

**TOWN OF HARVARD**  
**FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
Minutes

**Meeting Date:** February 6, 2010

**Meeting Place:** Town Hall

**Members Present:** Bob Thurston, John Sullivan, Heidi Frank, Collyn Bradley, Lori Granville, Steve Colwell

**Others Present:** Lorraine Leonard, Finance Director; Tim Bragan, Town Administrator.

**Meeting Time:** 9:04am

**Adjournment Time:** 12:15 pm

**Discussions and Actions**

- Bob Thurston opened the meeting at 9:04am
- No Minutes were approved
  
- **Library budget discussion**
- Library budget review with Library Board
- Mary Wilson put forth a presentation
- Energy costs are down by 10% annually
- Library has 5 Volunteers (17 hours per week)
- 4.9 FTE's on at any one time
- Usage of library up 14% over last year
- Discussion of MAR and risk of certification.
- It was put forth by HPL that there is sufficient risk that we would not receive MAR certification based on a level or down 5% budget.
- Lorraine pointed out that we need to appropriate whatever the approved budget for HPL is.
- It was discussed that the library would reduce hours versus reduce personnel.
- It was stated that Harvard spends roughly 2x per capita on our library versus state average.
  
- **Schools Budget discussion**
- Dr. Jefferson and School Committee was present
- Bob opened the session with a discussion of the budget constraints the town is under
- Dr. Jefferson discussed how the budget is put together.
- A response to our questions of January 23<sup>rd</sup> was provided and discussed.
- May share ELL costs with another district. Current person has moved out of town.
- Virtual HS – comes out of Maynard, expands our ability to offer a lot of additional curriculum. Thinks the 17 licenses that we have is about right today. Could we encourage more students to utilize it? Perhaps was the answer
- Discussion about ways to decrease transportation costs – Dr. Jefferson: All parents are aware that reimbursement at specific rates is available.
- Dr. Jefferson initiated the topic of user fees – User fees are becoming a burden for many families – Can the town offer any support to reduce the burden of user fees? Idea put across to have town pay the \$107,000 for the Coaching stipends and the Athletic Directors salary. According to Dr. Jefferson, User fees would drop by about 1/3. Down to around \$225 from \$425. All sports would be the same price. Individual cap would be \$600. Other schools are \$100 - \$200 per sport. Most have an under \$500 individual cap. We have the second highest fees in the state. We are the highest when you consider we have no cap as well.
- The school believes it can find \$33,000 of the \$140,000 needed to implement the program.

It was stated that they would not move forward with the program if the town would not allocate the \$107,000. What is the commitment as we move forward? Would the town be asked for more in future years? Could we allocate less than \$107,000? This additional \$107,000 will need to be voted on at Town meeting.

- Lori stated that we she would support an override for the town to vote on the User Fees.
  - Discussion on whether the Finance committee would support an override for \$107,000 to bring down user fees for Athletics.
  - A vote was taken 3-2 in favor of supporting an override of \$107,000 to reduce user fees. John, Bob and Lori voted in favor. Collyn and Steve voted against.
- Stated that information about Individual Education Program is not a matter of Public record.
- Discussion on the Devens dollars. Is it something we can rely on in the future? It is taken into account when they build their budget. They know they can't rely on this forever.
- John asked question on Services that HPL offers to the Schools. Dr. Jefferson indicated that there is a very good relationship between HPL and the school libraries. The elementary school has an open req. for a certified librarian for HES.
- TriBoard mtg – Feb 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - Discussion of recap that Lorraine will present.
  - Discussion on how to discuss Reserve Fund and Free Cash
- No other liaison reports.
- Next Finance Committee meeting February 10, 7:00 pm, Town Hall.
- Future meetings will be the first and third Wednesdays every month, 7:00 pm, at Town Hall.
- Move to adjourn at 12:15PM.