



Town of Paxton
Board of Selectmen
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Minutes for Meeting with Wachusett Regional School District Officials

Thursday, April 3, 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 7:00m.

Budget discussion

- **(JM)** I am going to suggest to my other board members that we go along with the budget that our Finance Committee will present with an override of \$120,000. Both Selectmen Bogren and Pingitore agreed with this statement.
- Rich Fenton from Finance stated that \$250,000 is the deficit that we were running. We were able to cut and now we are at a deficit of \$120,000 which will now go on an override.
- Joe Becker, Rutland Selectmen, stated that Rutland is looking at about \$300,000 deficit. We will make our vote contingent on the override.
- Joe Scanlon, WRSD official, stated that we appreciate your consideration in supporting the budget and your need for an override.
- Darryll McCall, WRSD official, stated that the schools budget is heavily dependent on the state and we don't know exactly what we are getting yet. We do see an increase in the amount for transportation and the per pupil cost. It is difficult to say what we could take away until we know what the state is going to do. We are starting to see a decrease in the student population. The percentages are changing so the towns are asked to put in more and the state is putting in less.
- **(JM)** Everyone has been very transparent and we appreciate the ability to work with the officials and committee members.
- **(JP)** Establishing an open line of communication is key. I would be ideal if you could look at your budget now to see where you might be able to come down, but I understand that you are in a waiting period with the state.
- Darryll McCall stated that Paxton gets about \$500,000 from the state, and about 40% of our budget comes from the state, which makes it difficult to make any

decisions until we have a bottom line number.

- **(JM)** We discussed possibly changing the date of our town meeting, but we are going to stay with our May 5th meeting date.
- William Clute, School Committee Member, stated that he agrees with what has been stated, and the relationship has been great.
- Joe Scanlon stated that the line item budget will be available online soon.
- **(PB)** inquired as to whether Joe Scanlon has any idea as to what the state numbers might be.
- Joe Scanlon replied that perhaps \$180,000 increase per pupil and another \$200,000 in transportation. About \$380,000 total and 10% to Paxton so about \$38,000.
- **(PB)** If enrollment is down how will that affect the future?
- Joe Scanlon replied that Chapter 70 won't decrease but it will increase slower. We are not projecting to have any great decrease in population. We are looking at a marginal or flat decrease over the next seven years.
- Darryll McCall stated that our fixed cost will continue to increase. WRSD is still an affluent community which plays into the Chapter 70 funds.
- **(PB)** What is the process for school choice?
- Darryll McCall stated that the process is currently on hold, but typically the principle would look at slots available and allow students in via a blind lottery.
- Jeffrey Kent, Paxton town resident, asked the school that within the 1.4% increase in the budget how much of that is for discretionary spending?
- Darryll McCall stated that a very small portion of our budget is discretionary, which is anything that is not salary related.
- Barbara Renzoni, School Committee member, stated that you need to be careful because the discretionary funds are the items that directly affect the students. We also need to reduce fixed costs which the Superintendent is aware of.
- **(JM)** Are there any unfunded mandates from the state that the school has to deal with?
- Darryll McCall replied that there are some. The PARCC program which may take the place of the MCAS. There is also a tech based assessment, so we need to catch up on technology as well.
- Sheila Dibb, Rutland Selectmen asked if there were any plans to consolidate any positions or to add on.
- Darryll McCall replied that we did absorb some positions about seven years ago in the Administrative office, and we have consolidated some principal ships in the district.
- **(JP)** Paxton did experience a onetime windfall, so for next year we have an even more difficult time with our budget.
- Darryll McCall stated that the school is in the same situation. If we have to come down for FY15 we are not going to be able to do anything for next year. We need to start looking at budgets over the next several years.

Override question for the ballot

- **Motion (PB) seconded (JP) to place an override on the ballot for \$120,000 to balance the FY15 budget. Unanimous, all in favor.**

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 14, 2014 at 7pm.

Adjourned Meeting at 8:05pm, Unanimous all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Graf-Parsons, Administrative Assistant

Peter Bogren, Jr.
Chairman

John F. Malone
Vice Chairman

Julia N. Pingitore
Clerk