

# TOWN OF WINCHENDON



## Finance Committee

Telephone (978)-297-5419

### Finance Committee Meeting- Toy Town Elementary Visit

November 13, 2018

Toy Town Elementary School Conference Room

**Present:** Chairman Thomas J Kane Jr., Vice-Chair Christian Orobello, Dr. Maureen Ward,  
Charles C. Corts, Charles (CJ) Husselbee  
Joan Landers- Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Mary Aker- Toy Town Principal  
Suzanne Michel- Director of Pupil Services  
Richard Ikonen, School Business Manager  
Brianna Roberts- Recording Secretary

**Absent:** Douglas Delay, Amy Salter

Suzanne Michel explained the ABA (applied behavioral analysis) classroom is a model that has been highly structured to support students with ASD (autism spectrum disorder). With only one ABA paraprofessional, there was improvement but spread too thin for one person.

Developing an IEP (individualized education program) is difficult since the standard program includes forty hours of education, which exceeds the regular school week. Parents are frustrated feeling the school system is not providing their child with what they need.

Cottage Hill Academy is phasing out their education program resulting in the Winchendon school system being responsible.

Mr. Husselbee asked what resources other school districts have or do to incorporate the IEP plans and deal with frustrated parents.

Ms. Michel responded that other school districts typically have a full time BCBA (board certified behavioral analyst). Toy town currently has one professional that is contracted out to work part time one day a week. Most districts also have an emotional classroom. Since Winchendon's school district does not have these resources, the children become safety risks and in turn, are sent elsewhere, costing the school a lot of money.

Germaine Lawrence Campus closed which left Cottage Hill to take in the girls that were living there. This month, five additional students from Germaine had been placed in the Winchendon school system. There

are not enough resources for the students that are in the system right now and it will continue to increase.

Ms. Aker recommended getting an ED/BD room to accommodate the children that are currently sent out. It would save the school a lot of money, and sometimes sending out can be worse for the child.

Ms. Michel stated a need for an 18-22 program. One eleventh grade students program and transportation cost totals around 250K.

Mr. Kane made a point that it would be a good negotiation for the town manager since transportation comes out of the school budget.

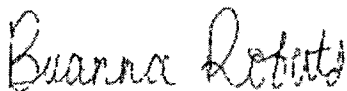
Ms. Michel stated that with a decrease in staff over the last few years, along with budget cuts, and an increase in students with mental health issues, there is no longer a balance in staff and resources. There is a need for an ED/BD room at every school.

Ms. Aker stated there is a huge issue with people walking in the front door and going through the building without checking in which is an extreme safety issue. The front door entrance needs to be resolved but the quote received was extremely expensive.

Ms. Aker discussed some of the recent grants the school applied for and received. There is also a high need for a grant writer. A lot of the teachers apply for these grants themselves, but there is a lot of missed opportunity and a grant writer would help fulfill that need.

The main building issues hoping to be addressed at the next capital meeting is the front door, drainage system for the side field, and a water heater.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brianna Roberts".

Brianna Roberts, Finance Committee Recording Secretary