

Draft Minutes Modified 2  
Norwich Finance Committee (NFC)  
11-12-07

The meeting was called to order by Henry Scheier at 8:15 AM

Members present: Karen Kayen, chair, Paul Tierney, Henry Scheier, Irv Thomae and Al Converse

Members absent: Cheryl Lindberg

Also present: Dennis Kaufman, and Steve Soares. Watt Alexander joined at 8:25. Gerald Chapdelaine joined at 8:30. Stan Williams joined at 8:35. Roberta Robinson joined at about 9.

1. Minutes were approved as presented.
2. Henry commented that the Town Financial Report mentioned in last month's minutes would be needed monthly. Steve will bring this to Roberta's attention. The report dated 11-7-07 was received with appreciation.
3. Watt Alexander led a discussion of the information meeting (Town Eating) to be held March 1. In order to better acquaint the public with the Finance Committee, the committee was asked to hold a publicly-warned meeting on a subject in which the public could participate. An objection to holding the meeting two days before election, because it would give publicity to the incumbents, was raised by Dennis and supported by Al. This however was not taken up by the committee.
4. Irv presented two handouts on the impact of the school construction aid funds. This analysis will be reviewed by the full committee at our next meeting.
5. Roberta, in reporting on the Town receipts, made us aware that many tax payers fail to file their homestead declaration, thereby benefiting from a lower tax rate until their status is determined and a new bill is mailed. Now that the resident tax rate is higher than the non-resident rate, it was felt that it would make more sense to tax everyone at the resident rate unless they filed a non-resident status form. Irv is to take this up with our state representatives as soon as possible.

Irv informed us that the legislature is considering changing the school-tax system to a flat-rate income tax, and that he plans to attend a committee meeting on the subject this Thursday.

6. Stan Williams reported that plans for a Valley Net fiber network is progressing. A three page handout was presented; a more detailed written proposal will be submitted to the Select-board, with a copy to the NFC. As currently envisioned, public funds will not be involved and the Town will bear very little risk. Stan was asked to return to our next meeting.

7. Debt Limit: Irv pointed out that it is difficult to have a combined school-town debt limit because our portion of the Dresden school debt depends on enrollment and therefore fluctuates from year to year. Henry felt that therefore we should deal with the Town debt separately, and Steve was reminded that we would like a report on the level of debt being carried by other towns. Never-the-less, as Karen pointed out, it is the total debt that must be repaid. The NORCAP report suggested that the Town debt be less than 1 % of the Town assessment, which would be \$6.7 million. The current school debt was estimated to be \$12-15 million, about 2 % of the Grand List. We plan to return to this at our next meeting.

8. Marion Cross School expenses were reviewed by Paul in a spreadsheet. There is concern that many of the categories have increased at a rate much higher than the CPI. The committee plans to return to this at our next meeting.

9. Adjourned at 10:55 AM

Respectfully submitted, Al Converse Nov. 12, '07.

NEXT MEETING: Dec. 18, '07 at 8:15 AM