

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
JOINT MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES MAY 18, 2016
APPROVED**

BOS Members Present: John G. Petropoulos, Chair (via phone); Anna Eliot, Vice Chair; Joshua A. Degen, Member; Peter S. Cunningham, Member; Barry Pease, Member

FC Members Present: Gary Green, Art Prest, Bud Robertson, Mark Bacon, Bob Hargraves

Also Present: Mark W. Haddad, Town Manager; Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Ms. Eliot called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Mr. Green called the Finance Committee to order at 6:00pm.

Ms. Eliot said that they were there to discuss the strategy of Town Meeting on Monday night since the override failed at the ballot the day before. She said that the School Committee was meeting at 7:00pm at the High School to discuss their next steps adding she would like their meeting (BOS/FC) to recess at 6:30pm so that they may attend the School Committee's meeting.

Mr. Haddad said that he spent time speaking to the Moderator and received an opinion from Town Counsel about the second night of Town Meeting on the 23rd. He said that the budget approved at the first session of Town Meeting was not valid because of the failed override with the exception of the debt budget. He said that they currently had no budget to start the FY. He said that the Moderator was hoping to expedite consideration of motion 4 which required a 2/3rds vote at Town Meeting. If they did not get a 2/3rds vote, the Board must call for another Town Meeting. Mr. Degen asked what the cost of another Town Meeting would be. Mr. Haddad said around \$5,000. He said that the Finance Committee needed to decide what the numbers in the motions would be and if they were going to have to call for another override vote, the ballot question needed to be submitted to the Town Clerk 35 days prior to the election, which would mean they had until May 25th to get him the question with the override number.

Mr. Degen said that the first override question was worded in such a way that it was a joint override and stated that they had the ability to not make this second one a joint override if they wanted. Mr. Haddad said that it would be his recommendation that they remove the last sentence from every motion (municipal budget contingent on override passing) under Article 4 and keep the municipal budget where it was. He said that they had \$1.1M within the levy limit for the schools which could be appropriated now. He said that the schools could begin on July 1 with a 1/12 budget from the state but the municipality would have to shut down if no budget was in place.

Mr. Degen said that the municipal budget was as lean as he had ever seen it and in the spirit of working together with the schools, they agreed to move forward with a joint override. He said that the voters spoke loud and clear at the polls. He said that the municipal budget was clean and clear and recommended that the Finance Committee present the municipal budget as is to the Town Meeting. Mr. Cunningham agreed completely. He said that there had been a lot of effort on this adding that everyone in town would be affected if they tried to trim the budget any further. Mr. Petropoulos said that the municipal side had cut a lot of out the budget adding they couldn't afford to have another failed override on the Town side. He suggested that they not draw any lines in the sand that day adding this would allow them to keep their options open. Mr. Cunningham said that he understood and agreed with the sentiment but they needed to design a path by Monday night.

Mr. Green said that Monday night was a target adding they were reliant on the schools right now. He said that he didn't want to feel like they had to move things on Monday night if they were not ready. Mr. Haddad said that they tentatively scheduled a third night for May 25th. Mr. Degen said that he was fine not taking a position

that night but was not fine with not taking one the next night. He said that they needed to start to make moves. Mr. Pease asked how specific the override question needed to be. Mr. Haddad said that they had to have the number and full question to the Town Clerk by the 25th. Ms. Eliot asked if they were to decide to adopt the budget as proposed, she asked if that would be the budget for FY17. Mr. Degen said it was.

Mr. Jack Risdon of West Groton said that the Town voted for no override and didn't know why they were talking about another override question. Mr. Degen said that they all saw the results of the Town Meeting vote which was unanimous in both communities but failed at the polls in both communities. He said that they needed to hear from the School Committee whether they were going forward with their original budget or pairing it back. He said that closing off debate was not fair to the School Committee.

Mr. Cunningham said that the municipal budget was more time sensitive than the school budget because the schools could operate on a 1/12th budget. Mr. Degen agreed that they needed to have a budget in place. Mr. Prest said that he also agreed adding that he was willing to wait until the following night. Mr. Haddad said that the Board was posted for 5/19 at 6pm and 5/23 at 6:30pm and asked if they wanted any other meetings posted. Mr. Degen asked that he post for 4pm and 6pm on the 23rd. Mr. Green said that the Finance Committee should post for 7pm on Friday and 9am on Sunday just in case.

Mr. Green recessed the Finance Committee meeting at 6:36 to attend the School Committee meeting.

Ms. Eliot asked for a motion to recess until 7pm at the High School. Mr. Degen made the motion. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion. Roll Call: Cunningham-aye; Degen-aye; Eliot-aye; Pease-aye; Petropoulos-aye.

Approved: _____
Board of Selectmen

_____ respectfully submitted,
Dawn Dunbar, Executive Assistant

Date Approved: 6/6/16