

**MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 2, 2005**

ATTENDING: Todd Abbott, John Carter, Brenda Edgerly, Duane Fay, David Fedrizzi, Rebekah Higgins, Cindy Moore

NOT ATTENDING: None

David called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The spreadsheets and budgets were compared. A memo from Nancy indicated that the Selectmen had allowed a request submitted by Home Health (Visiting Nurse Service) to be forwarded to this committee even though that organization had missed the deadline date. It was noted that there was a "0" amount appropriated to the VNA last year.

The item of an increase in the snowplow contracts was also mentioned in Nancy's memo. The committee questioned the request for \$300,000.00 since this indicated that it included the cost of salt and sand. Why would the line item remain for \$141,000.00--Winter Roads expense? If the cost of salt and sand is included in the snowplow contract that would reduce the Public Works department budget by \$159,000.00. Information on contract details such as the cost of sand, the cost of salt and the bid amount submitted would be helpful. The committee wants to understand the process and the figures behind the increase from \$131,481.00 to \$300,000.00 in plowing figures from last year to this year' budget request.

More details are needed to better understand the re-evaluation plan that was suggested by Jerry Daigle at the most recent Selectmen's meeting as was indicated in the memo. Since \$75,000.00 has been raised two years ago and carried forward, is the suggested \$125,000 a total figure or does it combine with the \$75,000 and total \$200,000? An article for re evaluation will appear on the on the 2005 warrant.

The committee was in agreement with the Selectmen agreeing that the amount indicated in the article can be reduced but cannot be increased. However, it was noted that allowing money articles not essential to the operation of the town (specifically Social Agency requests) to be placed on the warrant after the deadline is not good policy and it is hoped that this does not establish a precedent. The policy is in place requiring a referendum vote for all capital purchases over \$25,000.00. The Finance Committee voted unanimously to consider reducing this figure to \$10,000.00.

It was noted that the increase in salary for Motor Vehicle Agent increased more than 4%. Regarding fuel oil, a bid process would be preferred. J.P. Carroll always gets the oil contract. How is this awarded? When was the last time this was put out to bid? The line item of electricity under Municipal Buildings went down by \$5,000.00. Was it over-budgeted last year?

Salaries will be discussed at a later date

It was further suggested that all revenues at the Transfer Station be rolled over into the General Account and be listed as line item income.

Article #29: As has been done in previous years, the committee agrees that the sentence, 'All fees generated above billing costs will be used for capital improvements to be spent with approval from the Board of Selectmen' be removed from the article.

The offices of Fire Chief and EMA will be invited to attend our next meeting to discuss their budget requests. In the following weeks other departments (specifically, Transfer Station and Road Commissioner) will be asked to support their requested amounts.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

The next meetings of the Finance Committee will be on Wednesday, February 9, 16, and 23 at 7:00.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Carter,
Secretary