

Finance Committee Meeting

DATE: August 3, 2016

LOCATION: Nokomis Regional High School Library

Members Present: Robin McNeil, Samantha Brown, Evelyn Hickey, Susie Hopkins, Bill MacDonald, Don Mendell

Staff Present: Mike Hammer, Trish Hayes, Chris Gee, Cynthia Lutz, Don Roux, Jan Morse, Jane Stork, Licia Goodridge, Liz Mares, Lori Mellow, Mary Nadeau & staff and community members.

Robin McNeil informed the board about the meetings held by she and Mike with town managers, selectmen. Two meetings held – July 27 at 5:00, 1:00 on July 28. 9 attended on July 27. Narrow gap – start a dialog. Frank discussions. Agreed to continue meeting. Mike and Robin will continue to hold meetings. Robin wants to send a monthly newsletter to the town officials.

- Update website
- Minutes of meetings on website
- Mail agendas to town offices before meetings

Suggestions from 7/27:

- Cut admin even more
- Pay to play
- Look at teacher/pupil ratio
- Elderly can't afford more taxes
- Teachers need to email parents
- Common core hurting education
- Needed to be accountable and transparent
- Needed to eliminate current business office, hire financial advisor
- Eliminate personal days
- Fewer sick days
- Not the money but need to make a plan and stick to it
- Ask employees to forfeit a % of FY17 salary to fix cash flow
- Comprehensive bid process for all – insurance, electrical, mowing, etc

Suggestions from 7/27:

- Remove \$215,000 our problem
- Remove literacy coaches – put into teaching open positions
- Disappointed that we didn't reach \$656,000
- Why do buses go home with drivers at night? Park at garage for summer
- How many buses running for summer school?
- Tape all meetings
- Better updates on the website – current minutes on website
- Send all financials to prove all bills being paid

- Felt that two people should be fired immediately – me and Jan? – between Greg leaving and Ray’s arrival
- Town not satisfied until we reach \$656
- If can cut as we go back should have done in beginning
- Audit firm should report every six months instead of annually
- Want us to have a plan – repair communications, send minutes

Ken Sands wants to propose a Q & A session with the town’s people 3 days before the district meeting.

Mike asks – review the minutes as presented. Mike agrees that we should hold a meeting or two to allow the citizens to come in and ask questions.

Chris asks can we take the articles in reverse order? Mike will check on this.

Evelyn – businessman asked about a line item budget?

Shawn - Where do we start on 8/24? May ask at the meeting if anyone has anything they would like to reconsider?

Robin – the budget proposed last week must be re-presented at the 8/24 meeting.

Mike – need to fill positions in order to be ready to start school. Will be looking for the OK to hire. Need to move forward on our daily operations.

Robin – have a budget we’re living with. Thinks it’s important – until we get a positive vote have to go back until we get one.

Mike – great to work with towns officials. Want a plan to move out of this problem. Needs to be OUR plan! A lot of these things are in process already. Need buy in from admins, etc. Mike has ideas for cuts over the course of a year or more. Looking at every area to reduce taxes and have the \$ to keep us alive. Change the conversation, move forward.

Chad – please email info in advance so board can digest.

Winn – questioned are we in jeopardy by not having a budget passed?

Chris – do we have positions that need to be filled now? Need to move ahead.

Chad – class size needs to consider age/size of students

Sam – suggested St Albans visit school when it is in session. We are one district – not solos.

Doesn’t think people know what we’re “getting by” with.

Chad – acknowledge that town managers and selectmen are dealing with foreclosures and the other side of the struggle. Mindful of their struggles.

Sam – how are we going to get the info out to the town officials? Communities?

Mike – miscommunication/misconception will kill us! Would like to bring 5-10 students back each year. Need to talk about generating revenues! Not just cutting.

CHANGE THE CONVERSATION!

Robin – needs to get the positive info out from schools.

Sam – what about bringing back homeschoolers?

Winn – several things heard – impact on the elderly. Need a medium to reach the elders.

Ken – uninformed elders. Reading, writing, arithmetic is what they believe.

Evelyn – Rolling Thunder is the lifeline for the elderly.

Robin – avenues we have are sending notes home, etc. but doesn’t reach the general public

Sam – work with town managers to include a mailing in their mailings. Would Rolling Thunder donate a piece a month? Mike will ask. Could we get a column?????

Don – would be willing to offer his board payment to help pay the cost of the financial advisor?

Robin – town officials were interested in helping to find the \$9,000 needed for the financial advisor.

Jody - important to note that we shouldn't access too much. Identify individuals who, Not the best strategy moving forward!

Move forward with a question and answer night. Early enough to get information out.

Winn – give per student cost along with the per capita in the area.

Robin – need to have a budget meeting for if it fails where do we go from here?

Bill – why didn't we do the cuts before?

Suzie – can't plan until the budget meeting is held.

Sam – may need to wait and express to the citizens that we can't cut here. Need to know where we absolutely CAN'T cut.

Jody – need to focus on getting the voters out.

Bill – how many times did the budget committee meet? Line by line over the budget. People making irrational statements but hadn't attended the informational meetings.

Shawn – is every meeting attended by elderly? Where are the parents?

Robin – older citizens appalled that we'll get employees out to vote.

Jen – Mike says we need to change the conversation. No us against them. How do we present the info to all ages?

Ken – need top rated schools to attract people

Don – 55% law. \$8080... to get \$13 million from state. Check what our state contrib % is? How do we present this to the people? What is the actual – remove debt service, etc.

Chad – discussion on the 55%

Schedule a Q & A for public

Get info out to the public

Adjourn 8:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Trish Hayes, Business Manager