

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Finance held on July 16, 2008 in the Madison Town Campus

Present: Chairman Kathleen Rossini, Owen Charles, Fillmore McPherson, Kathleen Stahelski, Jennifer Tung, David Youngerman

Also present: Al Goldberg, First Selectman, Scott Cochrine, Assistant Director, Youth and Family Services; Bill McMinn, Facilities Department; John James, John Copeland, Library Expansion Project Review Committee; MCTV

Ms. Rossini called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes – June 11, 2008 regular meeting, July 2, 2008 special joint meeting. The following change was noted for the minutes of the regular meeting of June 11, 2008:

Page breaks need to be readjusted

On motion made by Ms. Tung, and seconded by Ms. Rossini, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 11, 2008 as corrected.

On motion made by Ms. Tung, and seconded by Ms. Rossini, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the special joint meeting of July 2, 2008.

2. Citizen and Finance member comments. There were no citizen or Finance member comments.

3. Discuss and take action on donation of \$2,400 from the Madison Chamber of Commerce for reinstatement of the Community Service Officer Program to service the downtown area during the summer months. On motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Ms. Stahelski, the Board voted unanimously to accept a donation of \$2,400 from the Madison Chamber of Commerce for reinstatement of the Community Service Officer Program to service the downtown area during the summer months, with thanks.

Ms. Stahelski noted that the Community Service Officer will be authorized to write parking tickets so some revenue could be generated from this position.

Mr. Youngerman commented that the reinstatement of this position should generate further discussion and further exploration of the benefits of having part time staff take over some responsibilities to relieve officers.

Mr. McPherson noted that this position will be filled with a member of the explorer scouts.

4. Discuss and take action on special appropriation request of \$26,270 for creation of office space for Youth Services in Memorial Town Hall. On motion made by Mr. Charles, and seconded by Ms. Tung, the Board voted unanimously to approve the request of the Facilities Department for a special appropriation of \$26,500 from Contingency, to Account No. 1-100-2102-9500-4500-050-64, Construction Services, for the conversion of the east meeting room at Memorial Hall to offices for the Youth Services counseling operation.

Mr. McMinn noted that his office has been working on a design to convert the conference room into two offices and a waiting room to improve communication in this department and the appropriation will cover the cost of the construction in this area. He noted that a bid has gone out for the furniture needs.

Mr. Youngerman noted that an arrangement has been worked out between the Land Trust and Madison Foundation to share space for their files and meeting space so this space can be available for Youth and Family Services.

Ms. Rossini noted that the goal is to get staff closer to each other for more efficient provision of services. In response to a question by Ms. Rossini, Mr. McMinn noted that the cost for furniture is included in the special appropriation request.

5. Discuss and take action on line item transfer request of \$72,270 from Director of Facilities from Island Avenue Update Heating Account to Island Avenue Asbestos Removal Account. The Island Avenue Heater Project involved heating improvements and asbestos removal. The estimation on the asbestos portion is short, but the overall project will balance. (Pending approval of the Board of Selectmen on June 28, 2008.) On motion made by Ms. Tung, and seconded by Ms. Stahelski, the Board voted unanimously to approve the request of the Facilities Department to transfer \$72,270 from Account No 1-208-0002-9998-7314-025-22, Island Avenue Update Heating, to Account No. 1-208-0002-9998-7300-025-5C, Island Avenue Asbestos Removal, to fund the heating improvements and asbestos removal noting that the asbestos portion is short but the overall project will balance.

6. Presentation from Scranton Memorial Library Expansion Plan – Project Review Committee. Mr. James noted that the first estimate for the Library expansion project as of September, 2008 is \$15.8 million and the second estimate is \$14.575 million as of March, 2009. It was noted that this is for construction only and does not include any land purchase costs.

The Board members reviewed information provided regarding the project including private fund raising efforts, the breakout of the construction costs, the need to consider temporary quarters during the 18 month construction period, projected changes in library and custodial staff as a result of the expansion, the expansion of parking spaces, and whether payment of prevailing wage will be required for this project. In response to a question by Ms. Tung, Mr. James agreed to further research what portion of library

expansion projects completed over the past five years, were covered by taxpayers vs. private donations.

Mr. Copeland, a retired architect assisting with the project, noted that the project is now beyond half way into the schematic design phase. Mr. Copeland reviewed the budget noting that he will look more closely at possible changes in operational costs that will come about due to the expansion.

The Board members agreed that, at an appropriate time, the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance should put together an estimate on the impact of this project on taxpayers. A presentation will be made on the project at a public hearing on August 13.

Mr. James agreed to communicate the answers to questions raised by Board members to the Chairman.

7. Discussion of presentation made July 2, 2008 by the Pre-Referendum Project Review Committee – Senior Center/Ambulance Center Plan. Ms. Rossini read a memorandum from Barry Miller, Senior Center Committee. It was noted that only some preliminary information on the project had been received but they plan to provide additional information tomorrow and next week. The Committee members are working hard to provide the necessary information prior to the August 13<sup>th</sup> public hearing.

Mr. Goldberg noted that the Chairman is Tom Scarpati and he is confident that the information will be available for the Public Hearing.

8. Potential Board of Finance meeting date change: August 20, 2008. Ms. Rossini requested that the Board consider moving the August meeting date. After discussion, on motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Mr. Tung, the Board agreed to hold the regular August meeting on August 25 at the Police Department and if this facility is not available, the meeting will be held on August 26 at the Town Campus.

9. Review of financials. Ms. Bavin provided members with information on the end of the year fund balance. She noted that the report shows that the Town is off \$140,000 in long term market projections but is on target for the projected fund balance. Ms. Rossini provided a copy of the Tax Collector report.

In response to a question by Mr. Charles, regarding switching investment funds from various investments, Ms. Rossini noted that the Town received 4% on some of its investments and overall had some short term successes.

Ms. Tung noted that she has received questions from the public regarding why 80% of the Town expenditures on legal fees have been going to one law firm. Ms. Rossini commented that she understands that a high percentage of the expenditures are related to Police Department issues and it is more efficient to use one law firm to avoid overlap of services.

In response to a question by Ms. Rossini regarding the process of hiring the Town Attorney, Mr. Goldberg noted that, following precedent, once per year the Board of Selectmen appoint a Town Counsel. The Selectmen believe that their responsibility is to do what is necessary to avoid exposure.

In response to a question by Ms. Tung regarding the \$100,000 budget item for other Attorney expenses, Mr. Goldberg noted that some Boards and Commissions, such as the Planning and Zoning Commission and Assessment Board of Appeals, hire their own specialist for legal issues.

10. Liaison Reports. Mr. McPherson noted that an energy conservation group had performed a walk through of the new Daniel Hand High School to look for ideas to save energy. He noted that the Town met is quota for residents to sign up for alternate energy so the Town will be receiving solar panels for a Town facility.

Ms. Stahelski noted that the Board of Education discussed looking at an energy consumption audit for all school facilities.

Mr. Goldberg noted that the energy audits involve a three step process including:

1. identification of low cost items.
2. a technical analysis where experts come in and look at the mechanical equipment
3. implementation of any conservation measures that require an investment including a review of the payback period.

Mr. Charles noted that at the Police Commission meeting it was noted that the Police Department had a balance of \$75,000 in its budget. It was also noted that officer recruitment efforts are going well for certified applicants. At the meeting, some members of the public spoke out in frustration for the high cost of legal fees for Police Department issues.

11. Report from First Selectman. Mr. Goldberg noted that there had been a meeting with the group developing a public/private partnership between the Town and Library. Members of this group include Al Goldberg, Noreen Kokoruda, Filmore MacPherson, John James and Ted Mallory. They are close to an agreement and they anticipate discussion on the agreement will be a part of the August 13<sup>th</sup> public hearing.

12. Citizen Comments. There were no citizen comments.

13. Adjournment. On motion made by Mr. McPherson, and seconded by Ms. Tung, the meeting was adjourned to executive session at 9:30 p.m. to discuss legal issues.

The next meeting will be held on Monday August 25 at the Police Department or Tuesday, August 26 at the Madison Town Campus. Members will be notified of the date and location.

Terry Holland-Buckley  
Clerk