

Joint Budget Sub-Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
1/27/12

In Attendance: Sue Rohrbach, Franklin School Committee  
Paula Mullen, Franklin School Committee  
Sean Donahue, Franklin School Committee  
Tina Powderly, Franklin Town Council  
Jeff Roy, Franklin Town Council  
Tom Mercer, Franklin Town Council  
Pat Goldsmith, Finance Committee  
Jim Roche, Finance Committee  
Chris Quinn, Finance Committee  
Jeff Nutting, Town Administrator  
Maureen Sabolinski, Superintendent of Schools  
Miriam Goodman, School Finance Director  
Sally Winslow, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

The first Joint Budget Sub-Committee meeting of FY '12 convened in the Franklin Municipal Building Training Room at 7:30 AM. Mrs. Rohrbach began by talking about how the Joint Budget Sub-Committee meetings were initiated this year as a result of miscommunications that occurred at the end of last year between the School Committee and Town Council with the goal of ensuring that everyone is on the same page.

The group discussed the idea of having a rotating chair to run future meetings. It was decided that Mrs. Rohrbach, Ms. Powderly and Mr. Roche would be co-chairs representing the School Committee, Town Council and Finance Committee. They will work together to develop future agendas and will take turns chairing meetings. The chair will appoint someone to take minutes at each meeting.

The tentative meeting schedule was discussed. The May meeting was changed from May 25<sup>th</sup> to May 18<sup>th</sup>. Meetings are on Fridays at 7:30 AM at the Municipal Building Training Room.

There was a brief discussion about ground rules and the importance of communication and conversations in open sessions to ensure everyone is on the same page. The importance of respecting the confidentiality around the specifics of contractual negotiations and balancing general information that both boards need to know to provide a heads up and avoid surprises was discussed. There was discussion about taking lessons learned from last year and working together to support one another and avoid this from happening again.

Mrs. Rohrbach stated that there appeared to be a philosophical difference on how the two boards viewed raises and raised the question of who has line item control and who has appropriation control. Mr. Nutting clarified that the Town Council sets the appropriation and that the School Committee decides how they will spend the amount appropriated. Mrs. Sabolinski reported that the \$350,000.00 that the Council voted to take away from the schools has been exited from the budget. Mrs. Gagner stated that she removed the money from a salary line item because she did not get a response from the schools about where to remove it from. Mrs. Sabolinski clarified that the School Committee did not wish to have a public hearing to re-open the budget. The school department budget has been frozen since November so that the money would be there to return to the town. Mrs. Sabolinski inquired if anyone thought about how to handle the end of year reporting and end of year audits in light of the budget reduction.

Mr. Roy stated that the intent is to return the money to the schools. The question is whether it makes sense to return it for FY '12 or FY '13. Mr. Nutting reported that the money went into a stabilization account.

Discussion ensued regarding the budget schedule for 2012-13. Mr. Nutting reported that he has received the budgets from the town departments. He does not yet have the costs for health insurance or the Tri-County assessment. The budget will go to the Finance Committee at the end of March and to the Town Council at the end of May. Mrs. Sabolinski said that the school department will not have its budget until later. The school department wants clearer numbers for state aid and health insurance.

Mrs. Sabolinski said that the school department recognizes that it will need to use some of the money from the revolving accounts. This will be done in a planful manner. Mr. Nutting discussed the importance of delivering a consistent message from this group to the public that we are all working together to do the best we can with the dollars that we have; that it is a shared burden but we will work together to make it happen.

Mr. Nutting shared that all nine town units are involved in contractual negotiations. Mrs. Sabolinski stated that the teachers' contract is the only one under negotiations this year. She mentioned that non-union personnel did not get raises this year. Mr. Nutting said that the same was true for the town.

Meeting ended at 8:30 AM.