

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

### Minutes

February 29, 2016

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Monday, February 29, 2016 at 7:00 p. m. with the following members present: D. Bruce, J. Burke, J. Denneen, J. McDermott, R. Mariani, M. Trudell, J. Vaillancourt, D. Crowley, T. Bowen, P. Hinton J. Stasiukevicius, S. Lawson, and K. Guyette 8:20 A. Healy. Member absent were: J. Lowre. Also in attendance was Town Administrator J. Johnson, Fire Chief T. Bailey, Chairman of the School Committee N. Gallivan, School Committee Member W. Buckley, S. Curtis. and School Superintendent L. Lynch, Assistant Superintendent J. Kenny, and M. Friscia, School Business Manager.

7:00 p.m. – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order

#### **May 2, 2016 Spring Annual Town Meeting**

#### **School Budget – School Committee Chairman N. Gallivan, Superintendent of Schools L. Lynch**

##### **Chapter 70 Resolution**

Chairman Gallivan spoke to Walpole being part of the Suburban Coalition which is a group of local officials from various towns working together to make sure that suburban towns have a space statewide. Resolution asks the Selectmen, Finance Committees and School Committee join in to send the Resolution to the Legislature and Governor to fund the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission.

Superintendent Lynch spoke to 80% of the School Budget is personnel and health insurance contributions. Schools are attempting to go 60/40 for new hires on health insurance. There is insufficient monies to cover health insurance in the Foundation Budget. Towns are at a disadvantage. State needs to step up and help balance the cost, can't support all the mandates. Costs of Special Ed has steadily increased. Costs have fallen on the cities and towns.

**MOTION MADE** by S. Lawson, Seconded by P. Hinton that that the Committee sign the Chapter 70 Resolution, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting)

Budget request is for \$41,528,987 (3.98%) Town Administrator is recommending \$41,139,417 (3%) representing a difference of \$389,570. State Aid is up \$166,000 in Governor's budget. Budget drivers are cost of living increases, steps and lane changes, special education, utilities and transportation contract. Teachers are allowed to move over a lane with college courses. A number of teachers are at the highest Step 17. (84%

of teachers hold a Master's degree or higher). Walpole has 36 different languages spoken by students and severity of disabilities is increasing. Poverty level is also increasing. Schools are working to increase State Aid and feel that the Governor's numbers are too low. Local government pays 85% of the burden. They are looking to increase state aid and feel the Governor's numbers are too low. Walpole is a minimum aid town.

Components of budget are contractual or mandated. School Budget has problems due to unexpected changes after budget is voted, especially special ed. Last year, schools had a number of changes due a lot of negatives early. This year the 2016 budget is on track, and if something is unexpected, it wouldn't be a full year. They are hoping for a good end to the school year. The volatility of the budget requires them to adjust as needed, and they don't want a structural deficit to carry over. They look to compare with other towns financially and academically. The goal is to provide a strong education services with the finances from the town.

The main budget drivers are Personnel costs of \$1,327,0000, Special Education \$150,000, Utilities \$75,000 and Transportation contract of \$26,000. They had looked into solar power at the schools, but this hasn't worked out. They have increased transporting fees to help offset the increase.

Committee had questions on the number of special needs teachers. School Department will meet with the Committee at a future date to go over the Special Needs Budget. It is difficult to predict the number of special needs students, it changes on a day to day basis. They work with the collaborative on this. They are attempting to separate the medical costs out and would like to have the insurance costs help pay for the students. Some students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), some have residential place and physical and occupational therapy.

Some students in residential program but are never in Walpole. Care comes out of the educational budget. There is a lack of information to the general population. Some children are receiving nursing care and the property tax is paying for the medical care.

W. Buckley, School Committee, spoke to a number of initiatives have been started that speak to the concerns of the Walpole delegation. There is the need to figure out where the unfunded mandates come from. They are working on funding of Chapter 70 formula and need other towns to deal with their legislatures. There is the need to change the foundation budget.

Per pupil expenditures in Walpole is \$13,501. They have \$379,000 in sustainable improvements, \$60,000 for Math Consulting, MS focus, \$65,000 for R & D Expenses and \$104,000 for textbooks, \$60,000 for Technology consulting, elementary level, \$30,000 WHS transition aide, \$30,000 MS technology specialist, and \$30,000 for a full day kindergarten aides (They receive 66% for tuition).

Challenges with the budget are the special ed costs, health insurance costs. They see opportunities with the towns' healthcare costs with MIIA, Out of district transportation

and expanded partnerships with BICO and TEC Collaborative. They are looking for efficiencies.

Enrollments are leveling off since town meeting 2.5% special education positions reduced with consolidation of programs. Scoring – Walpole scores above the State average in mathematics and English. Participation in Advanced Placement classes is increasing. Class of 2015 – 91.2% graduates attending higher learning Walpole has a very low drop out rate.

**March 21, 2016** – Committee will meet with School Department along with Special Ed Director and Health Nurse.

The number of students covered under the McKinney-Vinto Act is decreasing every year. Reimbursement for this program comes back as Free Cash. Monies are allocated at Fall Town Meeting and limited to the school year.

**Stormwater Management Update**– DPW Director, R. O’Brien, provided the committee with a proposal for engineering services dated December 4, 2015 on Stormwater Management Program.

### **Minutes**

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley to approve the **January 25, 2016** Minutes, Motion Approved (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke to approve the **February 18, 2016** Minutes, Motion Passed (10-0-4) (P. Hinton, J. Vaillancourt, K. Guyette and D. Crowley abstained ) (14 voting)

**February 22, 2016** Minutes (held)

### **March 3, 2016 Agenda**

Town Administrator spoke to a change in the March 3, 2016 Agenda. Schedule are the Police, Emergency Management, and Town Clerk and Elections Budget and a review of the May 2, 2016 Spring Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

**MOTION MADE** by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson to adjourn at 9:00 p.m, Motion Passed (14-0-0) (14 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril, Clerk

