

## Finance Committee meeting minutes

**March 3, 2015**

Members present Chairman Steve Noone, Vice Chair Mike Majors, Clerk, Margaret Woolley Busse, Doug Tindal, Mary Ann Ashton, Bob Evans, Bill Mullin

Members Absent: Herman Kabakoff and Roland Bourdon

Steve Noone called the meeting to order at 7:31pm

- I. Budget Hearing: Steve Noone—No public participation. Hearing closed at 7:33pm.
- II. Minuteman Regional School District FY16 Budget Presented by Assistant Superintendent Kevin F. Mahoney
  - a. Budget increase overall 0.9%
  - b. Doug: When will new building potentially be online? Kevin: September 2019
  - c. Margaret: What was budget increase last year? Kevin: 6%--included adding staff and technology—and 45 more students. Now this year, decline in students and also combining some programs so getting rid of some staff
  - d. Doug: What is the major driver in enrollment over time? Some of it is marketing. Some of it is demand from manufacturing industry and other relevant industries that want these graduates. Going forward, will be working with a consultant who specializes in marketing/recruitment, as right now only have 4% of students in these communities applying, where average is usually 7 or 8%, so room for growth
  - e. Mike: Is the maximum capacity of 628 for new building? Yes.
  - f. Margaret: If 628 will be at capacity, and we're at 745 now, why are we needing to do outreach? Kevin: New school will have more in-district students; Nancy: Also, many in-districts are developing in-house programs that compete with Minuteman's programs, so not as much demand.
  - g. Bill: What is bond rating? Kevin: I don't know because haven't needed it for 20 years. But expect it to be strong, when needed.
  - h. Margaret: Why is Acton's assessment going up so much? Kevin: Because fewer students overall so have larger part of overhead to pay for.
  - i. Doug: When toured the building several years ago, very appalled at the condition; this is not something that should be renovated, but should be completely rebuilt!
- III. ALG Report: Steve N.-- \$200,000 in tax title and \$200,000 in additional excise taxes coming in for 2015. For FY2016, proposed switch in using more reserves vs. using unused levy capacity. Deficit showing to be \$2.4 million right now, but with additional \$400K not being used from tax levy, the reserve use will end up being roughly \$2.8 million. Looking ahead FY17, FY18, not looking good—budgets would use up a lot of reserves  
Warrant message will include worst, best, mid case scenarios—include specifically the labor costs—if they go up a certain amount.
- IV. Recommendations on Warrant Articles

- a. MOTION: Doug moved to approve **Article 4 Local Options Meals Excise**, Bob seconded it. Bill: Supports it, especially because it's been de-coupled with Economic Development Director. Doug doesn't think we should be adding a new tax when we have so much in reserves. Mike: 0.75%--even though it's a minimal amount, still a new tax. Margaret: shouldn't be doing it just because all the other towns are doing it. Not good way to make policy. MOTION approved: Mary Ann, Steve, Bill, Bob vote for it; Margaret, Doug, Mike voted against it
  - b. MOTION: Bill moves to approve, Mike seconds **Article 5 Town Operating Budget at \$31,468,112**. MOTION approved: All voted in favor except Doug, who disapproves because of reliance on taxing full 2.5% when we have plenty of reserves.
  - c. MOTION: Mary Ann moves to approve, Bill seconds **Article 6 ABRSD Assessment \$53,171,009**: MOTION approved: All voted in favor except Doug, who again disapproves because of reliance on high tax rate when we have high reserves
  - d. MOTION: Bill moved to defer vote on **Article 16 Transportation Fund**. Motion approved unanimously.
  - e. MOTION: Bill moves to recommend **Article 7: Stabilization Fund**, Doug seconds it. Bill supports this idea. Doug supports it but with some reservations, because there has been no effort to do any outreach regarding this and Fincom recommended initially \$800,000 and also to use a multi-year process, not \$2 million this year. Bill recommends that we defer the vote on this. Bill and Doug WITHDRAW motion
  - f. Article 8: Deferred
  - g. Article 9: Capital Infrastructure and Equipment: Defer
  - h. MOTION: Bob moves to accept this article, Doug seconded **Article 10 Minuteman Regional School District Assessment \$896,328** MOTION approved unanimously
  - i. MOTION: Bill recommends to approve **Articles 34-40**, Mary Ann seconds it. MOTION approved unanimously
  - j. Votes on all other articles are deferred.
- V. Finance Committee business
- a. MOTION: Mary Ann moved to approve the minutes from 2-24-15, Doug seconded it. MOTION approved unanimously
  - b. Committee Reports: Margaret: Kelley's Corner consultants presented detailed plan of proposed public infrastructure changes. Zoning guidelines should be finalized within the next several weeks. Then public meeting to present the plan in early May and one more public meeting before Town Meeting would vote on zoning guidelines.
  - c. Meeting adjourned at 9:25

Documents used: Draft Town Meeting Warrant; Minuteman Regional Technical School Presentation