

Approved
4-22-09

TOWN OF NORTH BROOKFIELD

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of April 13, 2009

Present: Dick Chabot, Frank Hubacz, James Lovett, Chet Lubelczyk, and Robert Smith

Guest: Chief Aram Thomasian

1. The Meeting was Called to Order at 6:01 PM by Mr. Lovett. Mr. Lovett chaired the Meeting.
2. The Committee welcomed Mr. Chabot to the Committee.
3. The Minutes of the Meeting of March 30, 2009 were presented. A Motion was made by Mr. Hubacz, and seconded by Mr. Lubelczyk, to approve the Minutes as presented. The Motion was unanimously approved.
4. Chief Thomasian briefed the Committee about the FY 10 spending plan for the Police Department and provided information about full-time and part-time salaries, and overtime. He explained that use of overtime is largely governed by the union contract, which specifies when an additional full-time officer must be assigned on short notice to replace an officer on a shift. The limited availability of part-time officers makes it necessary to use the overtime account to maintain adequate staffing levels at key times. The Committee discussed the FY 10 request for full-time staff and the issue of accrued sick leave, which is specified in the contract. It was noted that the current practice creates a large unfunded future liability for the Town, but the issue would have to be resolved in future negotiations. The Committee congratulated the Chief on his successful grant application for a new cruiser. He advised the Committee that the grant would cover \$14,000 of the approximately \$28,000 cost of the vehicle, with the Town's share due in FY 11. In response to a question, the Committee asked the Chief to verify the dollar

amounts of the full-time salary request in his proposed FY 10 budget. The Committee thanked Chief Thomasian for his presentation. Attachments.

5. The March 30, 2009 Joint Meeting with School Committee Chairman Hicks, members of the School Committee, and Superintendent Nosek, was discussed. Mr. Hicks' email to Mr. Smith of April 10, 2009, which summarized possible reductions in the School Department's FY 10 request of approximately \$335,000 and indicated that Chairman Hicks or Superintendent Nosek would meet with the head of the Teacher's Union to discuss a 'freeze' on salary increases for FY 10, was discussed in detail. It was noted that Mr. Hicks' estimate of possible savings from such a 'freeze' had been reduced from the \$350,000 estimated on March 30, 2009 to approximately \$200,000. It was not clear to the Finance Committee whether this reduced dollar amount included both step increases and raises provided for in the Department's contract with the teaching staff. The Committee also noted that the Town faced a possible deficit of approximately \$60,000 in the 'School Choice' account, based on assessments made to the Town through May. A final assessment is payable in June. The Committee expressed disappointment that since the March 30, 2009 Joint Meeting, the gap between net-school spending and the reductions being considered by the School Committee remained significant. It was also noted that no mention was made of any current review of the \$585,000 transportation expenditure, which was discussed at the Joint Meeting. Members of the Committee asked about the status and dollar amount of 'School Choice' funds paid to the Town, and whether these funds could be used to reduce the School Department's FY 10 request.

The Committee agreed that given the serious financial problems facing the Town in FY 10, at its next Meeting, the Committee would recommend funding the School Department at no more than the net-school spending level, and would offer to consult with Mr. Hicks, the School Committee, and Superintendent Nosek about ways to offset this reduction in funds to limit the impact on the classroom.

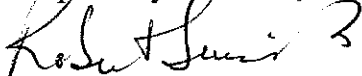
The Committee asked Mr. Smith, as Co-Chairman of the Finance Committee, to contact Mr. Hicks and advise him of the Finance Committee's decision. Attachments.

6. The Committee continued its review of FY 10 spending requests. Various strategies were discussed for closing the projected FY 10 deficit which included reviewing FY 09 budgets for funds from prior-year appropriations, and possible year-end savings in all FY 09 budgets. A deficit in FY 09 would directly impact the FY 10 deficit. A report will be provided at the next Meeting. The Committee agreed, depending upon the availability of reliable information about Local Aid for FY 10, to provide a preliminary budget recommendation to the Selectmen on May 14, 2009 and a final recommendation, if possible, on June 4, 2009. Mr. Smith was asked to contact all major Town Departments to inquire about possible uncommitted funds in various line accounts which might be used to close any FY 09 deficit. A report will be given at a later Meeting.

7. It was agreed that the next Meeting of the Committee would be during the week of April 20. Members of the Committee will be contacted regarding their availability.

8. No further business came before the Committee. A Motion to adjourn the Meeting was made by Mr. Hubacz, and seconded by Mr. Lubelczyk. The Motion was unanimously approved. The Meeting was adjourned at 7:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert Smith", with a large flourish at the end.

Robert Smith