**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, March 24, 2015, 6:30 PM**

**Lower Conference Room**

**Members Present:** John Heffernan (Chair), William Podolski, Russell Stamm, Maureen Hanlon, Dave Roberts, Liz O’Donnell, Steve Bilafer, and Kevin Hughes.

**Members Absent:** Sue Carney

Mr. Heffernan called meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

6:30 PM: ARTICLE SIXTEEN- *By the Board of Assessors. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, or borrow a sum of money to provide for the triennial certification of all Real and Personal Property located within the Town of Dedham, as required by the Massachusetts General Laws, AND to allow for specialized services and support documenting the basis of the values, if required, or take any other action relative thereto. Referred to Finance & Warrant Committee for study and report.*

Rick Henderson informed the Committee that the request is for $125,000. Mr. Henderson explained that the majority of this money would go to the revaluation company, Real Estate Research Consultants, Inc., (RRC).

Mr. Stamm asked if this year would cost more being a certified year.

ARTICLE FOUR:*To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds or borrow to implement capital improvements and capital projects, or take any other action relative thereto.* *Referred to Finance & Warrant Committee for study and report.*

Mr. Heffernan explained that the CEC got started early this season, and ended up getting pushed off later than they had planned due to snow and necessary postponing of meetings. He briefly described the new rating system that was put into place for the Capital requests. He explained that he was unsure of the rating system at first but was surprised at how well it ended up working as it generated good conversation.

Mr. Kern explained that he had optimism about process working with the new rating system, and it actually exceeded his expectations. Mr. Kern used the CEC’s ratings and made alterations to his recommendations based on some of the results.

Susan Fay, member of the CEC, reviewed all of the CEC recommendations line by line with brief explanations, stopping for questions as needed.

Jason Mammone informed the Committee that some of his amounts have changed.

Engineering Computer Workstations has gone down from $15,000 to $7,500 and the Design for Rustcraft Rd/Bussey St. has increased from $325,000 to $505,000. They have found that the Bussey Street Bridge is deficient.

Ms. Hanlon asked if the Endicott Library painting would still need to be funded or if insurance could cover the painting after damages from leak. Denise Moroney confirmed that the issues are not related, and the leak was not in an area with painted walls, they were brick walls.

Ms. O’Donnell asked a question about the rating system. Ms. Fay suggested that they not pay attention to the rating system numbers, as they were not intended to be included and it is a larger discussion she did not expect to get into with the Committee.

Ms. Hanlon asked where the flooring needed to be replaced in the High School. Ms. Moroney responded in the classrooms, and explained the need for asbestos abatement.

Mr. Stamm asked about the SCBA Lease, and asked how much in comparison to buy? It was confirmed that it is actually a lease to buy and the cost would be the same.

Mr. Kern reminded the Committee that the results of the Information Technology study from this year are expected next week, but he did get some preliminary information from the study and they have pinpointed urgent items that should be addressed now.

Mr. Heffernan would like a combined CEC/FinCom meeting in to discuss the full results of the IT study at a later date.

7:36 PM: Sprague Street Safety Project-

Jim Maher expressed concern with the delays on the project approval and explained that the interested parties have been asked to be patient until funding is available, and they have been patient.

A letter of support from Selectman Dennis Teehan was read into the record.

Mike Butler, Board of Selectmen spoke and mentioned the renovation of the Greenlodge Street intersection. He explained that the Sprague Street intersection is even worse than what Greenlodge Street was. He recommended that they visit the sites and come to their own conclusion. He added that while there may not be a perfect solution to the problem, it would be better to do something than nothing.

Mary Gilbert commented that she recently experienced this intersection and thought it was dangerous.

Rose Gray of the Manor neighborhood commented about tractor trailers being parked in the way of the intersection, and it not being very pretty. She said that she has lived there 43 years and the intersection is very dangerous. She added that they were promised this would be done, and they have been waiting 10 years.

Jim Maher added that if you grew up in the neighborhood you are more cautious, and with the traffic flow, primarily in high traffic times, you are taking your life in your hands at this intersection.

Mr. Stamm commented that he agrees the intersection seems to be a mess, but the crash data seemed low. He asked why the tractor trailers were there. Ms. Gray responded that they are stopping for a cup of coffee and a sandwich. Mr. Stamm commented that he was surprised it was not included to be funded this year. He pointed out that the Dedham Square project cost ten times as much and was done for both safety and aesthetics.

Mr. Heffernan explained why he voted against the project at the CEC. He explained that in past years it was presented as the Gateway to the Manor which really came across as a beautification project. This year it was presented as the Sprague Street Safety Project. He doesn’t have a problem with the project being for both safety and aesthetics. In discussions the project was presented as safety neutral. Also, he saw an issue with the trucks. He explained that as a result of the project one of two things is going to happen. The trucks will either pull into the neighborhood, or they will not stop and cause a business to lose business.

Mary Gilbert commented that she was surprised to hear Mr. Heffernan say the project was presented as safety neutral, as it was never presented to her that way.

Mr. Bilafer explained that he would like to find a way to support this project, and asked Mr. Kern what the potential last minute changes could be. He asked if safety neutral is truly the best they can do. Mr. Mammone explained the safety neutral part is the corridor of Sprague Street itself, and with narrowing the road you may have more issues there is a give and take- improvement on the intersection, but not necessarily the throughway.

Mr. Maher commented that George Wons of the Blue Jay is not in support of the project as it will affect parking for his business. He is not able to attend these meetings due to personal responsibilities.

Joan Connors, resident in the Manor neighborhood, commented that George Wons does have the right to be concerned as the intersection will not allow trucks to park as easily will affect his business.

Liz O’Donnell commented that it is hard to look at this request without being able to compare its crash data with other intersections. Ms. O’Donnell asked if they could restrict trucks from going down certain streets. Mr. Kern explained that the outcome of doing that is generally not positive.

Mr. Podolski asked why this project was not brought in front of the Planning Board. Mr. Mammone explained that the Planning Board does not have purview over public right of ways.

ARTICLE TWENTY**-** *By the Dedham Retirement Board. To see if the Town will vote pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 32, §103 (j), to approve the acceptance by the Dedham Retirement Board of an increase of $2,000 in the maximum base amount on which the cost of living adjustment is calculated for pension payments, which would increase such base amount from $13,000 to a base amount of $15,000 as of July 1, 2015, and which, once accepted, may not be revoked, or take any other action relative thereto.* *Referred to Finance & Warrant Committee for study and report.*

Lynn Carley was present from the Dedham Retirement Board.

Mr. Stamm recommended that this article be supported by the Committee.

Mike Butler commented regarding his support.

Ms. Carley explained that Dedham is in a good position, and comparatively there is a board in Norfolk County that is only 38% funded.

Mr. Stamm left the meeting.

8:46 PM: ARTICLE NINE- *By the Finance Committee: To see what sum of money the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds for deposit in the Stabilization Fund, or to take any other action relative thereto. Referred to Finance & Warrant Committee for study and report.*

Mr. Kern explained that he presented options to the Board of Selectmen of a contribution to the general stabilization fund of $250,000 from either direct taxation or free cash. He thinks the contribution should be made out of free cash as it will reduce the increase in the tax rate this year, and the Town is in a very strong position with free cash and this would be a very good use of free cash.

8:48 PM: ARTICLE ELEVEN**-** *By the Town Manager at the request of the Director of Finance*. *To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum or sums to one or more special purpose stabilization funds, or take any other action relative thereto. Referred to Finance & Warrant Committee for study and report.*

Carol Coppola explained that she has provided a schedule to the Finance Committee this evening of the Robin Reyes Fund. The objective of this article is to move the receipts.

8:50 PM: ARTICLE TWELVE-*By the Town Manager at the request of the Director of Finance. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate money from one or more special purpose stabilization funds to one or more of the stated purposes for such funds to be expended at the direction of a specified officer or multiple member body of the Town, or take any other action relative thereto.* *Referred to Finance & Warrant Committee for study and report.*

Carol Coppola referenced information that she had provided to the Committee this evening. She explained that they need to authorize the funds to come out of the Robin Reyes Fund. She explained that they should expect that they should be expecting this to come back in front of them in the Fall.

8:55 PM: ARTICLE SEVENTEEN**-** *By the Town Manager at the request of the Finance Director*. *To see what sum of money the Town will raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds to operate the Sewer Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year commencing on July 1, 2015, or take any other action relative thereto.* *Referred to Finance & Warrant Committee for study and report.*

Carol Coppola explained that there are a few changes this year that were supposed to carry forward in the FY14 budget, but did not for some reason. After speaking with Jason Mammone the change was made for this fiscal year. There is also a reduction in the amount for computer workstations since the total request was reduced from $15,000 to $7,500, it would be $3,750 now since half funded from the Sewer Enterprise Fund. The most significant change is the revenue line as it is retained earnings. Mr. Kern explained this further and explained why is proposing to use $111,000 in retained earnings. He wants to make sure that he is representing the costs accurately and would like to look at this more going forward before determining if rates need to be raised.

ARTICLE EIGHTEEN-*By the Town Manager. To see what sum of money the Town will raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds to operate the Endicott Estate*

*Enterprise Fund for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2015, or take any other action relative thereto. Referred to Finance & Warrant Committee for study and report.*

Carol Coppola explained that this fund also takes allocations from the operating budget, and right now all of this is budgeted in Article 3. $260,000 needs to be moved from the General Fund Operating Budget and associated with the Endicott Estate Enterprise Fund.

9:10 PM: Mr. Podolski made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Hughes. **It was voted 8-0**