montuori has offered \$125,000.00 from free cash (Article 9) to help address the shortfall.

Mr. Aznavoorian asked if there are any other areas where Mr. Sands feels that there still may be unknowns that could increase costs. Mr. Sands expressed concerns with the costs associated with the new high school and the condition and age of the Elementary Schools. Mr. Sands noted that in the future technology could also be a concern.

Mr. Francis noted that student achievement is always something that the School Committee looks towards and they have reduced class sizes tremendously and continue to works towards this.

Mr. Cooke discussed the migration that typically occurs in the Fall and questioned whether a reserve should be built in to address this as well as the IEP's as there may be a need for additional aides if there is an increase in the number of IEP's that are issued. Mr. Sands explained that this is something that is reviewed on a daily basis and while homeless transportation has increased there is no reason for concern at this point.

Mr. McGinness asked if there are any plans to address the problems at the Elementary School and the cost associated with same. Dr. O'Connor explained that a Statement of Interest to MSBA approximately two weeks ago. Three of the four elementary schools are 50 plus years old. The Dewing School is 40-45 years old and not ADA compliant. The request made was for one new elementary school to house the students at the Heath Brook and Trahan and to renovate the Dewing School to house both the Dewing students as well as the North Street students. Dr. O'Connor noted that no significant capital improvements have been made at any of the elementary schools. As a result, MSBA could state that the schools should be renovated instead. Mr. McGinness requested a walk thru of the elementary schools over the summer.

Mr. Sands reviewed Article 8 of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant in which \$608,345.00 is being requested to be transferred to the School Department from the Stabilization Fund. Mr. Sands reviewed the breakdown of costs:

- a) School Buildings and Maintenance - \$284,345.00. Included in this are items such as vehicle maintenance, bathroom partitions, Dewing School gym, retile

4 classrooms at the North Street, curbing and parking lot safety, industrial floor scrubbers and roof repairs at the North Street school.

- b) School Technology - \$139,000.00 – Installing a wireless network at the Wynn and Ryan schools costing approximately \$32,500 per school, smart boards for the remaining 8 classrooms (all other classrooms have been done), and classroom computers at the Wynn.
- c) School Instructional - \$185,000.00 – Training and professional development, 30 interactive classroom response systems, text books, and Special Education assessments, testing materials, and training.

Mr. Cooke noted that last year the School Department purchased a new vehicle and is requesting to do the same this year. Mr. Cooke asked if these vehicles are meeting the requirements of the green community designation. Mr. Sands confirmed this.

Mr. Cooke noted that Article 9 requests \$125,000.00 from free cash for the purpose of maintaining the new high school. Mr. Sands explained that the costs at the new high school were difficult to project and there was a shortfall. Mr. McGinness asked if these costs are expected to increase again in FY15. Mr. Sands explained that he does not expect them to increase as they are operational costs.

Mr. Cooke asked if a fee schedule has been set up for the use of the high school. Dr. O'Connor confirmed this and noted that the School Committee has approved the schedule. Mr. Francis explained that they reviewed how surrounding communities handle this and did a hybrid version. Dr. O'Connor will provide a copy of this to the Finance Committee members.

Discussion took place on the items the school department would address if they were to receive additional funds. Dr. O'Connor noted that a list was compiled with a total of approximately \$500,000.00. Mr. Montuori requested the list be provided to him.

Discussion took place on the increase in State and Federal Aid. Mr. Sands noted that it is not a significant increase, but he will work with Mr. Montuori to put together a plan on how the money will be spent.

MOTION: Mr. Lisiecki made the motion to approve the Town Manager's recommended FY14 School Department budget in the amount of \$46,308,416.00; seconded by Mr. Aznavoorian and the motion carried 4-0.

MOTION: Mr. Lisiecki made the motion to adopt Article 8 as presented; seconded by Mr. Aznavoorian and the motion carried 4-0.

MOTION: Mr. Lisiecki made the motion to adopt Article 9 as presented; seconded by Mr. Aznavoorian and the motion carried 4-0.

3) Snow and Ice Over Expenditure Report

Ms. Kucala noted that she is working on the final report for this year.

4) Lateral and Reserve Fund Transfer Request

There were no Lateral or Reserve Fund Transfer requests presented.

5) Correspondence

Discussion took place on the recent mailing sent out by the Firefighters and how the Finance Committee members feel about this. It was the consensus of the Committee to support Mr. Montuori's recommendation and that the stabilization fund should not be used for reoccurring costs.

**6) FY2014 Department Budget Discussion and Recommendations
Unclassified Line Budgets, School Department Budget and School Department
Capital Outlay Budget**

This item will be addressed at the next meeting.

7) FY2014 Budget Reconsideration of Budget Line Item Discussion

This item will be addressed at the next meeting.

**8) Annual and Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles Discussion and
Recommendations**

This item will be addressed at the next meeting.

9) Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Mr. Aznavoorian made the motion to table the approval of the meeting minutes presented; seconded by Mr. Lisiecki and the motion carried 4-0.

10) New Business

There was no new business.

11) Committee Member Reports

There were no committee member reports to be discussed.

12) Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Finance Committee will take place on May 2, 2013 at the Tewksbury Police Headquarters.

13) Documents Presented and/or Discussed

FY2014 Town and School Department Budgets
Warrant Articles for Annual Town Meeting May 6, 2013 and Special Town Meeting May
8, 2013

Adjourn.

MOTION: Mr. Aznavoorian made the motion to adjourn at 9:35 p.m.; seconded by Mr. McGinness and the motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: _____
Damin Sutherby, Clerk

Date