

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Town Hall Council Chambers
February 27, 2007 - Tuesday

Present: Kenneth DiFazio, Chairperson
Susan Kay, Vice-Chairperson
Paul J. Leary, Councilor
Patrick O'Connor, Councilor

Not Present: Michael Molisse, Councilor

Also Present: Michael Smart, Councilor
James Wilson, Chief Financial Officer
Robert O'Connor, Director, DPW
George Lane, Town Solicitor
Caroline LaCroix –Director of Administrative and Comm. Svcs.

Recording Secretary: Mary Briggs

Chairman DiFazio called the Budget/ Management Committee meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

07 007 – Re-appropriation to DPW Overtime

Mr. Wilson reported on the need to re-appropriate \$15,000 from the DPW salary account to the overtime accounts. Mr. O'Connor explained this represent funding needed to the end of the year, both in overtime scheduled for the balance of FY07 and for anticipated emergency response for the same time period. Mr. Wilson explained that this negates the need to come back to council for year-end measures while the FY08 budget process is underway.

There was a brief discussion with the committee regarding whether this may have been initially under-funded, and the current balance of the line item, which is negative.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Leary to refer 07-007 to the full council with a favorable recommendation and was seconded by Councilor Kay. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A MOTION was made by Councilor O'Connor to take item 07 010 out of order and was seconded by Councilor Kay. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

07 010 – Water Mains/Route 18 from Water Capital Projects Residuals Account

Mr. Wilson requested \$300,000 appropriation from the residual account. Each year, all of

the 01 accounts are cleaned out and placed into the residual accounts. This will fund the water main upgrading on Route 18, in conjunction with the work being done by Mass Highway. Upgrading includes increasing the 6" and 10" mains to 8" and 12", and tie-ins to the lesser mains.

There was a discussion with the committee regarding how changing main sizes will affect water pressure, the bonding monies remaining, and the capital improvements still to be done on Route 18, extending through year 2012. Mr. Wilson expects that with each piece of the road widening with Mass Highway, additional requests for water main improvements will come before council for funding.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Leary to refer 07-010 to the full council with a favorable recommendation and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Leary to take item 07 012 out of order and was seconded by Councilor Kay. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

07 012 – Fiscal Year 07 Free Cash Appropriation

Mr. Wilson requested a free cash appropriation of \$877,100. Current free cash balance is \$1,079,979. Since Mr. O'Connor is due shortly at another meeting, he will report on the DPW requests first. They are building maintenance- \$15,000, which includes building maintenance for all town buildings (boilers, elevators, alarms, etc.); \$35,000-vehicle maintenance; gasoline; \$25,000-street lights; \$8,000- parks.

There was a discussion with the committee regarding consortium bidding for fuels, contracts for Suez for service delivery charges in utilities, and current balances in DPW line items.

Mr. Wilson reminded the committee that although the state has not increased revenue since 2001, the town has had several increases which need to be funded, such as retiree health insurance (300%) and social security (1000%). Without the use of free cash, he would be obligated to halt any spending (limited to salaries).

Caroline LaCroix joined Mr. Wilson at the table to present the next requests- \$15,000 for the Veterans Agent. The current agent has expressed his plan to retire and factoring in retirement costs, and a new agent at lesser hours but same grade; \$35,000 Veterans' benefits; this was level funded, however, with more veterans and younger petitioners, there aren't enough funds available. Benefits include fuel assistance, hospitalization, and funeral costs, and the town is mandated to provide these services.

Mr. Wilson requested \$4100 for the Elder Services budget to correct an oversight in grants salaries, and \$30,000 to fund utilities for the Fulton School, which the school department abandoned to the town in June. He reviewed the timeline regarding the sale of the property, and reminded the committee that this will ultimately benefit the town in tax

revenue.

He requested \$163,000 from free cash in the 002 account to fund insurance payments carrying through September, which is when the new rates will be set. This is critical to the town's ability to purchase police vehicles and allows for some flexibility. There was some discussion on the town's insurance providers, current cost drivers, including increase in flood plain rates.

Mr. Wilson and Solicitor Lane requested additional funding to Tax Title. Over the last few years, most accounts have been cleared, and overdue taxes collected with a 6/1 return rate on money spent to collect. This funding is needed to continue the present "culling" mode.

He and Solicitor Lane requested \$4,000 for legal salaries, for the paralegal hired in November of 2006. Marsha Connolly currently works an abbreviated 15-hour schedule out of an office at Tufts Library, and he would like to increase her hours to twenty per week. They reviewed several projects in which she has been instrumental, including tax title, drafting legislation on a Home Rule petition for Fulton School and litigation preparation. Councilor Kay requested the committee be provided total cost, including benefits in increasing her hours to twenty per week. Solicitor Lane estimates it will be about \$40,000 and urged the committee to support this request.

Mr. Wilson requested \$3,000 to fund medical exams for four new firefighters, and \$200,000 for the Workman's Compensation stop loss insurance. The trust fund is currently depleted. Councilor Kay requested a report without providing names, in which Mr. Wilson indicated includes mainly police, fire and school maintenance employees. Mr. Wilson will review his files and report back to the committee.

Mr. Wilson requested funding unemployment insurance account. (The town is self-insured.) and the account which is historically expended to 60% in January was 75% expended this year. He reminded the committee that some school employees and traffic supervisors are entitled to collect compensation during the three school year vacation weeks.

Councilor Kay asked for a report on all legal fees associated with Special Counsel, beyond what is associated with town ordinance. Mr. Wilson will provide this requested information.

There was a discussion with the committee, reviewing the items in this request, and a comparison of the free cash balance this year and last.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Kay to refer 07-012 to the full council with a favorable recommendation and was seconded by Councilor Leary. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

**07 008 - Weymouth/Braintree Regional Recreation Conservation District
Emergency Action Plan**

Mr. Wilson reviewed this measure for the committee. Under intergovernmental agreement, the towns agree to expend 50/50 on any items. Mr. Wilson will request the basis for this request and provide this information at the public hearing.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Kay to refer 07-008 to the full council with a favorable recommendation, contingent on receiving the information on the expenditure from Mr. Wilson, and was seconded by Councilor Leary. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

07 009 – Sewer Enterprise Retained Earnings Appropriation

Mr. Wilson requested \$110,320 to fund debt service for payment made by the general fund and to be reimbursed to the debt service-- Sewer Enterprise fund.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Kay to refer 07-009 to the full council with a favorable recommendation and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor. Councilor Leary amended the MOTION to include the wording "with the Town Accountant in the item and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

07 011 – Raise and Appropriate for an Opinion of Value- 1389 Main Street

Mr. Wilson reported that this item was previously bid, but that the bids did not meet the minimum requirement. This measure represents receipt of an opinion of value, and will go out on an RFP rather than auction. At a prior auction, the bids did not meet the minimum set, and Mr. Wilson believes the town should hold this property until the pricing is successfully met.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Leary to refer 07-011 to the full council with a favorable recommendation and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

07 013 – State Mandated GASB-45 Post Retirement Health Insurance Actuarial Study

Mr. Wilson reported that he is required by the state to conduct this study, but cannot take action. The study must be disclosed yearly, and redone every three years. Mr. Wilson reviewed the project requirements- manner and disclosure for the committee.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Kay to refer 07-013 to the full council with a favorable recommendation and was seconded by Councilor Leary. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

07 014 – Unpaid Bills

Mr. Wilson reported on \$2375 to the Appellate Tax Court for FY-06, and insurance claim of \$10,000. With the absence of certification by the auditor, without an auditor on staff, Mr. Wilson provided the committee with back up.

A MOTION was made by Councilor Leary to refer 07-014 to the full council with a favorable recommendation and was seconded by Councilor O'Connor. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

At 8:00 PM, there being no further business, Councilor Leary made a MOTION to ADJOURN, and was seconded by Councilor Kay. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Chairman Kenneth DiFazio