

**Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Town Hall ~ April 6, 2017**  
**Sturbridge, MA**

**Call to Order:**

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. The following committee members were present: Kathleen Neal (KN), James Waddick (JW), Suzanne Smiley (SS), Joni Light (JL), Jared Burns (JB), Michael Serio (MS), Larry Morrison (LM) and Mike Hager (MH).

Absent: Bruce Boyson (BB)

Guests: Becky Plimpton (BP), Deb Boyd (DB), Erin Noseck (EN)

**Budget Review – Library Building and Operations – Becky Plimpton**

BP started her budget review by explaining how the appropriation is set for library materials, clarifying that 19% of the library budget must be spent, at a minimum, on library materials. BP explained the increase in salaries due to extended sick leave. The employee is expected to be on leave for 8 to 12 weeks, and the total includes the wages less three hours per week for the duration. MS asked if there was a noticeable shift in budget for hard copy materials versus soft copy. BP said this the demand for soft copy materials is slowly increasing with this year showing a 7-9% increase over last. JB asked about the increase in travel expenses. BP explained that there are two events this year with one being in Vermont and the other being on the west coast. The Trustees will help pay for some of the travel and accommodation for the second event.

There was further discussion on the building and necessary repairs, such as the door mechanism and interior painting. BP further noted that bids were being accepted for the HVAC repairs pending the HVAC study which is on-going. BP confirmed that the facilities coordinator will be of assistance in the RFP for the HVAC.

Prior to the discussion on Tantasqua, the committee debated staffing requests from the building department.

**Budget Review – Education – Deb Boyd, Erin Noseck**

LM presented and explained the full scope of the school budget process in all its complexities. DB and EN explained how the Special Education budget for Burgess and Tantasqua remains in the Burgess budget. The reason being because it is for Sturbridge residents and should not be a shared expense by the other regional towns. The decision to keep special ed students “in house” does save on out placements and transportation costs with outplacement costs averaging from \$50K-\$70k per student. With respect to school choice, schools receive \$5,000.00 per pupil coming from another town, and will pay out \$5,000.00 for pupils opting out of the school to another town. Charter schools, however, receive the full per pupil cost at the state level. The average cost per pupil at the state level for Burgess is \$13,369.00, and for Tantasqua the cost is \$13,450.00 per pupil. There are 13 students from Sturbridge chosen to go to the OSV charter school.

DB further explained the funding process for charter schools in Massachusetts noting that each town will be reimbursed 75% of the per pupil cost in the first year that they go to a charter school. State reimbursements will continue up to five years with decreasing percentages. Towns are responsible for the transportation of its residents to the charter school if located in that town. DB said this is being reviewed to determine any additional transportation charges that may have to be incurred due to the different school hours. The charter school will be responsible for the transportation of students that reside outside the town in which the school is located.

**Meeting Minutes**

MH moved the motion to accept the meeting minutes of March 30, 2017 as amended; JL seconds. Motion accepted 5-0-3 (LM, JB, MS abstaining).

**No New Business****No Public Access**

KN confirmed the next meeting will be in Conference Room 2 at Town Hall.

JL moved the motion to adjourn at 9:33pm; SS seconds. Meeting adjourned.

/jml