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FINANCE COMMITTEE  
Minutes  
Zoom Number 840 3896 9229

2023 MAR -7 AM 9:13  
MILLBURY, MASS.

Date: February 6, 2023

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Present: Cooper, Kuphal, Pratt, Wells, O'Connell

Absent: Cooney

Meeting called to order at 6:31 p.m.

Motioned by Pratt, seconded by Wells to accept the minutes of January 30, 2023 as written.  
Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; O'Connell, yes

Judith O'Connor was present at the meeting.

Jennifer Barrett, Finance Director, was present at the meeting.

Sean Hendricks, Town Manager, was present at the meeting.

Jen O'Connell: We are here for the Public Hearing. We will be having another Public Hearing in March.

Motioned by Wells, seconded by Pratt to open the Public Hearing at 6:34 p.m. Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes; O'Connell, yes

Jen O'Connell asked if anyone had any questions for the Public Hearing.

No one had questions on the budget for the Public Hearing.

Motioned by Wells, seconded by Pratt to close the Public Hearing at 6:35 p.m. Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes; O'Connell, yes

Jen O'Connell: I asked Sandie to cancel the next two meetings. I do not think it is right to have any more discussion on the budget or vote on the budget until our other member is appointed. I would like this person to be able to look at the budgets and ask whatever questions they may or may not have. This has been going on for a long time. We are waiting for the Moderator to send a letter to the Town Clerk appointing this person. We will move the next Public Hearing to March 20th and potentially vote on it that night. We will meet again on March 6th. I have reached out to BVT and have not gotten a response yet.

Jennifer Barrett: The last correspondence we got was that the budget was the same as last year. I built in a 3% increase.

Jen O'Connell: He also said we could use a figure of \$15,000 per student for now. His point on his budget is that his district covers everything. We have a separate DPW and Treasurer. His budget has to include a contractor to plow and sand and also they do their own payroll.

Jen O'Connell: I still have to reach out to the School Committee.

Jennifer Barrett: They have their regular meeting on Wednesday and their Public Hearing on February 22nd.

Sean Hendricks: The School Committee will be adopting their budget after their Public Hearing.

Russell Wells: Do you still meet with them periodically?

Jen O'Connell: We have not met this year. It is with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the School Committee, the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, Greg, Rick, Kevin and myself. So much of their budget is due to unfunded State mandates in Special Education. Salaries are contractual.

Russell Wells: What percentage of the budget is for Special Education? Is it about 50%?

Jen O'Connell: I don't think it is that high. The Special Ed Director is very good at keeping the numbers down. She is outstanding in her job. She looks at all of the students individually.

Sean Hendricks: You have someone from the public that has signed into your meeting. You will need to suspend the rules of the hearing in order to let this person speak on the budget.

Motioned by Wells, seconded by Pratt to suspend the rules of the hearing. Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; O'Connell, yes

Jen O'Connell: In the School Budget, \$670,000 is due to contractual increases. Utilities went up ½%. We have 352 employees in the school with an average pay increase of \$2,000. All non-union employees are receiving a 2% increase. The teachers' contract is up in 2025. 68% of the teachers are at the top step in pay.

William Pratt: How do we rate with salary and benefits?

Jen O'Connell: We used to be high. Now we are about average.

William Pratt: How are we in school rating?

Jen O'Connell: We are not as diverse as other communities. It also doesn't help with BVT getting a lot of our top test takers.

Jennifer Barrett: I also want to remind you that the Benefits and Debt are in a separate budget.

Jen O'Connell: The Town pays for more of the health insurance than most other Towns. We cannot change the % that the Town and the employees pay. We have, at one point, been able to have the co-pays changed to reduce the actual cost of the insurance.

The next meeting will be on Monday, March 6, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Motioned by Wells, seconded by Pratt to adjourn at 7:13 p.m. Cooper, yes; Kuphal, yes; Wells, yes; Pratt, yes; O'Connell, yes

*Jen O'Connell*  
*William Pratt*  
*Russell Wells*  
*Robert Cooper Jr*  
*W. H. Kuphal*