

Approved 3/13/2014

BOARD of FINANCE
Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2014

ATTENDANCE: The meeting was convened at 7:32 pm by Chairman Ezzes in the Town Hall Meeting Room with members Mr. Carter, Ms. Koller, Mr. Bochinski, and Mr. Grauberd present. Town Administrator Landry and Finance Director Rick Darling were also present.

SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE: Superintendent Palmer, Business Manager Keating, Special Education Director Pernice, and Board of Education members Harvey and Uzenoff were present to update the Board on the status of Special Education spending for the year to date, and to discuss potential additional shortfalls.

Supt. Palmer told the group that the Board of Selectmen has indicated that it will act to approve a supplemental appropriation for additional special education related expenses, but prefers to defer the actual vote until the final numbers are available. After discussion of the issue, the Board expressed that it supported the Selectmen's position to fund the deficit, and it directed that the Superintendent come to the April meeting with all of the information necessary to support a supplemental appropriation request in the required amount.

During the briefing, sometimes in response to questions, Dr. Palmer noted the following:

- The current deficit is at \$230,000, and there is the potential for an additional \$225,000 pending the outcome of several active cases.
- Federal money, directed through the State of CT. is available once the cost for a special education case exceeds 4.5 times the average per pupil cost (approximately \$80,000).
- The district has spent down those grant funds, and expects to have no surplus carry over of these funds for next year. There was some discussion of exploring the possibility of creating a local reserve fund for this purpose.
- Costs are not at the sole discretion of the Board of Education, given the protected status of special education students. Parents can contest the education plan, and the final decision is subject to state mediation and ultimately a due process hearing. There haven't been any hearings in the past 6 years. A typical year might have six or seven mediation cases.
- Over the past five years, the BOE budget has averaged a .8% increase annually. Over the same period, the Special Education portion has increased a total of 20%, far outpacing general education costs.
- 12% of district students are involved in the special education programs, which is fairly typical in the area.

POLICE MILE OF SAFETY UPDATE: Chief Troxell, Commission member Moch, and Sergeants Daubert and Brodacki were present to give the Board a status report on over expenditures to date on the Mile of Safety coverage to date, as well as the outlook for the rest of the year. The primary problem was that there was no funding in the budget

for the additional 3 daily hours for the Mile of Safety. Plans to cover much of the time with on duty Officers have not been realized due to many other service demands. While the budget was set at \$15,000 for this service, the actual year end cost will likely be \$29,000. These numbers are only the Police side, and do not include the Board of Education funded share of the service. The Chief said he thinks that the overall overtime expense for the year will be \$221,000 on a budget of \$198,000. The costs will be monitored and the issue will be revisited later in the year.

MINUTES: Approval of the minutes was deferred.

MEETING SCHEDULE: A motion (Ms. Koller, Mr. Bochinski second) to approve the meeting schedule as presented (attached) passed by unanimous vote.

ADJOURN: At 8:40 pm, a motion (Ms. Koller, Mr. Bochinski second) to adjourn the meeting passed by unanimous vote.