

JOINT BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE

MINUTES

OCTOBER 17, 2011

Members present: Councilors, Scott Mason, Tina Powderly and Steve Whalen. School Committee members, Paula Mullen, Sue Rohrbach and Jeff Roy, Finance Committee Chair Jim Roche. Also present were Town Administrator Jeff Nutting, Town Comptroller Sue Gagner, School Finance Director Miriam Goodman, School Superintendent Maureen Sabolinski and Assistant School Superintendent Sally Winslow.

The meeting was called to order by Scott Mason at 7:02 pm

Jeff Roy gave a detailed explanation of the time line and issues the School Committee dealt with over the last few years concerning collective bargaining, unfair labor practice and the rationale for the settlement of the contract with the teachers.

He explained the timing of the wage deferral, the unfair labor practice filed by the teachers as a result of the schedule change at the High School, the collective bargaining process, the arbitration on the schedule change, the issue of steps and lane changes in the collective bargaining agreement, and the ultimate settlement of all those issues.

The collective bargaining process was stalled until mid June 2011, and with change in Union leadership, a tentative agreement was reached, and was then voted on when the teachers returned to school in the fall.

The Town Councilors disagreed with the decision and stated that they were focusing on saving jobs.

All agreed that better communication would have helped the situation.

The teaching staff had been reduced from 407 to 402 as a result of budget reductions. There were also 16 retirements, which is higher than normal. The School Committee was not asking for any additional funding, but the Council was very concerned about the impact for FY 13.

Generally, the Councilor's position was that they may have made different decisions on municipal staff reductions, if they knew that there were funds in the School budget for pay raises.

Jim Roche has questions about SPED funds and other revolving accounts.

There was no agreement among the parties about the issues raised and no action taken or recommended.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm