

Board of Selectmen

Town of Upton



Massachusetts

Meeting Minutes of April 8, 2011

Location: Police Department Headquarters, 30 School Street – Basement floor Training Room.

Present: Chairman Michael E. Goodwin, Selectman Robert J. Fleming, Selectman Kenneth E. Picard, members of the Finance Committee, members of the MURSD School Committee and Town Manager Blythe C. Robinson.

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm.

Chairman Goodwin began the meeting by asking the school committee members if they would like to provide the Selectmen with some additional information about their proposed FY 11/12 budget. Ms. Heather Applegate reviewed the district's revenue reductions from the prior year (loss of federal stimulus dollars, potential reductions in Chapter 70 funds) and the cost drivers to the budget (increase in health insurance expenses among other things).

Chairman Goodwin expressed his concern about using all of the school stabilization funds and his wish to preserve at least ½ of what is available presently for a future year's budget. Mr. Picard indicated that he concurred with this position. He also indicated that it will be difficult for the Town to get to the 60% funding that the State will require as a result of education reform, and he'd rather see the boards discuss a process by which we will achieve this requirement over time in a manner that the Town can afford. A discussion ensued among several persons present over the challenges of school choice and that a large number of the 8th grade class members may seek to go to other schools, as well as the perception people have about the quality of the district's educational offerings. At the same time Upton's tax rate is trending upwards and is now 68th in the State. The Board recommended that the district look critically at using some of next year's budget to add back a School Business Manager to better manage some of these issues.

The Board asked Ms. Robinson to review the budget adjustments that she prepared for the meeting. Based upon the Board's previous meeting and discussions Ms. Robinson reduced the overall budget by a total of \$361,105.93. This included \$252,967 from the school budget, \$85,000 in various capital projects, and the balance from a number of other operating budget line items. Along with this cut she proposed that \$243,125 of School Stabilization funds be utilized to balance the budget and the end result was that the budget was favorable by \$3,755. The board discussed these cuts and took comment from the school district members about the impact that the cut would have on district programming.

45 After further debate Selectmen Fleming made a motion that the cut to the schools be
46 reduced by \$100,000, and that a further \$100,000 from School Stabilization funds is used to
47 adjust for this. That would leave approximately \$150,000 in stabilization for a future year.
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49 Motion #1: Mr. Fleming motioned to accept the adjustments to the FY 11/12 budget as
50 proposed by the Town Manager with the exception of the MURSD budget which would be
51 reduced by \$152,967 instead of \$252,967, utilizing a further \$100,000 from School Stabilization
52 funds for this purpose. Second: Selectmen Picard, unanimous: Chairman Goodwin.
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54 Several members of the Finance Committee asked the Selectmen to discuss further the
55 wage adjustments in the operating budget for the non-union employees. Discussion ensued
56 about the practicality of doing so in a year with fiscal difficulties and the precedent this would set
57 for a future year. The Selectmen responded that they do not wish to adjust the budget
58 downwards for a small group of employees and believe the raises are appropriate given the
59 negotiations that took place last year.
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61 Motion # 2 At 6:15 PM Selectman Picard motioned to adjourn the meeting. Second: Selectman
62 Fleming, unanimous: Chairman Goodwin.
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64 Respectfully submitted,
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66 Blythe Robinson, Town Manager
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