

**Call to Order**

Chairman Stumpf called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room. In attendance were: S. Jon Stumpf, Greg Serrao, Linn Anderson, Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt, John Barry, Jr., Margaret (Peggy) Kruse, Bojay Taylor and Bonnie Zahorik. Also in attendance was Donna Walsh Finance Director. Absent were Joanne Marden and Greg Serrao. The meeting was live cablecast.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Minutes of March 16, 2016**

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Kruse and seconded by Mr. Barry, it was unanimously voted to approve above minutes as amended. Motion passed 6-0-1 with Ms. Zahorik abstaining.

**Fincomm Report**

Mr. Stumpf noted the items in the letter of the report should include the following: a) while the gap in the school budget is \$1,060,000 “on paper”, there is \$562K available in circuit breaker funds. If school elects not to use those funds and not fund for elementary school teachers, the money is nonetheless there to be used; b) in prior years sufficient funding above that approved at Town Meeting available to add additional FTE’s and this trend is consistent.

<u>Fiscal</u>	<u>FTE’s Over and above FTE’s voted</u>	<u>Number of Total FTE’s are Teachers</u>
FY16	8.0	7.89
FY15	12.73	12.5
FY14	15.14	13.0
FY13	38.0	29.0
FY17	Reasonable to assume trend will continue	

Similar trend over the last four years for acquiring computers at the end of the year not funded in the original budget.

Ms. Zahorik noted that the School Committee had recently voted to review its Goal 5 to update strategic educational funding, financial management and infrastructure. She pointed out that this may present an opportunity for a member of the Committee to liaison with the School Committee on this important endeavor. She will email a copy of Goal 5 to the members.

Ms. Kruse pointed out the number of students increasing in the in-district program: FY14- 151; FY15 - 174; FY16- 178; and FY17 - 208. She added that this may explain the higher than state average number. Discussion ensued on the costs of SPED and ways to address root of the problem: a) early intervention at elementary school; b) and lower class size to better able to identify and intervene for special needs students.

Mr. Stumpf pointed out from the school’s original request of \$1.8M (5.46% increase over last year) and more than the town manager’s recommended budget, \$300K for the high school project had been removed leaving a balance of \$221K. Of that \$300K, a reduction of \$60K was for OOD placements in original budget that have aged out and \$60K in telephone expense not needed. Discussion ensued on the need for more “scrubbing” of the budget. The Town Manger is planning on a summer long-term strategic planning workshop.

**Audience Participation**

Mr. Roli commented on the school department budget, special ed and out-of-district in particular. In answer to his question on why students are sent out of district rather than meeting their needs in district, Mr. Stumpf replied that highly specialized needs students require this placement and it is not cost effective to serve them in-district. Ms. Zahorik also commented that a study is ongoing to evaluate the entire special ed program.

He then addressed the article on Elder Citizens Tax Relief. He had been working with Representative Lyons and Senator L'Italien for the past several years on drafts of the legislation. Mr. Stumpf said the Committee voted on disapproval of the article because the financial impact was undetermined. Mr. Roli pointed out we have 3,190 seniors over the age of 70. The reduction would be \$100K off the assessed value with a residency of twenty years. Not all seniors would apply for the program. Ms. Kruse pointed out that the amount exempted would have to be reapplied to the residents' tax bill. The costs to administer the program was also of concern to the Committee. Mr. Stumpf told Mr. Roli that if additional information was made available, the Committee would consider a revote.

**OPEB**

Ms. Zahorik suggested that the Committee be afforded ample time to speak to significant financial issues in context of the entire budget, either in a powerpoint presentation or other graphic. The points that are made in the letter can be enhanced to further educate Town Meeting. As the one who addresses Town Meeting, Mr. Stumpf agreed to talk with Ms. Zahorik to develop context.

Discussion ensued on the votes taken on the school budget come before OPEB in Article 4, and the need to educate Town Meeting at the beginning on the relationship of these two votes.

**Town Meeting Planning**

Mr. Stumpf discussed assigning speaking roles in accordance with liaison assignments. (see attached).

**Next Meeting**

Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>

**Adjournment**

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Anderson and seconded by Ms. Moffitt, it was unanimously voted to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford  
Recording Secretary

*Attachment: Town Meeting Speaking Assignments*