

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
JOINTLY HELD MEETING WITH
BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2017
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Auditorium
109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.**

Selectmen Present:

Barbara Anderson, Chairwoman
Audrey LaBrie, Vice-Chairwoman
Austin Cyganiewicz
Amy Salter
Michael Barbaro

Keith Hickey, Town Manager
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant
William Schlosstein, Town Accountant
Debra Dennis, Recording Secretary

School Committee Members Present:

Janet Corbosiero, Acting Chairwoman
Larry Murphy
Felicia Nurmsen
Dawn Fronte

Steven Haddad, Supt. of Schools
Rich Ikonen, School Business Manager
Barrie Martin, Recording Secretary

Absent: Danielle LaPointe

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Town Manager Memo regarding "Revised Budget Documents to Meet House Proposed Budget" (attached)
- Draft Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrant for May 15, 2017 (filed)
- FY18 General Government Budget Updated with House Budget (attached)
- Comparison of Budget Uses and Sources-House Budget FY15-FY18 (attached)

The Joint Meeting was called to order by each Chairperson at 6:30 p.m. with the *Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America*.

Announce audio/video recording disclosure: The School Committee Recording Secretary Barrie Martin disclosed she would be audio recording the meeting this evening.

1. NEW BUSINESS:

FY18 Budget Discussions – Chairwoman Anderson said they have come together tonight to discuss the budget. Mr. Hickey thanked the Boards gathering this evening. He provided them with an updated budget to reflect the house budget changes. There are a couple of major changes. The House Budget changes provide an additional \$16,964 to the School Department. He said he has revised the School Department Indirect Costs and Net School Spending amounts in the revised budget document. The House has also increased the Veterans Benefit reimbursement from \$222,840 to \$319,186. The revenue increase of \$96,346 has been applied to the property tax levy surplus.

He said he would like to use \$62,233 of the property tax levy surplus for additional capital purchases in May. The total amount that could be used in May for capital purchases is \$220,292 which would fund the fire truck and DPW truck leases and also a police cruiser. The rest would be proposed to be funded in November.

If the Board supports his proposed capital funding plan, the balance of the property tax surplus levy would be \$112,863. One of the other changes is regarding the funding for the sally port. The Robinson-Broadhurst

Foundation indicated they will support a \$500,000 grant not the \$562,610 that was anticipated. He said he has modified the article increasing taxes from \$59,000 to \$121,610. He said he has not changed the FY18 budget to reflect the additional tax funding but would make up the additional \$62,610 in FY19 and FY20.

Mr. Hickey said the school is considering two overrides. He said he wanted to see if the Board has interest in providing the School Committee with all or some of the \$112,000. He cautioned that if the Board is interested in providing an offering, to not offer all of it, because the house budget is not finalized and something could come up. It would be nice to have a little in reserve if something happened in the next six months. We are fortunate to be in this position to have funds to work with the school on to increase the net school spending amount.

Acting Chairwoman Corbosiero said "what a breath of fresh air. It's nice to hear that there is money and the thought of the School came up. It's wonderful."

Chairwoman Anderson was concerned that the money was originally allocated to Veterans Benefits and she wanted to make sure veterans will receive what they are entitled to. Mr. Hickey informed her that the money we are receiving is from the seventy-five percent reimbursements. The money in the FY18 budget is what the Veteran's Agent said he needed, unless there is an unforeseen situation that may come up.

Chairwoman Anderson asked where the funding was coming from for Article 3 in the warrant to raise and appropriate \$55,328.76 for old bills related to the school department. Mr. Hickey replied that he is proposing to use free cash or stabilization; it doesn't impact the FY18 budget at all. There will be \$62,000 left in free cash if everything is approved at the Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Hickey said he feels comfortable keeping \$50,000 to \$60,000 as a cushion for the Town.

Selectman Barbaro asked if Article 3 doesn't pass, has it been budgeted for in the School Department budget. Superintendent Haddad replied, "No, it has not." Mr. Hickey said the bills need to be paid; services have been provided and rendered and we owe the money. School Committee member Felicia Nurmsen asked if he had investigated if there might be a grant they could apply for through the National Grid foundation. Mr. Hickey replied, "no he hasn't." Supt. Haddad also said he had not. Mr. Hickey said he did reach out to National Grid to see if they would reduce what was owed on prior bills. He didn't receive any offer back yet.

Selectman Barbaro said splitting the \$112,000 in half and helping the school is a good first step showing we are working together. **Selectman Barbaro moved to split the \$112,863 in half to \$56,431.** Selectwoman Salter asked if they would change the override amount if they received this money. Acting Chairwoman Corbosiero said this is a onetime deal; the override is for years to come. The override is to keep the school going so the override amount wouldn't change. Selectman Barbaro suggested the \$56,000 could go into unemployment so it would potentially stop additional layoffs if the Proposition 2 ½% override didn't pass. Selectwoman LaBrie asked if there was a use for it on the town's side. Mr. Hickey said there were things that are needed that hadn't been supported by him. We can live without the \$56,000; but we could use it. He suggested if it was the School Committee's intention to not reduce the override amount, that there could be a discussion before Town Meeting and possibly wait to see if the town wants to provide the school with additional money. The Board doesn't have to vote this evening. Acting Chairwoman Corbosiero said the issue here is we haven't had a chance to talk about this. It's tough to make a decision now. It might be better to have that money in hand because we don't know what will happen. Supt. Haddad said he would like to know sooner than later whether he can count on this additional funding source. **With no second being heard, the motion failed.**

Selectwoman Salter said she is concerned what the school is going to do if they don't get the override. There was some discussion on addressing this at a Fall Town Meeting. The Board did not need to vote tonight. School Committee Larry Murphy said he is trying to sort out pros and cons. He thanked the Board for the money. He wondered about reducing the override as a sign of good faith to citizens and taxpayers. He wondered if reduced, what would happen next year. Acting Chairwoman Corbosiero said they are working very hard to help people have a clear understanding what they are voting for. Everyone will understand what will happen if they vote no for the override. Ms. Nurmsen added it's not just about cutting teachers but also about cutting programs.

Selectwoman LaBrie noted the state hasn't voted on this and any motion should be predicated on final numbers from the state. The Town Manager was concerned on the deadlines the School needs to meet especially with notifying teachers. He was looking for basic direction on where the Board wants to go contingent on senate funding. Selectman Barbaro noted that they could change the numbers at the Fall Town Meeting after the final numbers from the state come in to play. The Town Manager understood everyone's concerns, dealing with assumptions, nothing concrete. The Board could make a decision to support an amount with the understanding if something else comes up to impact the community and we are working together, we sit back down as a group before fall town meeting and work this out, possibly find a way to return the \$56,000.

Selectman Barbaro moved to fund the School District with \$56,431 based on the projected revenue at this time; Selectwoman LaBrie seconded.

ANDERSON(Y) LABRIE(Y) BARBARO(Y) CYGANIEWICZ(Y) SALTER(Y)

Mr. Hickey said the Board votes on Monday night whether they support the Town Meeting warrant articles. He said if there are any questions to let him know. He will change the warrant again to reflect the \$56,431 that was voted tonight. The warrant will be finalized Tuesday night after the Finance Committee votes. He invited everyone to feel free to reach out to him with any questions.

2. OLD BUSINESS: There was no Old Business this evening.

3. COMMITTEE/BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Superintendent Haddad said the School Committee will be holding a public hearing tomorrow night and will vote after it.

Chairwoman Anderson reminded everyone that Saturday April 22nd is Earth Day. She said bags and gloves will be provided. It's a good opportunity to clean up the town.

Acting Chairwoman Corbosiero said Gar Park had an incident of vandalism. She said they have video of the incident.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments this evening.

5. ADJOURNMENT: Selectwoman LaBrie moved to adjourn; Selectman Barbaro seconded.

ANDERSON(Y) LABRIE(Y) BARBARO(Y) CYGANIEWICZ(Y) SALTER(Y)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm

Respectfully submitted;



Debra A. Dennis

Recording Secretary