

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

March 21, 2016

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Monday, March 21, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Finance Committee Room, #112, Town Hall with the following members present: D. Bruce, J. Burke, M. Trudell, D. Crowley, J. McDermott, J. Denneen, J. Lowre, J. Vaillancourt, K. Guyette, A. Healy, T. Bowen, P. Stasiukevicius, S. Lawson and P. Hinton. Member absent was R. Mariani. Also in attendance was Fire Chief T. Bailey.

7:05 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman D. Bruce.

May 2, 2016 Spring Annual Town Meeting

School Budget

Chairman Bruce cautioned the Committee that any discussions on special needs and health services is very confidential.

Present for discussion on the School Budget was School Committee Chairman N. Gallivan, School Committee Members M. Ryan, B. Muccini Superintendent of Schools L. Lynch, Assistant Superintendent J. Kenny, Director of Special Needs L. McKelligan and School Nurse Leader K. Garvin and Business Manager M. Friscia. Unfunded and Underfunded State and Federal Education mandates were provided to the Committee. Special Needs represents \$11,000,000 (25%) of the School Budget.

Director of Special Needs L. McKelligan and School Nurse Leader K. Garvin provided the Committee with a brief overview of special needs students that they deal with on a day to day basis and health care nursing within the education system and what services are provided. IEP (Individualized Education Program) is available to any eligible student. The process to provide an IEP is very detailed and involved. Assessments, social, academics and teams determine eligibility. It is a requirement that all school districts must provide education to special education students from ages 3 – 22 and must be done in the least restrictive environment.. Program is required to be provided by qualified staff. Program is also available for non-public students (private) As of October, 1, there were 612 students. This number has been pretty consistent over the past five years. Walpole cannot meet the out of district placements, this cost an average of \$60,000/student. These are students with high needs. Walpole has had as many as 52 and lowest of 33 students out of district. If a student cannot be provided for in district they have to be provided out of district through a collaborative, or private day or residential programs. Walpole has approved programs by Mass. Dept. of Education. Tuition budget for out of district students varies day to day. Responsibility resides where

the parents reside. Walpole does their own investigation on residency. The cost of providing assessments, evaluations, and specialized instructional services exceeds the funding provided by federal and state sources (unfunded mandates) In addition transportation is provided to all students in grades K through 6 who live two miles or more from the school. Students with disabilities must be provided accommodations that will assist in their learning. It may include a disability that is not covered by special education.

McKinney-Vento Act requires that schools accept any homeless student who wishes to attend the public school. Transportation requires the school district to transport any homeless students living in their district to the district of their last permanent address. Superintendent Lynch spoke to their has been talk of reimbursement to the towns.

Superintendent Lynch spoke to school receiving assistance with police on residency investigations. They anticipate that there might be problems next year. If this was to occur, they would come back in the Fall to adjust the School Budget. They are saving money in the transportation program (\$100,000 for special ed) with having their own vans. They review the costs monthly. Early intervention is a federally mandated program to help the development of medically and structured students. Special Ed Budget is very volatile and cannot be a fixed budget.

Longview Farms – Walpole provides a plan for the educational needs of students residing at Longview Farm. They have an approved special ed program. The component of the mandates are to provide for day, and residential (24/7) This is the responsibility of Town. The residential education has huge impact on town. Presently there are 28 students in the Special Ed Account. Walpole covers all ages 5 to 18. Establishment has 60 beds. There are presently 28 students. There has been a huge impact on the town in the last five years. Group homes in Boston have been eliminated, Walpole now has two. Some students aren't prepared to enter school and have trauma and medical needs. They have a meeting with DCF on May 4. Students at Longview Farm are historically here for 18 months.

Discussion ensued that the cost of students from Longview Farm takes away from other children, costs in time and labor. Evaluations cost \$3,000/ a year. Cost approximately \$100,000 after evaluation. Background checks are done. Town doesn't have any control and can't say no. Regular children suffer, their education is not mandated. Average person doesn't understand the issue. Word has to get out.

7:55 p.m. Committee Member P. Hinton

Group homes are registered by DCF. If DCF has custody, they can share information with the Walpole School District. If the parents haven't signed a waiver, they have no way of obtaining information.

School Nursing – K. Garvin spoke to this program. In the month of February, 2016, the number of students requiring nursing services was 2,634 of which 139 were dismissed

from school and 2,420 were returned to class. Students have emotional and behavioral problems. They have seen one student this year 50 times due to emotional health issues. Students have anxiety, depression and other related issues. School Department sees the impact of Longview students. Nurse is required to be on field trips and after school activities. They are required to provide to the State a report listing the number of issues.

Superintendent Lynch spoke to moving forward with programs. A lot of good things are happening. Department is in good shape for on line testing and education evaluating testing is working well. Majority of employees are vested in the town and schools. Property values are strong due to the schools.

Chairman Bruce proposed not voting on the School Budget at this time, and wait for the Town Administrator recommendations. There might be additional money available from the State for the budget.

Minutes

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke to approve the March 3, 2016 as amended, Minutes, Motion Passed (12-0-2) (J. McDermott, P. Hinton abstained)

Adjourn:

MOTION MADE by S. Lawson, Seconded by P. Stasiukevicius to adjourn the meeting at 9:15, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Clerk