



Town of Paxton
Board of Selectmen
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Minutes for Meeting with Finance Committee

Wednesday, April 2, 2014

Meeting Location: John Bauer Senior Center 17 West Street, Paxton, MA 01612

Members Present: John F. Malone, Chairman
Peter Bogren, Jr., Vice Chairman
Julia N. Pingitore, Clerk

Carol L. Riches, Town Administrator

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:45pm.

Budget discussion

- Rich Fenton, Chairman of the Finance Committee presented that with the recent change to how the pay raises will be calculated we are looking at an additional \$13,000 or \$14,000 in deficit. Stabilization has \$366,000 which could be used to cover the deficit, or we cut elsewhere to balance the budget.
- **(JM)** Thanked the Finance Committee for all their efforts in putting the budget together again this year. Looking to see if we can come up with any ideas about the school budget.
- Rich Fenton stated that the Finance Committee voted on a budget with a \$100,000 override and this is what they are presenting to the Board of Selectmen.
- **(JM)** I would like to see this group along with the school committee come up with an alternative plan. We have another \$16,000 to carryover for snow and ice, and I would like to emphasize that when we met with the Auditor he stated that we need to put more into our Stabilization account.
- Rich Fenton stated that the \$16,000 for snow and ice is already in the budget.
- **(JM)** Maybe we need to make some drastic cuts. Cut the COLA and take back \$32,000. Ask the school to make a cut.
- Rich Fenton replied that the Finance Committee did make cuts. We decreased the budget to where we are comfortable. Now we need an additional \$13,000 to be cut and we will be okay. We could move the \$30,000 from Stabilization to Capital Depreciation to cover their request.
- **(JM)** We need ideas to present to the school tomorrow that work for both sides. Why should we have to absorb a state mandate that the school is moving away from. \$77,000 from MLC went directly into RASA. Maybe we can agree with the school that if more money comes in that it comes right back to the town.
- **(CR)** For the sake of the warrant we need to make a decision as to what we are

doing.

- **(JM)** We need to wait until we meet with the school tomorrow to see what they can do. I feel that the school now wants to work with us.
- Rich Fenton stated that we have not cut the budget that much this year from what was submitted.
- **(PB)** Percentage wise we fund the school less than most others. We need to be careful if we cut this year because they will come in higher next year. We need to know what we are going to ask for and explain what we have done and why we need their help. We need to look at what the increase has been for the WRSD for the past years and compare it to what the towns increase/decrease has been. We need to be careful that we do not set up an us versus them.
- **(JP)** I agree with what Peter has said. We need to talk to the school, but we need to be careful. We could run the risk of them inflating their future budget knowing that Paxton will ask to cut, cut, and cut.
- **(PB)** What will we do if they say they will change their number? They still need to have a school committee meeting. Will we change the date of our Town Meeting?
- **(JM)** No, we will see what happens after we meet them.
- Mark Love – Finance Committee member – I think the \$100,000 over ride does show the school that we need them to cut back a little. We don't know there budget so they need to look at what can be done. In the future an area they could look at is the 90/10 split for the teacher's benefits with the contract negotiations.
- **(JM)** The \$100,000 over ride will not pass. Instead if we could talk to them and be up front and say that we need help and see what they can do.
- Scott Runstrom – Finance Committee member – Asking the school to make a cut when Holden, Princeton and Sterling don't need the cut is going to be difficult. We can't afford the whole budget and we have cut what we can and the school does need to make up the rest. The reason for the override is to give the whole town the opportunity to vote rather than just the handful of people that show up at Town Meeting.
- **(JM)** I would like to try the up-front approach to see what they can do with the school budget.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 2014 at 7pm.

Adjourned Meeting at 8:50pm, Unanimous all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Graf-Parsons, Administrative Assistant

Peter Bogren, Jr.
Chairman

John F. Malone
Vice Chairman

Julia N. Pingitore
Clerk