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TOWN OF WINCHENDON

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Finance Committee

Telephone (978)-297-5419

Regular Meeting/Public Hearing

Finance Committee Minutes

March 13, 2025 6:30PM

Town Hall 2nd Floor Auditorium

Members Present: Chair Thomas J Kane Jr, Vice-Chair Dr. Maureen Ward, Charles C. Corts, Diane Coulter, Adam Gardner, Mike Giovannucci

6:30PM: Chair Thomas Kane Jr. called the Finance Committee meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Presentation of the Proposed FY2026 Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School Budget: Superintendent Thomas Brown and Human Resources/Business Manager Tammy Crockett were present.

T. Brown began with an overview of the presentation, how they plan on funding certain expenses, and explained they understood that every community is struggling right now. They have made an effort to fund with grants when possible and use other funds that don't affect the towns. Monty Tech has received over a million dollars in federal grant funding. The Perkins funds pay for a lot of the equipment for the shop programs. For Title 1, they have ed tech teachers that teach classes and support the students in terms of technology. IDA supports special education including paraprofessionals. This year they have earned \$2.7M in competitive grants they have pursued to support their programs.

Dr. M. Ward wanted to mention that in 2015, Monty Tech received \$25,000 in grants, and 10 years later in 2025, they have received \$2.7M and are hoping for another \$1.3M. The growth is phenomenal and commended them for their efforts in pursuing these grants. T. Brown thanked Katie Whittaker for her work in underwriting the grants, and stated she does a great job at working with the departments to get them funding when needed.

MVP Academy is up and running this year. At the beginning of the school year the students were working out of the main campus as they were still completing renovations. The building is a 16,000 sq.ft. warehouse 1.5 miles down the street that they converted into a space for 3 workforce training programs- carpentry and electrical are up and running, with plumbing to be implemented in the near future. This program is unique in the fact that the students work off the same schedule as Monty Tech students, where it is a rotation academic and workshop schedule, but with this program, they stay enrolled in their

hometown, meaning the Chapter 70 funds stay with the communities. Monty Tech receives the Chapter 74 funds.

T.Brown stated they believed everyone should have access to workforce training. One group that is overlooked are people with disabilities. Last winter there was a grant offered for young adults with disabilities 18-30 to get workforce training. Last year they had 12 students in the program. They were able to partner with local businesses to assist these students with getting jobs. This year they have 25 students they are assisting.

Their auto spray booth is original from the 1960's-70's. They put it out to bid to replace and it ended up being a lot more expensive than anticipated. With combined funds from Perkins and Commcorp they will be able to start the work in May. Heavy equipment is very expensive, but they are able to bring in advanced real life simulators to help the students on training with heavy equipment.

Last year they had 235 juniors and seniors out on co-op. Co-op is when the students are working with and outside partner instead of going to shop. There is a night program called the CTI- Career technical initiative that has run 5 rounds so far, and is a no cost training program.

Tammy Crockett explained the foundation budget portion of the presentation. The state establishes rates for different types of educational categories and also different age groups. Vocational school is the highest funded regular education. They receive \$17,354.29 on a baseline to spend per pupil. For the MVP program, Monty Tech receives the difference between the vocational baseline and the amount given for high school students at \$11,714.46, meaning they receive \$5,639.83 per MVP student. They receive additional funding for special groups such as special education, english learner, and low income students. The total foundational budget that the state has calculated for Monty Tech was \$30,990,414. The required net school spending is the minimum required amount they have to spend on the students, not including transportation, debt service, capital, and school meals. The foundation budget per student is \$20,827. For FY26 their required net school spending is the same amount as their foundational budget. In FY25 they were a hold harmless district and required more Chapter 70 than the district dictated, so the state requires them to spend that difference on the students. The amount above the required school spending was \$606,410 or 1.96% above. The capital budget was \$500,000, a decrease of \$10,000 from the current year. The total budget was \$34,641,344, a 3.51% increase over FY25. They are estimating \$2M in reimbursement from the state for transportation. The school committee has established a revolving fund, the Regional Transportation Fund, and if the school receives more money in transportation aid than budgeted that year, they vote to add the money to that fund. The fund must be used in the following year to reduce assessments to the communities for transportation. They are expecting to have an excess of \$200,000 to contribute to next year's fund. Total assessments equal \$13,178,539, a 6.11% increase. It is anticipated that E&D (excess and deficiency) will be certified between \$1M and \$1.1M. \$20,000 was budgeted for OPEB and \$30,000 for the Stabilization fund.

Salaries and payroll are one of the largest line items. They have a 3% COLA in next year's collective bargaining agreement, representing a \$580,000 increase. Fringe benefits, medical and dental, are projected to increase 5% next year, at \$438,000. They are self insured, so they are able to negotiate or adjust rates as needed.

Winchendon's foundation enrollment decreased by 10, from 96 to 86. Required minimum contribution went from \$613,383 to \$577,554. The decrease was due to enrollment quota, last year they graduated 31

students and had 21 freshmen. The state uses a few factors to determine a community's ability to pay towards their systems. One factor is property values, multiplied by a uniform property percentage- 0.3243, which is used for every community across the commonwealth. Another factor is residents income multiplied by the income percentage- 1.5699. Every community gets 17.5% state aid. The FY26 required local contribution is \$7,428,294. Winchendon is \$1,791,113 of Monty Tech's foundation budget. The FY26 proposed assessment was \$632,821.

Minutes: February 13, 2025 Minutes

Dr. Maureen Ward motioned to approve the February 13, 2025 Minutes, 2nd by Charles Corts.

Corts (Y) Coulter (Y) Gardner (Y) Giovannucci (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 6-0

February 20, 2025 Minutes

Dr. Maureen Ward motioned to approve the February 20, 2025 Minutes, 2nd by Mike Giovannucci.

Corts (Y) Coulter (Y) Gardner (Y) Giovannucci (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 6-0

YTD Reports: T. Kane stated he was surprised the expenses and revenues were all in one report. Katie did the reports this time, whereas Deanna typically does them, and she just was not sure how to separate them. The revenue report was severely behind. Personal property tax was at 23% and real estate tax revenue was at 13%, being about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the year.

Member Comments: Dr. M. Ward stated this year will be her last year on the committee. She suggested letting Deb Dennis know so she can post the job listing.

Public Comment: None.

Adjourn: 7:51PM- Dr. Maureen Ward motioned to adjourn, 2nd by Charles Corts.

Corts (Y) Coulter (Y) Gardner (Y) Giovannucci (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 6-0

Respectfully submitted:

Brianna Lindahl

Brianna Lindahl, Finance Committee Recording Secretary

Thomas Kane Jr., Chair

Dr. Maureen Ward, Vice-Chair

Charles C. Corts

Diane Coulter

Doug Delay

Adam Gardner

Mike Giovannucci