**Minutes of the Finance Committee March 13, 2019**

Members attending: Mr. Fenton (Chairman), Ms. Herron, Ms. Lennon, Mr. Linton, Mr. Love, Mr. Seth Peters, and Mr. Runstrom.

Members not attending: None.

Additional Attendees: Carol Riches (Town Administrator), Peter Bogren (Selectman),
Debbie Bailey (Library Director), Catherine McCourt (Library Trustee).

Meeting called to order at 7:30pm.

### Debbie Bailey (Library Director)

Ms. Bailey presented information to the committee on current Library programs, as well as the requested FY2020 budget for the Library.

* We were down a person, but we have hired a new children’s librarian. Her name is Pam, and she currently works as the children’s librarian in Dudley. She lives in Rutland so the commute is much better. She starts in 2 weeks.
* Some minor changes in the budget.
* Small increase in office supplies… we use a lot of materials for book covers, bar codes, paper, laser cartridges.
* CWMARS went up. Now that they have overdrive (downloadable books) we have an extra assessment.
* What is maintenance? General maintenance of the library – boiler service, elevator inspection. Elevator inspection is about $800. AC cleaning and maintenance, which is done by a private company.
* Spending on books remains 24.2% of the total budget.
* There is a slight increase in hourly wages. This is mostly because minimum wage went up (which affects pages). Ms. Bailey would like the clerks to get a 50 cent an hour raise. They’ve been here for 17 years. With the increase in minimum wage they aren’t much higher than the minimum now. The clerks are paid hourly, they are only paid when they work.
* Is the increase in the budget enough to cover that raise? Yes, we usually have a little extra money in the budget.
* How is utilization of the library? Busy as all get out. It’s been hard to park sometimes.
	+ 15-25 kids per story hour.
	+ 20-25 kids for Friday kids program.
	+ We’ve added some new art programs.
	+ We have had quite a few new signups for library cards.
* Do high school students use the library? Some. Not as much as we’d like.
* Have you had any computer issues lately. Not really, except for some minor issues with the circulation computer. I’m hoping that it can be fixed with a simple software reinstall. When we have an issue we usually call Computer Central.
* Can the Library use the town IT services? She can, but often cannot wait for when he is onsite (Fridays).
* Purchased services includes elevator maintenance. Why isn’t it in public buildings?
Public buildings only covers the town hall and the white building.
* Special revenue funds – looks like it’s being used quite a bit now. Is that for special projects or to offset budget? It’s for projects… we’ve put in new carpet, we’ve done painting… refurbishing in general.
* It seems like since we’re using special revenue funds, some of the budget pressure is off the budget? We’re doing pretty good now. It depends somewhat on the library trustrees. This board wants to do some updates to the library, the previous board sort of wanted to leave things as is.
* How much use does elevator get? Probably 2-3 times a week. It’s tricky to learn to use it. It’s very handy for moving stuff (books) around.
* A few years ago we discussed replacing the boiler. Did we do that? No. We had Peterson come out and look at it, they said it’s still going strong (despite being 40 years old). We did have to do maintenance on one of the circulating pumps.

### Budget Consideration

**1610: Library.** Motion to approve the budget for Library (#1610) in the amount of $184,158 made by Ms. Herron and seconded by Ms. Lennon.
**Motion Approved 6-0**. (Mr. Runstrom recused himself from the vote.)

### Discussion Regarding How to Calculate COLA for Budgets

Mr. Fenton questioned how we should be calculating COLA increases in various budgets when there is also a merit increase to salary during the year. If we budget a certain amount at town meeting, but the salary is then increased during the year, does the COLA apply to the amount approved at the previous town meeting, or to the new amount (after merit increase).

Mr. Runstrom: Can a budget go up after town meeting? It doesn’t seem like you could spend more than the budgeted amount?

Mr. Fenton: For example, the salary budget for Treasurer had 58,458 approved at town meeting, but the salary was increased to $60,000 during the year.

Ms. Riches: We don’t change the budget for the year. The budget is set, but since we often don’t spend the full amount of the budget for many positions, there is a little wiggle room in the budget, so we can increase during the course of the year based on evaluations… merit increases.

Mr. Love: So if someone has a salary set at 10k, and we give them a 3% COLA. Then they get an increase based on merit, change of duties, etc. So now they make 11k. Is the COLA applied to the 10k or the 11k?

Ms. Riches: I think it should be on the budgeted amount for the next year (the 11k), otherwise you are lowering the salary they are being paid.

General agreement from the committee on this point.

**Motion** made by Mr. Love and seconded by Ms. Herron to apply COLA to the budgeted amount for the next year. **Approved Unanimously**.

### Discussion Regarding School Budgets

Mr. Love: We haven’t talked about the school budgets yet.

Mr Fenton: The Baypath budget went down, to $173,187.
We haven’t discussed the WRSD budget, because we don’t set their budget… we just vote on the total.
There was a meeting with the school committee and Selectboard that we were all invited to.
We will approve it or disapprove it at the next meeting.

Mr. Love: Our population went down but our assessment still went up. That doesn’t seem to make sense. What happened to the “line in the sand” that the towns wanted to set at 3.5%?

Mr. Fenton: I went back and calculated the average budget increases since 98, and it came in at 4.2%. So when they came in at 3.95 it seems right in line with expectations.

Mr. Bogren: They are an independent entity. We don’t really have the right to set their budget. We just recommend approval or disapproval and it’s up to town meeting to vote it up or down.
The real issue is the flawed foundation budget formula. The state really needs to give more support to cities and towns for school funding.

Mr. Love: What about transportation funding? What is the status of that?

Mr. Bogren: It’s gone up from last year, will need to check the exact percentage.

Mr. Love: My final position is that the WRSD budget came in higher than I expected. I thought the roundtable discussions had more teeth than it really had.

Mr. Love: Do we know where the other towns are?

Mr Bogren: Princeton is fine. Holden doesn’t like the 6+ % increase. Rutland is the only town that I know will oppose it. Sterling will approve it.

Mr. Love: What about the Agriculture student?
Ms. Riches: We budgeted an increase, but we won’t actually know the real number until April. The agriculture student is in his senior year.

The next meeting of the Finance Committee is scheduled for Thursday March 21.

Fire/EMS will come in for the next meeting. That should be the last interview of the year.

We will also be voting on the Bay Path and WRSD budgets.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:18pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Runstrom, Secretary.