

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
JOINT MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN / SCHOOL COMMITTEE / FINANCE COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2016
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Auditorium
109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.**

Selectmen Present:

Michael Barbaro, Chairman
Barbara Anderson, Vice-Chair
Audrey LaBrie
Austin Cyganiewicz

Keith Hickey, Town Manager
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant
Donna Allard, Town Accountant

Absent: Amy Salter

Present School Committee Members:

Dawn Harris, Chairwoman
Danielle Hart
Janet Corbosiero
Greg Vine
Larry Murphy

Steven Haddad, Supt. of Schools
Mark Chapulis, School Business Office
Barrie Martin, Recording Secretary

Present Finance Committee Members:

Robert Guenther, Vice-Chair
Ulysse Maillet
Maureen Ward
James Robichaud

Absent: Thomas Kane, Chairman; Cindy Leroy

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Town Manager's Summary of Discussion Topics dated Feb. 2, 2016 (attached)
 - Draft Town Meeting Schedule (filed)
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The Joint Meeting was called to order by each Chairman at 7:05 p.m. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America. The meeting aired live on local cable access channel 8.

Announce audio/video recording disclosure: No one announced they would be recording the meeting this evening.

NEW BUSINESS:

Finance Committee Topics:

1. Cook and Co. “Stop Loss” Insurance Reimbursement and Health Insurance Member Audit Update

Mr. Shepardson asked about the stop loss reimbursements. Town Manager Keith Hickey noted the responses he provided in the packets regarding the topics raised this evening. In regards to the Stop Loss, Blue Cross and Blue Shield is holding \$672,000 for potential claims. Our insurance consultant has indicated that BCBS will be returning \$300,000 in the near future and has indicated sending out an additional \$272,000. The balance to be held is \$100,000 to cover any remaining claims. Our insurance consultant is looking to release more of the deposit and release all of it by June 30th; but he was not sure if it will happen being part of the working deposit. Mr. Shepardson asked how much we have been reimbursed in the Stop Loss part of our insurance. Mr. Hickey stated the consultant reported all Stop Loss reimbursements have been received and thought it was around \$700,000. He could get an exact number from the insurance company. Mr. Robichaud asked about the audits that go back to 2009 not mentioning anything about Stop Loss until 2014 and how Roselli and Clark has said they had a hard time tracking this. Mr. Hickey said he would be happy if Mr. Robichaud would come in to the office and he would work with him on this. He didn't have the exact specifics on the \$700,000. Mr. Shepardson asked about the enrollment audit. Mr. Hickey hadn't heard if it had been completed yet.

2. Include the Town Budget, School Dept. Budget and School Transportation in the same Warrant Article rather than separate Warrant Articles

Mr. Bob Guenther said the Finance Committee collectively didn't want to include in the same article the Town and School's budgets but they think the transportation amount should go in the school's budget. The Town Manager explained the Transportation portion of the budget, while school controlled, is a Town government expense. What's being proposed is for it to be taken out of the Town's budget and put in the school's budget.

Discussion was had on this issue and whether or not to include the School's budget within the Town's budget having one budget article voted on. It would provide more flexibility when needing to transfer between accounts if needed during the year and had been recommended by the Dept. of Revenue. Mr. Maillet mentioned that ten years ago the transportation budget was part of the school budget but had been taken over by the Town to do the negotiations of the transportation budget. He would like to see it returned back to the school where it belongs. The town will pay for it one way or the other. Some members suggested keeping the Town and School budget separate this year with a lot of new faces on each committee and get the routine down first before melting some things together.

Ms. Allard explained that the Transportation articles would still be funded by the Town and be recognized in the Town's budget so that the transfers could take place because we realized the school cannot fund those transportation articles. We currently limit it as they are done in a special article outside of the budget and that is what the Town Manger is referring to not being able to do those transfers. We then have to wait if it's over expended until a Town Meeting, like we did for the \$35,000. If we eliminated where the article lies and put them with the actual budget and combine the school and town, it isn't meant that we are going to be doing transfers between the school and town budget. It really is to show that unity; but the transportation portion is so that we would have some flexibility and would not have to go to Town Meeting.

After a bit more discussion on the topic, **Mr. Vine moved to include the School budget and the School transportation budget in the same warrant article and for the Town budget to remain in a separate warrant article; Mr. Guenther seconded.** After a discussion of this being confusing to them it was suggested by some to leave the process as is, to have time to get some answers to questions, seek legal assistance and have a clear understanding of how it will all work, **Mr. Vine asked to withdraw his motion; Ms. Corbosiero seconded. By a majority vote of aye, the motion carried.** This issue was asked to be brought up at a joint meeting in the fall.

3. Update on the 2015 Audit

Mr. Hickey said he has had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Tony Roselli from our auditing firm and they anticipate a draft financial statement and draft Management letter to the Audit Committee on February 11th. The Audit Committee has received the draft financials. Mr. Maillet said the Audit committee will be sitting down with Mr. Roselli next Monday.

4. Update on Financial Team Meetings

Mr. Hickey reported he has had the opportunity to sit in with the Accounting office and School Business office meeting and thinks the meetings have gone well. They are meeting on a weekly basis having discussions and working through issues on a timely manner. Concerns have been raised outside those meetings and he and the Superintendent have had a great conversation and are making each other aware of issues and are working together. His perspective is the financial records are in good shape and reconciliation between the Town and School have been greatly improved. He said Supt. Haddad has been a tremendous resource to him and appreciates his willingness to be available. Supt. Haddad agrees the relationship between the School Business Office and the Accounting Office have improved and Mr. Hickey has been a fantastic asset for the Town and appreciates the support and help as well.

Most of the Dept. Heads have submitted their budgets which were due in tomorrow. The School Dept. has some last minutes issues to work through and will have their budget submitted a week later.

Selectmen Topics:

1. Use of School for Walkers

Ms. Anderson explained they had a community member come forward that likes to walk on the bike path and due to weather was not able to. She asked if the School is open or the track is clear could it be used for walkers.

Supt. Haddad said the track is open any time and can be used but they don't plow it. Toy Town Elementary was a possible option for walkers but a sign-in sheet, hold harmless agreements and CORI checks would need to be done. Other options would be the Clark arena possibly for seniors. It was decided the School Dept would look into how this would impact the afternoon programs and things going on at the school.

2. Parks and Recreation Student Selectmen

Mr. Barbaro mentioned the vacancy on this committee and that they were looking for two student members. Mr. Vine said he would check with Aden who is a student and active at the school to see if he could bring to other students. He said he has been pushing it, hasn't had much interest and would try again. Mr. Murphy said he would be happy to try and drum up some interest.

- ##### **3. Monty Tech Representative Update from School**
- Mr. Barbaro asked about an anticipated budget and enrollment. Ms. Harris attempted to meet up with the Monty Tech representative and is working on it and will pass information along. Ms. LaBrie was concerned about the numbers going to Monty Tech and wanted to see how we can address some of it and get students back in house. Ms. Corbosiero has been working on this and has sent a list of questions to Monty Tech and has some information back. The 2015 quota in October was 23 and for Winchendon we had 40 students. As of January 1, 2016 we had 149 students. Ms. Corbosiero said the whole scheme in her mind is the purpose of a vocational education has changed. Their mission statement has changed. It is no longer truly vocational ed. It is now more a college prep school with a tweaked vocational ed. Monty Tech is a public school with state funding and we do pay them \$16,000 to send a child there. It is \$13,000 per student here. Monty Tech has an admission's policy where it is point based on your grade, attendance, discipline, etc. You are chosen based on the points you get. Sixty-seven percent of graduates go on to college. They are more a college prep school.

Ms. Hart felt that the last time the representative was at their School Committee meeting, he might have felt almost attacked with all the questions they were asking. She said they are just looking to get data they can analyze to see which of our kids are going there and the reasons why. Ms. LaBrie appreciates the efforts and said a school like Monty Tech fills a need; however she would like to see what we can do to make our schools better.

4. School Committee FY17 Budget Timeline

The School Committee spoke about their budget timeline at their meeting earlier this evening. The Business Office would forward a copy of their schedule to the Town Manager. It was noted that warrant articles are due in to the Town Manager's office no later than Monday, April 4th at 5:00 p.m.

Ms. LaBrie asked how the School Budget would be presented whether it would be detailed or not. Supt. Haddad mentioned on March 10th they would be having a Public Hearing and it would be as much detailed as it was last year. There was some consideration that the detailed budget also be submitted at Town Meeting as well.

Mr. Maillet requested a line item budget for the Finance Committee and mentioned they do not meet jointly with the Selectmen when the School budget is presented. It is done separately.

5. Finance Committee FY17 Budget Review Meeting Dates

Mr. Maillet said the month of March and April is full with Finance Committee meetings. They have five meetings to be scheduled. Chairman Tom Kane will be getting in touch with the Selectmen and School Committee for scheduling. The Committee will meet next week and confirm dates.

OLD BUSINESS:

Ms. Corbosiero wanted to know what is going on with the Town Accountant Search Committee stating she was away when this happened. Mr. Hickey said the Town Accountant Search Committee hasn't met yet and is working with Donna for an appropriate time for her departure. When we find the appropriate date, we will determine when that Search Committee will meet. Ms. Corbosiero volunteered to be on the committee. She asked about the formation. Mr. Barbaro said it was formed at a Selectmen's meeting and consisted of the Town Manager, Supt. of Schools, Finance Committee member, a Board of Selectmen member and a School Committee member. Ms. Corbosiero suggested it should also have someone on the committee that knows of the work that will be involved, for instance the Collector/Treasurer. Ms. Corbosiero told Ms. Allard that she was sorry to see her go.

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. LaBrie moved to adjourn the Selectmen's meeting; Anderson seconded. By a vote of all aye, the joint meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Daigle
Executive Assistant