

Barrington Committee on Appropriations

Meeting Minutes

[Date]February 24, 2014

Opening

The regular meeting of the Barrington Committee on Appropriations was called to order at 7:04 on [date] in the Senior Center by Tim Sweetser.

Present

Tim Sweetser, Geoff Grove, Joel Hellmann, Peter Clifford, and Chad Mollica

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the prior meeting were not yet published. Geoff Grove will get the minutes sent out this week for review and approval.

Open Issues

The school budget was the first topic of discussion. Geoff Grove noted that the “Capital Budget – Technology”, \$275,000 for computer technology, is not a capital purchase and should be listed in the operating budget. Chairman Sweetser agreed that this topic should be addressed to the School Administration when they meet.

Joel Hellmann began reviewing the Proposed FY15 School Budget as presented 2/13/14. He noted that the listed increase of \$266,267, is significantly less than the actual increase and could possibly include the structural surplus. The addition of All-Day Kindergarten (ADK) will add 5.5 full-time employees. The additional increase in salaries for ADK staff is listed as \$583,569.

Peter Clifford asked if the Uniform Chart of Accounts is reflected in the Town Audit. No one was sure, so Tim agreed to ask the question of the School Finance Director.

Chad Mollica asked how the request for redacted W-2 wage data was progressing. Tim said that the School Finance Director is “working on it” and will produce it soon. We hope.

Joel Hellmann turned attention to the revenues. The noted increases in State aid of \$672,489, he contends, should not be considered when determining the proper budget. A loss of State aid would not reduce the amount of money going to the school budget – the

difference would have to be made up by property taxes. So, we should be focused on the proposed overall budget increase, which is 3.17%.

Chad Mollica asked if the 276.62 certified FTE's are *all* of the certified staff, or is there another place in the budget that includes positions not reflected in the salary line.

Enrollment is projected to be 3,258 by NESDEC and 3,316 by BPS (Barrington Public Schools). Both figures are a decline from the current year. The NESDEC number represents a decline of 65 students, almost a 2% decline in student enrollment.

Joel pointed out that the 5-year budget forecast does not reflect any increases in central office or principal costs. This is a highly suspicious assumption, leading to an underreported projection. This is problematic because the decline in student population and a reassessment of the State Aid Formula will likely cause a reduction in State Aid to our town.

Chad brought up, again, that the pension liability is a ticking time bomb. As the student population declines and there is a corresponding (hopefully) reduction in staff, the retirement system of which the teachers are a part, there will be fewer employees paying in to a system that supports an increasing number of retirees. He believes we should attempt to reflect in the budget a more correct number. This is clearly a problem that must be addressed by the State legislature because it will come back to the taxpayers of the Town.

Agenda for Next Meeting

Review the School Budget with the School Finance Director and the School Superintendent.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 by Tim Sweetser. The next general meeting will be at 7:00 pm on March 5, 2014.

Minutes submitted by: Geoff Grove

Approved by: Committee 3/5/14