Town of Farmington
Budget Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 28, 2016

**Committee Members Present**: **Committee Members Absent:**
Stephen Henry, Chairman Stan Freeda, School Board Rep.
Sylvia Arcouette, Vice Chairman
Neil Johnson, Selectmen’s Rep.
Elizabeth Johnson
Alex Morin
Jodi Connolly
Sam Cataldo

**Others Present:**
Town Administrator Arthur Capello
Superintendent Ruth Ellen Vaughn
Business Administrator Laurie Verville

**1). Call to Order:**Chairman Henry called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Public Comment**: None.

**4). Review Minutes:**July 27, 2016- Page 1- correct Superintendent’s name to “Ruth Ellen” in list of Others Present and in item #5, first sentence.
Page 2- 8th sentence from the bottom, change “required” to “allowed”
Page 4- 2nd sentence, add an apostrophe s to “Town” to read “Town’s car”
Motion: (N. Johnson, second Connolly) to accept the minutes as amended passed 6-1 (Arcouette abstained).

**5). Review School Reports:**A). All Funds- Revenue Report-
Page 1, State Revenues, Line 17, Adequacy Aid – Ms. Verville said the district received a payment from the state and has taken in $1,247,425 so far.
Mr. Johnson asked if the total amount of the adequacy aid has been set by the state for the year.
Ms. Verville said the budgeted amount ($6,237,123) was set in April 2016.
Mr. Henry asked if the Town of Milton contributes funds for their students playing on the joint football team.
Ms. Verville said much of the funding for the team comes from the Booster Club and is not included in the revenue report because they a separate entity from the School District.
Mr. Johnson asked if the club pays anything toward the coach’s salary and upkeep of the fields or does the Farmington School District pay for those expenses.
Ms. Verville said she will check on the percentages paid by the School District/Booster Club and report back to the committee.
B). YTD Expenditure Fund- General Fund-
Ms. Verville said the district budget is in a good position although there is still quite a lot of funds to be encumbered for items such as utilities and textbooks. There is $2,177,295 remaining in the general fund she said.
Mr. Henry asked if there were any major changes or unexpected expenditures.
Ms. Verville said there has been a lot of changes in the health insurance line due to the shifting around of current staff and hiring of new staff. She said the district has saved some money in this line through insurance buybacks for some employees.
Mr. Henry noted that earlier budget projections showed potential savings of $320,000 in health insurance coverage but the actual savings were $220,000 leaving the district to find the $100,000 elsewhere in the budget.
Ms. Verville said despite that fact, the budget is still in good shape.
Mr. Henry reported that at a recent School Board meeting, the board discussed the new pay scale for the Paraprofessionals which includes wage increases, that was approved by the voters but the article did not include language to allow an increase in the tax rate to cover those expenses.
Vice Chairman Arcouette asked how many new teachers have been hired.
Superintendent Vaughn said about 15 teachers have been hired and the hiring process is still continuing.
Ms. Verville added that they are also conducting the census at this time.
Mr. Henry noted that some of the positions have been reduced with the reduced population in the schools.
There were no other questions or comments.
 Mr. Henry thanked Ms. Verville and Ms. Vaughn for attending the meeting.

**6). Review Town Reports:**
A). Remittance Report- Mr. Capello told the committee that there are two revenue reports prepared by the town- one from Town Clerk Kathy Seaver and one from Finance Administrator Pam Merrill so this report is not a complete picture of the Town’s revenues.
Mr. Johnson noted the Town received $53,444 from septage permits.
Mr. Capello said this is from opening up collection of septage from other towns for treatment at the sewage facility but added that the amount collected may go down next year. The increase in funds collected helped to offset treatment costs to the benefit of the rate payers as it resulted in a smaller rate hike he said.
Mr. Henry asked if the funds could only be used to benefit the rate payers instead of benefitting all of the taxpayers who are paying for the treatment facility through their taxes even if they don’t use the facility.
Mr. Capello said the money is deposited in the Enterprise Fund and can only be used for expenses related to the treatment facility.
Mr. Henry asked if the cable TV franchise fee paid to the town is based on the number of subscribers.
Mr. Capello said the fee is based on the number of subscribers and noted that the fee has increased due to the addition of TDS as a cable service provider who currently has about 400 subscribers.
Ms. Arcouette asked if the company will expand their service area in town.
Mr. Capello said the company may expand the service area but it may not be for a few years.
Mr. Johnson explained that TDS would have to negotiate with the utilities that own the poles for use of those poles which could be a highly expensive proposal.
B). Actual & Anticipated Revenues- General Fund- Mr. Capello said these accounts are in line with where they should be at this point.
There were no questions or comments on this report.
C). Actual & Anticipated Revenues- Parks and Recreation- Mr. Henry remarked that it appears the dept. has already started collections for next year’s Hay Day celebration.
Mr. Capello said he thought that about $1,000 was in the account.
Mr. Henry said the report shows $735 in the Hay Day Fireworks line.
There were no questions or other comments about this report.
D). Actual & Budgeted Expenses & Encumbrances- Mr. Capello said some of the individual lines are over budget but the expenses are within the bottom line of the budget. He said Selectmen authorized him to go forward with the expenses and absorb the overages somewhere else in the budget.
Mr. Capello told the committee that the builder has started constructing the second floor of the new Public Safety Building and they are expected to start “swinging trusses” tomorrow.
Mr. Cataldo asked about the plans for the old fire station.
Mr. Capello said the town is waiting until the end of October so the surveyor can complete the survey of the three lots where the existing fire station currently sits. He said the Selectmen may sell the parcels and add the proceeds to the general fund.
Mr. Morin asked why there is no line in the budget for fire truck fuel.
Mr. Capello said all of the fuel expenses come from one general fuel line that includes building and vehicle fuels. He said he would need to go out of town and find a former Fire Chief to find out why it was set up that way.
Mr. Capello said there will be no big decrease in the fuel line this year despite the new fuel contract that will supply propane at a discounted price. Selectmen decided to keep the same amount in the fuel line “just in case” and because the new Public Safety Building won’t be occupied until March which is more than half way through the heating season he said.
Discussion included the terms of the propane contract which runs through Apr. 30 and then a new agreement will need to be negotiated.
Mr. Henry asked if he will know the new rate for 2017-18 before they lock in the price.
Mr. Capello said they expect to begin negotiations at the end of summer next year.
Mr. Morin asked if the Police Dept. currently has an Animal Control Officer.
Mr. Capello said the Town does not have an ACO due to difficulties hiring a suitable person for the position and that those duties will be absorbed by the rest of the dept. He added the Town hopes to save some money on temporary animal holding by including a kennel area at the Public Safety Building site.
E). MS-535- Mr. Capello said the School District information should be submitted by next week and the tax rate should be set by early October. He noted that the undesignated fund balance is up by about $130,000.

**7). Old Business**: None.

**8). New Business**: None.

**9). Any Other Business to Come before the Committee**: None.

**10). Public Comment:**Ms. Arcouette invited everyone to attend the Candidates’ Forum to be held on Tuesday, October 4 at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.

**11). Adjournment:**
Motion: (N. Johnson, second Ms. Connolly) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:35 p.m.

Respectively submitted
Kathleen Magoon
Recording Secretary

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Stephen Henry, Chairman