

Norwich Finance Committee
Approved Minutes of the Meeting of April 17, 2007

The meeting convened at 8:17 AM. Members present: Henry Scheier, (acting chair), Al Converse, Irv Thomae, Paul Tierney and Cheryl Lindberg, Also present Stephen Soares from the Town, and Lucinda Walker from the Norwich Public Library. .

1. A motion to accept the draft minutes of the meeting of March 20, 2007 was made by Cheryl Lindberg and seconded by Irv Thomae . Passed unanimously.
2. The use of the library for child care was discussed with Lucinda Walker, Librarian at the Norwich Public Library. This practice has fallen off lately Opportunities for increased revenue, other than suggested donations for use of the facilities by groups meeting there, were not apparent. The advantages to the Town of having a incorporated library that is not a department of the Town were recognized. It was felt that the section on the library in the Town Report should be expanded in the future.
3. Financial Policies, NORCAP
The report, Capital Budget Plan and Report, Nov. 8, 2006 was acknowledged. It was felt that the Finance Committee should be represented on the committee if the document is modified in the future. Henry Scheier filled this role in the present version. The primary authors of the report were Neil Fulton and Stephen Soares. The report analyzed future trends and their impacts on capital facilities. Two policies attached to the report, Capital Budget Policy and Debt Management Policy, are to be discussed at our next meeting.
4. Cemetery Commissions .. left for next time
5. Amortization of VT construction aid
The aid will be received in two large grants, and the school districts must choose a yearly schedule. Irv and Paul volunteered to study the matter and prepare a document for our consideration at our next meeting,
6. March Budget Report
The report was received and discussed briefly.

7. Budget Procedures/Process – Town and School

Some consideration was given to the use of the COI to set the acceptable increase in the budget. Some felt that it was more appropriate to use it to set an acceptable increase in the tax rate which is nearly proportional to the per-pupil costs. Some objected that this approach assumes that the current budget is optimal.

It was felt that more attention should be given by the town and school boards to the activities accomplished with the current budget and not just the budgeted amounts of money.

The view was expressed that the Selectboard should go into less detail in the public budget hearings and give the Town Manager more leeway. The Selectboard should be more concerned with a vision of the town, and formally gather information from the townspeople concerning their vision of the town.

8. Norwich School Investment Policy ... to be discussed next time

9. Changes in the Zoning Regulations

Concern that they will make affordable housing more difficult to obtain was expressed. We plan to take up the matter after attending the meeting on 4/26/07 in order to advise the Selectboard.

10. HS 122 Assistance

It was moved by Paul and seconded by Al that: Irv Thomae and Henery Scheier be thanked and commended for holding the sessions to explain, and assist individuals in, how to obtain one's entitled income-based reduction in the school property tax.. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Alvin Converse

Next Meeting: May 15 at 8:00 AM SHARP