

Dennis Finance Committee Meeting
Wednesday, June 13, 2007
Dennis Town Hall, Hearing Room
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Attendees: Dennis Finance Committee; James Plath, Peter McDowell, William Crowell, Rachel Baroni, Ted Dumas, Michael Brennan and Robert Prall. Board of Selectmen; Jane Otis, Paul McCormick, Sheryl McMahan and Heidi Schadt. Town Administrator Robert Canevazzi and Assistant Town Administrator Sandra Fife.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Article # 3, Recommendation for School Budget

Jim Plath asked D-Y School Supt. Carol Woodbury how their motion reads for this appropriation.

Robert Canevazzi stated that he has drafted a motion. The School Board will need to review it with their Counsel. The crux of the issue is that we need to make sure the School Committee has an appropriation at the start of the fiscal year for purposes of continuing their school operation.

Carol Woodbury, Supt. of School, stated that she has received the draft motion and forwarded it on to Counsel.

James Plath stated that the Finance Committee needs to know the exact numbers of what the School Committee is requesting.

Mr. Joseph Cucinotta, Fiscal Director for the D-Y School District addressed the attendees. He stated that \$87,000.00 the Chairman for the Yarmouth Board of Selectmen feels as though it could be considered an E & D item. If the funds are applied to the \$242,000.00 it would bring the assessment of Town of Dennis would be \$154,000.00.

Robert Canevazzi stated that the Chairman for the Yarmouth Board of Selectmen will be talking to the Dennis Chairman.

Peter McDowell stated that he thought it was forbidden to use E & D funds to reduce assessments.

Mike Brennan asked how the programs will be funded in future years, as the school will only have a portion of what they need.

Supt. Carol Woodbury stated that school choice funds and E & D funds have been used in the past. When you add the two together we have \$1.8 million. The amount that was cut from the budget was \$1.48 million dollars. In order for us to add new things we had to cut others. Every year we will need to identify what needs to be kept, and what can be reduced. This will be an ongoing issue.

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James Plath stated that if the School Budget passes at Town meeting and fails at the polls the school committee will still have the option to have a District Meeting. Mr. Plath asked if the positions are non-union.

Supt. Carol Woodbury stated these positions would be part of the administrative unit. These individuals would work 193 days per year and they would not be eligible for vacation during the school year.

Jim Plath asked how many students have been suspended or expelled from the Wixon School in the last five-years.

Carol Woodbury stated that she needs advance notice for these types request, as she needs to research this information. Supt. Carol Woodbury stated that you could ask hermany children have specials needs or how many children have been taken away from school to the hospital because they are a danger to themselves or other people. The point is being missed here. There are some serious issues going on. She added that she would love to have Mr. Plath visit sometime.

Mr. Brennan asked how a Dean would deal with a student that would hit, kick or spit on a person.

Supt. Woodbury stated that we are required to work in teams. The Dean would come with a particular skill set to deal with these problems.

William Crowell asked if children are going to the hospital on a regular basis.

Supt. Woodbury stated that it is not on a daily basis, but we are experiencing an epidemic of mental health issues we current have 3 students with autism at the Baker school. If these children have to be placed out of the district, then we will be looking at more than \$154,000.00.

Supt. Carol Woodbury stated that the law requires the school to educate all children even though they have special needs or disabilities.

Jim Plath asked if the schools have a child psychologist.

Supt. Carol Woodbury stated that both schools have a psychologist on staff.

Gerry Bastian, Chairman of the D-Y School Committee, stated that 40% of children in the District are not working at grade level. In order to pursue the plan for the district we need to address the discipline issues.

Peter McDowell asked what is preventing the principals from participating in the class rooms.

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Supt. Carol Woodbury stated that one incident can take all day to resolve. This prevents the principal from participating in the class room. Discipline can take all day to resolve.

Peter McDowell asked what exactly would the Principal do in the class rooms.

Gerry Bastian stated that the Principal or Assistant Principal will be providing feedback to the teachers.

Supt. Carol Woodbury stated that the Principal needs to be involved in the classrooms on a day to day basis in order to fill in the gaps. The research shows that this improves achievement. This is called job imbedded professional development. Carol Woodbury stated that the way the Laws are written, frequently we have no choice, but to call the Police.

The drops out numbers are way too high and these children are contributing to the crime rate in our communities.

Paul McCormick stated that he has two children entering the High School and he is shopping around. D-Y does not offer the same level of offerings as some of our neighboring Towns.

(Finance Committee)

Motion:

Peter McDowell moved to recommend Article #2 as printed. Ted Dumas seconded. The Finance Committee voted 6-1-0 (Michael Brennan). The motion was carried.

Article #1, Rescind Article 9 2D

Motion:

Peter McDowell moved to recommend rescinding the motion. Ted Dumas seconded. The Finance Committee voted 7-0-0. The motion was carried.

Operating Budget

Sheryl McMahon stated that she recently attended a financial meeting with Moody's and Standards & Poor's at the Sea Crest Resort in Falmouth, MA. She provided a brief overview of the meeting agenda. She discussed the financial management and fiscal policies that Towns are required to have. She stated that the Town of Dennis desperately needs to be looking at financial planning. A continuously declining reserve fund balance is a concern, especially if it becomes a trend.

Peter McDowell asked what is the undesignated fund balance.

Sheryl McMahon stated that it is based on the number on June 30th. Moody's looks at trends.

Peter McDowell stated that the capital fund and the stabilization fund have been increasing. In the last few years we have been eroding the funds. If we had left the fund alone we would have \$80,000.00 in the fund.

Jim Plath stated that no one wanted to take money out of the stabilization fund, this may keep us from needing an override. We had to use the funds in an emergency.

Peter McDowell stated that Chapter 90 funds can be used for an awful lot. This should reduce the Town's need to use the stabilization fund.

Motion:

Bill Crowell moved to approve Article # 2 as printed. Jim Plath seconded. The Finance Committee voted 7-0-0. The motion was carried.

Bridge St. Layout

Peter McDowell asked if this Article is not passed would the project fail. This project is now at \$1.5 million dollars.

Joe Rodricks stated that the easements would need to be done individually.

Jim Plath asked if a private individual sign a contract.

Robert Canevazzi explained that this was a request for a proposal for an appraisal.

Joe Rodricks stated that this was a request for an appraisal.

Motion:

Bill Crowell moved the sum of \$10,000.00 for the purpose of Article # 4. Bob Prall seconded. The Board of Selectmen voted 7-0-0. The motion was carried.

Article #5, AFSCME Union contract.

Robert Canevazzi stated that this funds the second year of the contract.

Motion:

Bill Crowell moved to approve the sum of \$83,000.00 for the purpose of Article # 4 Ted Dumas seconded. The Finance Committee voted 7-0-0. The motion was carried.

Article #6 , Chapter 90 Funds

Robert Canevazzi said this is a standard Article for the sum of \$65,654.00.

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Motion:

Bob Prall moved to approve Article # 6. Bill Crowell seconded. The Finance Committee voted 7-0-0. The motion was carried.

8:00 P.M.

Motion:

Bill Crowell moved to adjourn. Peter McDowell seconded. The Finance Committee voted 7-0-0. The motion was carried.