

FINAL

Town of Weare Finance Committee

Minutes of the Meeting of January 5, 2011

This meeting of the Finance Committee was held in the Conservation Committee Room of the Town Office and was called to order by the chairman at 7:03 p.m.

Present were Jill Dagenais, Gregg Elwood (chairman), Neal Kurk, John Rauscher, Ike Shepard, Jeff Spring and Mark Sullivan.

1. **Minutes:** on motion by John, seconded by Jeff, the minutes of the meeting of December 29, 2010, were approved.
2. **Town budget:** those attending the selectmen's budget meetings informed the committee of some of the issues involved, including a \$95,000 increase in police overtime (from \$55,000 to \$150,000), 24/7 police coverage, a 17% increase in health insurance premiums, a policy of paying 100% of the premiums for town employees' health insurance, a policy of paying 50% of the savings to town employees who obtain health insurance elsewhere, and a lack of an agreement with newly hired police officers to serve for a number of years in order for the town to recover its training costs. It was noted that information on the revenue side of the budget was as yet unavailable.
3. **Library budget:** the library budget distributed by the chair was confusing, as it only covered the current year, not next year.
3. **School budgets:** no changes were reported. An analysis of Weare school district budgets for the last six years indicated costs per pupil had increased by 53.1%. The budget increased 30.6% as the student population decreased by 14.7%.
4. **Tax impacts:** the chairman estimated that if current budgets were adopted as proposed, Weare's tax rate would increase from \$17.33 in 2010 to 17.68 in 2011. The rate was 16.60 in 2009.
5. **Budget recommendations:** the committee discussed what recommendations would be appropriate given the current and prospective condition of the state and national economies. Recent elections suggest voters are looking to reduce the size of government, as the current level of spending and taxes is not sustainable. Individuals see significant increases in their health care costs, in food and in fuel, while for those still employed their incomes remain stable. Their lower disposable income has adversely affected local businesses. After considerable discussion, it was generally agreed that the committee would recommend a 2% decrease from 2010 budget levels for the town and for both school districts, or approximately \$91,500 in the case of the town, \$248,000 for Weare schools and \$271,000 for John Stark. Warrant articles will be

considered when they become available. Greg and Mark agreed to inform the three boards of the committee's recommendations, together with suggestions for savings, before the public budget hearings scheduled for January 11th (Weare schools), January 13th (John Stark) and January 17th (town).

6. **Next meeting; adjournment:** after scheduling the next meeting for Wednesday, January 19, 2011, at 7 p.m. in the Conservation Room, on motion by John, seconded by Jeff, the chairman adjourned the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal M. Kurk, Secretary