



Finance Committee
 Town of Halifax
 499 Plymouth St.
 Halifax, MA 02338

Meeting Minutes
 Monday, February 4, 2013

	Gordon Andrews	Karen Fava	Nikki Newton	Margaret (Peg) Fitzgerald	Stu Hall	Vacant
Present	✓	✓	✓		✓	

Others in Attendance: Kendra Kelly, Finance Committee Secretary; Sandy Nolan, Town Accountant; Charlie Seelig, Town Administrator; Members of the Kingston and Plympton Finance Committees; Members of the Silver Lake School Committee.

Meeting called to order by Gordon Andrews at 7:05pm

Kingston has asked for a level serviced budget. They have not seen one yet. They are not comfortable with going on the numbers that the Governor has not decided on yet.

John Creed said that they will have to look at the process. There are increases of 2.7-2.9 billion in revenue in order to balance the budget. The School Committee is recommending that the Towns wait until June to vote on any budgets. The State budget is not expected until June 20th. Karen stated that if we approve the budget using the Governor's numbers, Silver Lake could be stuck with the excess which could be upwards of 700,000.00. John pointed out that Silver Lake has a new mandate to fingerprint every person in the system that is involved with children. That alone is going to increase costs. The second mandate we are facing involves children that are currently on welfare and are going to Halifax Elementary School. The parents have the right to send the child wherever they would like and Halifax will have to pay for that to happen.

John stated he is unwilling to move on funding the new teacher in the Early Childhood Program in order to meet the Ch. 74 Certification. There are 55 students in that program currently. He is unsure if the increase in the program would occur as the student/teacher ratio would actually remain the same. Gordon stated that if we don't have numbers can we all be on a level funded frame of mind so the Governor's numbers don't hold the school hostage. Kingston is still looking for a level service budget. School Committee stated that this is a level service budget with the exception of the additional teacher and 3 required Aides.

The process for arriving at a budget is as follows. Silver Lake comes up with a budget with 16 votes and needs 2/3 of the entire Committee (11 votes). Once that happens, the

budget and the assessments go out to the towns. The towns then vote for or against the assessment. Once two of the towns vote no, the budget is defeated. Silver Lake would then review the budget and send it back out to a Special Town Meeting to be held within 40 days. If that does not happen, a no vote automatically becomes a yes vote. This continues back and forth until December 1 and then the state comes in and figures it out.

Kim Roy read an email that she received from MEMA. The House is trying to protect the 9C cuts. If the House cuts transportation they would have to use the E&D budget to fund it.

Silver Lake drives the budget of the towns. We are in an operational deficit now. Cuts would have to come from the Elementary school. Halifax cannot support the budget as it stands. Gordon does not see Halifax supporting any kind of override. Kingston is currently 400,000.00 in the hole for FY14. As a result, waiting until June to vote budgets is not an option. What would be a more feasible way to handle the situation that we are in? Kim suggested it would be fair to split the difference. In order to make that successful, there would need to be an understanding between the towns and Silver Lake.

Karen has concerns regarding the cuts always being at the Elementary School over Silver Lake. She would be in favor of no CTE new teacher to avoid cutting at the Elementary School level. Elaine Fiore explained that the Fin Comm.'s are just trying to balance the budget. We are here to brainstorm and come to a middle ground. Is Silver Lake prepared for an alternate funding source if the Governor's numbers do not hold? Nikki Newton asked if Kingston Fin Comm. had a number in mind. Elaine said that they did not; all they know is that the number does not work. You don't budget to a number; you budget to a service level.

February 6, 2013 at 6pm in the High School will be the next Silver Lake Budget Meeting. March 14, 2013 is a public Budget Hearing and that is when the budget has to be complete. Both Kingston and Halifax have asked for level funded budgets plus contractual increases.

Gordon Andrews made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Karen Fava. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:19pm.

Nikki Newton
Corresponding Clerk