

Present: Dorianne Almann, Michael Carrier, Joe Conroy, Mike Darcy (selectmen's rep), John Hartnett, Mo Klein, James MacDonell, Lewis Major, Tina McCosker, Peter Zavorotny. Excused: Bruce Bellville.

Mr. Zavorotny called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. He noted the committee had minutes for Meeting 628 to approval and asked for comments. No one had edits to make. Mr. Carrier made a motion to approve the minutes, was seconded by Mr. Hartnett, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Zavorotny told the committee he had spoken to Mr. Bellville. Regrettably, medical issues mean Mr. Bellville will be excused for the remaining meetings between tonight and the March elections. He also noted that Ms. Almann and Mr. Klein had been incorrectly noted as Absent on the December 4 meeting's roll call when they were Excused.

Turning to matters of the budget, he reminded the committee that Ms. McCosker had told the committee that the school had removed \$55,739 from its budget. He noted that salaries and benefits are about \$8,000,000; "salary and benefits account for so much that very little remains that's discretionary."

Mr. Hartnett asked how much the school anticipates returning to the town. Mr. Darcy said it's expected to be roughly \$257,000.

Mr. Zavorotny remarked that on page 7 IT equipment increased to \$350,000 from \$250,000. What were the circumstances behind the increase?

Mr. Hartnett said, "Let's look out for the taxpayer," noting it seems as though \$200,000 is to be added to Student Support. What's behind this? Mr. Zavorotny said he'd make a note of this point to discuss with the School Board at the January 8 meeting.

Mr. MacDonell noted that the ACA penalty relates to Obamacare.

Mr. Darcy said the town gets historical averages for five years. These data are helpful in analyzing line items in the town's budget.

Ms. McCosker noted there was an increase in out-of-district placements.

Mr. Zavorotny noted that "if the school district wasn't returning money to the town." Ms. Almann brought up the fact that perhaps the school's budget is too big, given the fact every year the school returns money to the town. She pointed out that the town incurs an opportunity cost every time this happens because the town loses benefits it could have seen had it had that money in the first place.

Mr. Darcy noted that the audit is done. MS-5 has been processed. The selectmen will decide on what will be done with money in the undesignated fund at its Monday, January 13 meeting.

Mr. MacDonell pointed out that on page 18, the salary is \$52,000 for the Guidance Counselor; he wondered why this is so high. Ms. McCosker explained that the salary is for the Drug and Alcohol Counselor. The position was granted-funded for the previous seven years and now that the grant has ended, the person's salary will now be paid by the school.

Mr. Hartnett voiced his concern that there are "lots of salaries!" relative to the small number of students in the high school--under 300. He pointed out there's the SRO, the assistant principal, the Drug and Alcohol Counselor. He wondered about the number of actual drug involvement cases exist at the school on an annual basis, saying that when he was involved with the school (10 years ago), these data had to be reported to the state.

He went on to say that for \$77,000 a year for a four year period, the town could have hired a police officer. He said "maybe it would have been better to pay a full-time police officer rather than accept a grant", wondering "would we have been better off?"

Mr. Zavorotny noted there are two warrant articles related to the school: One is related to the operating budget, the second to increasing capital reserves. The question about the \$250,000 fire escape still has not been resolved. The roof of the high school still needs work in two sections.

He reminded the committee that they would be gathering at 6:30pm the following night up at the SAU to talk over any final issues before meeting with the school board at 7pm.

Mr. Darcy told the committee that MS-5 would be in Concord on January 8. Mr. Zavorotny reminded the committee that he hasn't received revenue figures from TA Collins and noted that the town "got more money from the state than was originally expected."

He said that one elementary school teacher was dropped because of smaller classes, so one page of the school budget shows a reduction in salary. Ms. Almann asked how VY's closing affected the school. Ms. McCosker said there are less than 10 families with children in the school system who have a family member working at the facility. Mr. Darcy spoke up, saying there are a total of 50 households in town with some connection to VY. According to him, the town gets about \$25,000 from VY. He doesn't know how much the school receives.

With no more business to discuss, Mr. Carrier made a motion to adjourn. He was seconded by Mr. Conroy. The meeting ended at 7:01 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Dorianne Almann
Recording Secret