

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
JOINT MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN / FINANCE COMMITTEE / SCHOOL COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2019 7:00 P.M.
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Auditorium
109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.**

Board of Selectmen Members Present:

Audrey LaBrie, Chairwoman
Michael Barbaro, Vice-Chairman
Barbara Anderson

Keith R. Hickey, Town Manager
Joanne Goguen, Town Accountant
Lindsay Kuchta, Recording Secretary

Finance Committee Members Present:

Tom Kane, Chairman
Christian Orobello, Vice Chairman
Charles Husselbee
Maureen Ward
Douglas Delay
Charles C. Corts

Brianna Roberts, Recording Secretary

Finance Committee Members Absent:

Amy Salter

School Committee Members Present:

Larry Murphy
Roanne Demanche
Felicia Nurmsen (remote participation)

Joan Landers, Superintendent
Carolyn Hendricks, Admin. Assistant

School Committee Members Absent:

Greg Vine, Chairman
Dawn Fronte

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- May 2019 Enterprise Expenses (attached)
 - May 2019 Enterprise Revenues (attached)
 - May 2019 Enterprise Town Expenses (attached)
 - May 2019 Enterprise Town Revenues (attached)
 - FY19 Budget Transfers (attached)
 - Account Summary Report for Grants (attached)
 - Town Accountant Financial Review PowerPoint (attached)
 - Monty Tech Quarterly Report, Moe Ward (attached)
-

Kane called the Finance Committee meeting back to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

LaBrie called the Board of Selectmen meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Murphy called the School Committee meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., and noted Felicia Nurmsen was in attendance by phone call.

No one they were recording the meeting this evening when asked.

It was noted by Kane that the School Committee did not have a quorum as three members must be physically present to have a quorum, and one of their members was present only through remote participation, to which Murphy replied they did not have any action to take as it were.

1. NEW BUSINESS:

1.1. FY19 Budget Update with Town Accountant- Kane noted the first item is the update from Town Accountant Joanne Goguen. Goguen proceeded with her Budget Update by way of a Power Point Presentation.

Goguen reviewed the expected amounts of reimbursement in Town Revenue, and noted The Town's Collector/Treasurer, Donna Spellman, worked at getting good rates for the accounts the Town uses, and has helped to get us a good return.

Goguen continued, stating she believes it will be another good month for ambulance services as they have continued to bring in good revenue. Additionally, the Building Department budgeted \$167,000, and has earned \$232,266 thus far. Goguen has been going through old School grants that were misappropriated and doing research to figure out where the money will go once it is verified where it was originally meant to go.

Orobello asked if the reimbursements would be considered supplementing to which Hickey replied the funds were posted to the wrong accounts; Landers along with the Town Accountant have been reviewing and reconciling the grants, and in doing so verified that \$62,000 was charged to the school operating budget rather than the grant. The reimbursements will be put into Free Cash.

Additionally, Goguen noted the street light rebate offsets the transfer to the street light account, two people paid \$5,000 for town properties at auction but backed out, and the town has been collecting money for 911 dispatch, which is kept offline in a revolving account. The moneys are being used for the purchase of police cars and other necessary equipment.

As of May 31, 2019, the Town collected \$1,281,335 in state funds, and Goguen anticipates \$200,000 to be collected in local revenues. She noted she was being conservative with her estimates.

The solar company started operating in October at the landfill, but credits were not received until February; when the company started operating the credits were generating but were not being awarded. In February, all of the National Grid bills had huge credits on them, and the Town is still getting credited every month. We have \$26,400 in credits on the bills, which means the town has saved \$61,576.87; a little over \$28,000 from October to May.

Goguen projected that \$166,280.53 will be left in expense appropriations by the end of the year, which would also go to Free Cash. The numbers will probably be higher but she noted she would rather be conservative.

After review of the School's expenses, estimates of payroll and accounts payable, it is estimated that \$94,369.57 will be going towards Free Cash from the school. School Grant funds to be returned are at \$14,835.33, grant funds to be reviewed are \$281,628.55, current

year school funds are \$475,037.22, and funds in the amount of \$564.03 need to be reclassified.

Ward noted there is a lot of work in reviewing numbers, speaking from experience with the Audit Committee; she thanked Goguen for all of the work she has done.

Hickey stated with the \$208,000 in excess cash as well as close to \$166,208 in funds to go to Free Cash from the school, conservatively we are looking at roughly \$468,000 in Free Cash. Additionally, he has had conversations with Superintendent Landers about a few different things; it was suggested that \$92,000 be used to address some of the less expensive capital needs of the school such as the maintenance shed roof. He would love to see the money go into free cash, but if the school has needs why not meet them; Landers will be working feverishly over the next 19 days to get the \$92,000 to address the school's needs. We won't have \$1,500,000 in Free Cash, but we will have Free Cash and that is what matters.

Kane commented it is great that for the first time in four or five years that the Town will have Free Cash and no one has dibs on it. Hickey agreed; it is a pretty good feeling.

1.2. FY19 Year End Budget Transfer Requests- The Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen then voted on the end of year budget transfers as follows;

1. \$2,559.42 to be transferred from Board of Selectmen Administrative Expenses to Town Manager Executive Assistant to cover two weeks' vacation buyback.

Ward moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Husselbee with a vote of all aye.

Barbaro moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all aye.

2. \$4,549.81 to be transferred from DEP Grant to the Transfer Station Tipping account to cover end of year tipping fees.

Hickey noted this transfer does not need to be considered by the Finance Committee or Board of Selectmen; he asked that it be passed over. Kane noted it is not part of the operating budget.

3. \$2,500.00 to be transferred from Highway Operator to Cemetery Summer Help to cover summer help at the cemetery.

Ward moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Husselbee; Kane asked if the funds would be used until the end of June to which Hickey replied the DPW likes to have summer help to keep the cemetery cleaned up; it would not be expended this fiscal year. *By a vote of all aye the motion carried.*

Barbaro moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all aye.

4. \$100.00 to be transferred from Conservation In State Travel to Conservation Secretary to cover Recording Secretary's payroll account due to more meetings than expected.

Ward moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Husselbee with a vote of all aye.

Barbaro moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all aye.

5. \$50.00 to be transferred from Conservation Office Supplies to Conservation Secretary to cover Recording Secretary's payroll account due to more meetings than expected.

Ward moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Husselbee with a vote of all aye.

Barbaro moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all aye.

6. \$1,500.00 to be transferred from Police Differential to Dispatch Overtime to cover the extended leave of a dispatcher.

Ward moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Husselbee with a vote of all aye.

Barbaro moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all aye.

7. \$1,700.00 to be transferred from Police Reserves to Dispatch Dispatchers to cover the extended leave of a dispatcher.

Ward moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Orobello with a vote of all aye.

Barbaro moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all aye.

8. \$300.00 to be transferred from Police Reserves to Dispatch Per Diem Employees to cover the extended leave of a dispatcher.

Ward moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Husselbee with a vote of all aye.

Barbaro moved to accept the transfer, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all aye.

- 1.3. School Department Reconciliation of Grants- Landers noted this was addressed during Goguen's Financial Review.

- 1.4. Interim School Business Manager Position- Landers stated Mr. Ikonnen is leaving the School at the end of the month, and is currently taking his vacation time. He will be back to do the final payroll. An interim business manager job has been posted; Landers noted she feels this is the way to go during a transition until things settle down. She has spoken with Hickey and the School Committee; applicants are being met with, and soon finalists will be interviewed by others. The School is looking for someone with expertise in grants and longevity to get things settled down.

LaBrie thanked Ikonnen for the time he has put into the Winchendon Public Schools and wishes him well.

- 1.5. Changes to School and Town Accounting Staff Responsibilities- Hickey noted with the resignation of Ikonnen, he and Landers have double teamed on the changes made to the School and Town Accounting staff responsibilities, as well as had a conversation with

Goguen to discuss how to best meet the accounting needs of the town and school. As most are aware, the Town and School have separate Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants. In the future, Assistant Town Accountant Wendy Stevens will be handling the Payroll Warrants for both the Town and School and Danelle Mallard of the Winchendon Public Schools Business Office will be handling the Accounts Payable Warrants. Ms. Stevens is currently training in the School Department to familiarize with their responsibilities. Additionally, discussion for a bond for a community compote grant to do rural accounting for both sides and having an independent fresh set of eyes come in and make recommendations on how to move forward. Hickey continued, stating he called the Department of Revenue to speak with Zack Blake, and asked about accounting for a grant. Mr. Blake said it was not necessary for the Town to apply for a grant; the DOR was going to perform a study, for lack of better terms, to see what needs the School and Town have, what resources are available, and make recommendations to bring back to the School Committee. We will spend whatever time is needed on this. Both myself and Landers only want what is best for the Town; worst case scenario, the only changes made are to payroll and accounts payable. That will benefit both sides through continuity. Joan is great to work and communicate with.

- 1.6. Report by Monty Tech School Board member Maureen Ward- Ward noted she plans on doing quarterly reports; it is easier than presenting a large amount of information at Town Meeting once a year. This current year, 2018-2019, 160 students attended Monty Tech at a cost of \$919,899. There is an expected decrease of 21 students for the upcoming year; a total of 139 students will be attending, that will bring a saving of \$62,903. The drop in the amount of students is due to other communities using their full quota of seats. The total proposed budget for 2020 is \$28,760,202, which is a 3.62% increase from last year and 1.1% over Net School Spending. 15% of the students are on IEPs and another 13% have 504 accommodation plans.

Monty Tech is the second largest regional vocational- technical school in the State, supporting 18 communities. They offer 21 vocational-technical programs with a graduation rate of 99.7%. MCAS results in Science, Math and ELA range from 82 to 95% in the advanced and proficient range. As part of the local assistance program, Monty Tech students started replacement of water fountains at the Winchendon Public Schools at a cost savings of five to six thousand dollars, and met with Manuel King, The Beals Memorial Library Director, and Rick Ward, a Board of Trustees member last week, to discuss plans for the children's library; though we are out a few years, it's feasible that labor will fit within the student's curriculum.

Last quarter, Winchendon students who ranked at the top of the Skills USA Competitions held on March 13 were as follows:

- Natalie Dokulil, Basic Health Care, Bronze Medal
- Jillian Bussiere, Early Childhood, Silver Medal
- Nathan Gaulin, Urban Search & Rescue, Silver Medal
- Jason Tavares Jr. Welding, Bronze Medal

Ward asked if there were any member comments, and stated she was sorry Dawn Fronte was not present at this meeting. She wanted to thank her as she has been tremendous in supporting students and the community.

Anderson commended Ward for giving her report, and said it's kind of amazing, we should know this for a budget we endorse, but she is having an issue with the amount of savings Ward stated we are going to have in the upcoming year. We seem to be paying more and getting less. Anderson asked when we are looking at 15% education plans do they make it 15% at senior level? Ward stated she is unsure but can find out for Anderson.

Demanche replied the total amount of 15% is average for the school. It can range from year to year based on the student's testing in and out of the IEP. She stated she does know students sent from Winchendon are on what we call full inclusive or partial inclusion IEP. Students who have severe special needs continue to be serviced in the public schools.

Orobello asked if the 15% is representative of Winchendon or if we have a higher rate to which Ward replied right now Winchendon is at 22%.

Murphy stated it still surprises him that vocational schools don't take students with severe disabilities, the very place that they need to be to get the training and skills they need to have a life after high school. Ward stated Monty Tech is no longer just vocational but also a technical school. Nurmsen commented she understands that it causes challenges but that is why she is on the School Board; it is about creating equal access of opportunity for all students. Sending the message that students with handicaps aren't as capable is dead wrong. Ward stated that is not what she was saying. Landers stated it is a concern across all districts.

After further discussion, Kane noted it is powerful that there are a lot of feelings regarding this conversation, but perhaps it would be good to take up the matter another night; a meeting could be set up to put forth the conversation and see where it goes. Ward thanked Kane.


2. **OLD BUSINESS:** There was no Old Business this evening.
3. **COMMENTS:** There were no comments this evening.
4. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Ward moved to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting, seconded by Husselbee with a vote of all aye at 8:16 p.m.

Barbaro moved to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all aye at 8:16 p.m.

Demanche moved to adjourn the School Committee meeting, seconded by Nurmsen with a vote of all aye at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Lindsay Kuchta
Recording Secretary