

Conway Finance Committee
Budget Hearing Notes
Monday, March 8, 2010 7:00 PM
Town Office

Present: Jim, Roy, James (no quorum)

Upcoming Fin Com Meetings

Next Fin Com Meeting: Wednesday, March 10th 7 pm (Agenda: Finalize Article 2 Recommendations)

Fin Com/Select Board Meeting Together: Monday March 15th (Review Article 2 if necessary and review all special articles)

Fin Com will need to meet again to finalize recommendations on special articles the week of March 15th

Note-taker's comment: The deadline for finalizing the warrant so that it can be sent to the print shop and mailed is March 23rd. Based on past history, Fin Com may also need to meet with the SB on Monday March 22nd to finalize Fin Com recommendations on any last minute changes (for example on the Grammar School Building Envelope article).

Other Meetings:

Frontier School Budget Hearing (at Frontier) Tuesday March 9th

March 10th 5 pm School Building Committee

March 11th 7 pm CIPC

March 16th 7 pm Grammar School Building Public Forum

March 16th pm Garage Committee Public Meeting (Town Hall GP Room)

April 1st Grammar School Building Public Forum

Budget Hearing Items

Dept 300 Grammar School Operating Budget – Requesting an increase of \$16,782 which is an increase of 1.14%. There are several line items going up and down (Fin Com has copies of the handout) but the main point of interest is that the incoming school choice population (and associated \$) is going down, because there are more Conway resident students starting to come into the lower grade. Assuming this increase is not an aberration, this bolus of Conway students will have budgetary implications for years to come, both at the Grammar School and at Frontier.

Grammar School Building Envelope – There will be Proposition 2.5 Debt Exclusion Override question on the ballot in April. This is separate from the articles that will be on the Town Meeting Warrant. The Warrant will have 2 related articles:

- 1) For the town to approve borrowing some amount of money, the amount which may not be actually determined until town meeting so the article may be written with a range of dollar amounts, for all expenses related to the project, the construction work as well as moving and storage. It sounds like they are going to be vacating the building for June 1st – I am not sure where everybody is going to go to finish the school year.
- 2) For the town to vote the amount of money needed to may the first payment on the loan in FY11.

Once we know how much Free Cash we have, it sounds like we will need to think about how much if any we want to vote as a down-payment, from Free Cash, or from Stabilization. This is part of why I

am afraid we will be meeting with the SB on Monday March 22nd, the night before the warrant needs to go to the printers. A new School Building Committee was officially formed tonight, consisting of the SB and Tom Shaw, Bruce (Jouannet?) and Joe McG. It sounds like construction bids are going to be opened soon and also budgetary numbers are being gathered for things like the moving and storage. The town is going to hire a clerk of the works to oversee the construction.

Dept 892 Frontier Operating Budget – This increased but there is some confusion as to where the transportation was budgeted last year. Last year at town meeting we voted \$880,221 for Dept 892 but in reviewing the handouts tonight, last year there was also an additional amount of \$9,317 for transportation that apparently was not voted/appropriated at Town Meeting. For FY11, the request including transportation is a total of \$828,726, which includes \$20,895 for transportation, so the increase showing on Article 2 right now for Dept 892 is \$51,495 or 6.2%. Frontier is planning to use \$200K of Free Cash to reduce the towns' assessments. Within the operating budget, there are a bunch of line items going up and down. Fin Com has copies of the handouts.

Dept 751 Frontier Capital Improvement Bond – This decreased by \$17,742.

Frontier Stabilization Article – Frontier is asking for approval to establish a Stabilization Fund for future needs of the school building. They are not asking for any money this year, because apparently first they need the four town to approve the formation of the Stabilization Fund. So this will be a special warrant article.

Dept 141 Assessors – Submitted a revised budget request totaling \$41,403 with a 3% wage increase.

Assessors Reval Article – There will be an article for \$6,000 towards the triennial reval.

Wage Increase – Discussed this some more. My frustration was that when I voted last week for the 2%, I was working on the assumption that the SB had already voted the 2% and so I thought there was no point in discussing it. I reiterated that this evening. Jack pointed out that other town around were doing 2% or less, which sort of made me feel better about it. SB was planning to vote later in the evening and indicated they were still leaning towards the 2% increase. Liz pointed out that there were years that the cost of living increase was more than 3%, but that Conway stuck with the 3%, but I missed the point she was trying to make. See the SB minutes for more detail - something about her understanding the need to be fiscally conservative but that the justifications used for the % over the years being inconsistent. There was also a long discussion about the impact of wage increases on the size of retirement pensions which ended with Roy indicating that it was a screwed up system and that it would be good for Fin Com to meet with the retirement system at some point to understand how it works. Assuming the SB voted for 2%, Tom is going to get us the revised numbers with 2% wage increase, so that we can vote our recommendations at our meeting on Wednesday this week.