

### Call to Order

Chairman Stumpf called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room. The meeting was live cablecast.

### Remote Participation Requirements and Procedures

Per 940 CMR 29.10(7), Linn Anderson contacted the Chair in sufficient time prior to the meeting with the request to participate in the meeting remotely due to geographic unavailability. Pursuant to 940 CMR 29.10(5), Chair so notified the members of Ms. Anderson's request, gained their approval, and initiated roll call. In attendance were S. Jon Stumpf-Y, Margaret (Peggy)-Y, John Barry, Jr.-Y, Joanne Marden-Y, Bojay Taylor-Y, Eugene (Janie) Moffitt-Y and Bonnie Zahorik-Y (arrived late.) Absent was Greg Serrao.

The remote connection was unsuccessful and terminated at 7:20 p.m.

### School Budget

Mr. Stumpf announced that Dr. Berman was present to speak to the school budget. He and the Town Manager had balanced the budget to \$76,099,203. The Town Manager has increased his original recommended budget as follows: a) \$100K in local receipts; b) \$252K in Chapter 70 state aid; c) \$147,029 in new growth estimates; d) \$118,374 in more local receipts; and e) \$86K miscellaneous receipts.

The Superintendent had decreased his original requested budget of \$77,299,074 as follows: a) \$560K in circuit breaker funds; b) \$300K high school scheduling; c) \$251,245 other deductions; and d) \$88,626 in further scrubbing. Dr. Berman indicated that savings were realized in: a) \$30K VOIP; b) \$50K SPED transportation; c) \$10K residual oil supply; d) \$20K reorganization of sped teachers at middle school level trading four positions to three positions; and e) reduce supplies/materials per kindergarten by \$2K with funds taken from surplus in revolving account.

Ms. Zahorik expressed appreciation for the commitment of the Superintendent and Town Manager in working together to balance the budget. This commitment will continue this summer when they will work together to develop a long-term financial plan for sustainable budgets. She noted the risks involved in this year's budget, i.e reducing circuit breaker funds down to \$0, and pointed to the fact that gaining control of SPED costs was a high priority going forward.

In answer to Mr. Barry's concern that the two main areas of focus for sustaining the budget are SPED costs and compensation, Dr. Berman expressed his commitment to focus on compensation in the upcoming contract negotiation process and do the strategic planning necessary this summer with the Town Manager. He also added that there were opportunities in special education to address costs: a) language based assessments; b) project monitoring; c) early assessment in the regular ed classroom; c) professional development needed has been preserved in budget; d) reorganization at middle school has started that process of reevaluation of the program. Reevaluation would ensure quality of in-district services that parents want leading to fewer OOD placements. He expressed his commitment to transparency and open communication generally, and specifically that he had no intention of hiring more FTE's if there is extra money found in the budget.

He added that enrollment projections show fewer students at the high school level and 71+ at the elementary level. In the eventuality that increase was realized, and included English language learners that required more services, he would share that information with the Committee early on and not "just handled" by the school department. He added that in the personnel budget, current positions had been rolled over.

Mr. Stumpf noted the importance of the quarterly personnel report. He also noted that retirements were important to track in order to project costs.

Ms. Moffitt expressed that the “ceiling becomes the floor.” She reiterated the need to address total compensation, salary, COLA, step, track, longevity and benefits. She also appreciated the good faith working relationships of the Town Manager and Superintendent.

Ms. Marden expressed the importance of sharing the above information with Town Meeting and letting the word go out that “something different has to happen next year” in developing sustaining budgets.

Ms. Kruse noted that the OPEB problem needs to be partially owned by the school department, since two-thirds of retirees are school employees. Dr. Berman acknowledged the importance of this issue, noting that in prior districts total compensation for every new hire was calculated. Mr. Stumpf agreed to ask Mr. Blumstein to add this item to the agenda for serious discussion.

#### Article 4 School Budget

Upon motion made by Mr. Barry and seconded by Ms. Moffitt, it was unanimously voted to recommend approval of the school budget in the amount of \$76,099,203. Motion passed 7-0.

In answer to Mr. Roli’s question about the percentage increase, Mr. Stumpf replied it was in the aggregate a total of 4.59% increase.

#### Warrant Articles

Mr. Stumpf noted that the following articles had been withdrawn:

Article 6 Budget Transfers; Article 7 Supplemental Budget Appropriations; Article 8 Stabilization Fund; Article 9 Free Cash; Article 10 Unexpended Appropriations; Article 13 Unpaid Bills; Article 22 Free Cash to OPEB Trust Fund; Article 48 Create SRA1 Zoning District; Article 49 Amend Zoning Map SRA1 Zoning District.

#### Article 30 Lovely Field Turf Replacement

Mr. Stumpf noted that the total appropriation is \$500K, but that the total cost of the project is \$598K with the \$98K coming from prior CIP funds. Ms. Kruse added the following information obtained from Ed Ataide: a) the \$98K is taken from remaining funds of the Woodhill masonry CIP project; b) bid obtained for \$443,900 for replacing turf and crumb rubber refill; c) as a result of parental disapproval (may be carcinogenic and potentially concussive,) the fill would be replaced with coconut crumb fiber, cork and silica sand at an additional \$154,150; d) since the latter is organic it requires maintenance every year at a cost of \$6-7K and over a ten-year period would be \$65K. Ed noted that if the article failed, Lovely field would have to be closed.

Following discussion on the additional monies requested of \$98K coming from a previous capital improvement project, Ms. Walsh will confirm where monies are coming from so as to have the proper authorization of appropriation needed at Town Meeting. Also the Committee will inform Town Meeting the its approval was originally for \$500K but that it also approves of additional appropriation of \$98K from other funds.

Article 54 General Bylaw Amendment Contract Scoring

Mr. Stumpf read the amendment to warrant submitted by Mr. Pokress (see attached.) Discussion ensued, and upon its merits of transparency and accountability, the Committee was in agreement. This warrant, however, is requesting a change in the bylaws, and the Committee would need more information about the various impacts thereof. Also it was felt that qualified staff would be hired by the town to accomplish the project. It was the consensus of the Committee that the intent is good, but that the scope needs to be redefined.

Article 59 Limited Tax Relief for Certain Elder Citizens

Ms. Walsh addressed the Committee as follows: a) 432 households may qualify based on age (70+). Mr. Roli added that as a result of a senior survey in which 30% participated, 51% had lived and owned residences for over 20 years. Ms. Walsh added that original amount was \$100K but has since been reduced to \$75K.

The program would be treated as an abatement taken off the overlay account before town and school funding is determined. If 100 persons participated it would cost taxpayers \$111K; 200 - \$222K; 300 - \$333K. Apply for this abatement through February 28 based on average home value calculated in December, and actual abatement applied to tax bills due in February and May. The funding would not have to be factored into budget until FY2018. Administration costs would require a form developed, staff to process, with verification of age, income and residency requirement.

Mr. Roli added that the state of New Jersey freezes taxes at age 65 costing annually \$335M. If Andover implemented program, it would cost at maximum \$480K. According to 2010 census 27% of residents earn \$250K; 50% \$150K and 37% below \$50K. Massachusetts one of worst state in country between working class and retirees. Seniors outliving their nest eggs.

Discussion ensued on the following points: a) if 37% of residents earn less than \$50K, why not remove age limitations if based on need; b) Mr. Roli as an advocate for seniors who have contributed to town for a long time; c) Board of Selectmen can review and may terminate program after two years; d) may be able to pilot this program e) Sudbury was required by state to run program as a test for three years; f) legislature still has to vote on this bill; g) concept is to acknowledge residents in town for 20+ years who want to stay in town; h) low impact is expected for those applying to the program; and i) the unfairness of favoring one group over another.

It was agreed that members wanted time to think further about this article, and will talk further about this article at next Monday's meeting.

Town Meeting Preparation

With an eye toward presenting at Town Meeting, Ms. Kruse asked for clarification on the articles involving Town Yard. With regard to health insurance, any savings from retiree health insurance premiums would be kept in the health insurance line item at least through the second year of being self-insured before being moved to the OPEB line item. Ms. Walsh confirmed we would be getting close to \$900K back for reinsurance.

**Next Meeting**

Next meetings are Monday, May 2, 3, 9 and 10 at 6:00 p.m. at the Collins Center Band Room before Town Meeting.

**Adjournment**

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford  
Recording Secretary

*Attachment: Contract Scoring Warrant Article Amendment*