

# **Barrington Committee on Appropriations**

Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2014

## **Opening**

The regular meeting of the Barrington Committee on Appropriations was called to order at 7:01 p.m. on March 18, 2014 in the Senior Center by Tim Sweetser.

## **Present**

Tim Sweetser, Geoff Grove, Joel Hellmann, Peter Clifford

## **Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

## **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

## **Open Issues**

Tim Sweetser began the discussion reviewing the analysis of the school budget. In that analysis, Chad Mollica sorted the data in various ways. The data isolated the longevity bonus given to school personnel as supplemental income. This amounted to approximately \$230,000 in the current fiscal year. This sum of money paid as a bonus for years on the job, is an anachronism harkening back to the days of yore when teachers were underpaid. It seemingly has become a 'sacred cow' that must be negotiated with the union because it is a provision of the contract.

Peter Clifford presented his analysis of the school budget. Working with the school finance director, his analysis looked at the budget amounts versus the actual spending for the last 5 years. Of note, the student population is declining while the expenses are increasing. Purchased services are increasing substantially this year.

Joel pointed out that the capital expenditures of the school are determined outside of the Capital Planning Committee. He feels that the Schools should present their capital needs to the Planning Board Capital Planning subcommittee like all other town departments.

Tim suggested that the April 1 scheduled meeting of the COA invite the School Committee for discussion of the budget.

Discussion turned to the Municipal budget. Geoff suggested that COA should meet with the Capital Planning Committee. Tim will arrange this meeting.

Peter Clifford presented a preliminary analysis of the budget that shows that the 'Other Cost per Resident' has declined over the last 10 years from \$1,284 to \$1,186 while the Education Cost per Student has increased from \$9,607 to \$14,224.

The municipal budget request shows an increase of 1.94% (\$330,689). After adjusting for the reduction of long-term debt, the increase is 2.13%.

There is \$50,000 in the budget for Information Technology (IT). It is absurd that the School Department has six full-time employees dedicated to the hardware and software used in the Schools, but there is no one doing this work on the municipal side. It is the opinion of the COA Chair that the IT needs of the schools and the municipality should be taken care of by one department.

#### **Agenda for Next Meeting**

The next meeting will continue discussions and review of both the school and municipal budgets. The Town Manager and Town Finance Director will be invited.

#### **Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 by Tim Sweetser. The next general meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on March 25, 2014, in the Senior Center.

Minutes submitted by: Geoff Grove

Approved by: [Name]