

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF WAREHAM FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Date of Meeting: January 9, 2013**

**I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Donna Bronk, Chairman  
Frank Heath, Vice Chairman  
David Trudell  
Bonnie Cottuli  
Sam Gray  
Tom Worthen  
Marilyn Donahue (Arrived at 6:35 P.M.)  
Dominic Cammarano (Arrived at 6:50 P.M.)

Member Absent: Larry McDonald

**III. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION**

No-one came forward for Citizens Participation.

**IV. BUSINESS**

**A. Review FY2012 Audit.**

Members present stated they reviewed the FY2012 Audit.

**B. Discuss School Committee presentation re: FY2014 School Department budget.**

Ms. Bronk stated the School Committee had a good presentation, but there is a \$1.7 million shortage on the school side. She noted this shortage on the school side doesn't include Upper Cape Technical Vocational School.

Mr. Heath stated the School Committee will have a half hour synopsis this evening on the presentation at the Middle School auditorium.

Mr. Gray stated he spoke to Mr. Swett & Dr. Rabinovitch & they both feel 1) over the past five years the School Dept. has taken the brunt of cuts and 2) it is extremely hard to cut below where the schools are now. They feel there will be a battle at Town Meeting.

Ms. Bronk stated she had some issues w/ the adjustment counters that were presented.

**NOTE:** Ms. Donahue arrived at this time.

Ms. Bronk explained that over 50% of the children in the school system are on free or reduced lunch. She doesn't see any "fat" on the Town side. Mr. Gray would like to hear department budget presentations before he concludes this statement.

Mr. Trudell stated the School Dept. has taken many hits, but the Police Dept. has expanded. He stated there aren't any departments left that have expanded in the past five years (except for the Police Dept.).

Mr. Gray stated the School Dept. figures were a result of the past five years & cuts that have been made to schools vs. the Town.

Mr. Trudell stated the Town/School Dept. has not significantly dealt w/ capital needs. Neither party is taking care of infrastructure needs.

Mr. Gray stated there is no plan for "here is a way out". Mr. Trudell stated until the BOS gets actively involved w/ the budget & gives direction to the Town Administrator, the Town will see nothing move forward. Ms. Donahue stated a plan is needed/a vision needed for a way out & a need to find a different way to deliver services. Mr. Worthen stated the BOS needs to meet w/ peers in other towns as well because everyone is in the same boat.

Mr. Worthen stated w/ the amount of school buildings the School Dept. has, they need to take a serious look at the buildings they have. Ms. Donahue stated the School Dept. has many more mandates than the Town does. She stated the Town doesn't have the same kind of liability as the School Dept. does.

Mr. Trudell discussed the condition of several Town buildings, such as the Tremont Nail office building which is filled w/ mold & the maintenance of the Old Town Hall is sad. He stated maintenance of Town buildings that are open and/or closed at this time are in pathetic shape.

Mr. Worthen stated the School Dept. could sell a building for another purpose. Mr. Heath stated there is a deed restriction on the Hammond School that states the building can be utilized for educational purposes only. He discussed the space problems the School Department is facing w/ two school buildings. He stated there are great expectations for the West Wareham Academy because children who attend this school cannot have their needs met in the regular schools & this school is self-sufficient. He discussed other school space needs & the utilization & problems w/ other buildings.

Mr. Heath explained that school technology is ten years old. He spoke re: the common core requirements. He doesn't feel there are enough science & math teachers. He noted there are high expectations, but not enough resources.

**NOTE:** Mr. Cammarano arrived at this time.

Discussion ensued re: teacher training, curriculum, school choice, etc.

Discussion ensued re: reimbursement for free & reduced lunch & other entitlements these students qualify for.

**NOTE:** Mr. Heath departed at this time to attend the School Committee meeting.

Ms. Bronk stated the School Department has six special needs students placed out-of-district at a cost of \$600,000 annually. She noted the School Department is mandated to pay for these students.

Mr. Trudell discussed unfunded mandates & that there is a need to draw the line & push back re: these mandates. Mr. Gray stated if these mandates are not met, the State can come in & take over the school system.

Mr. Gray stated everyone in Town government & the School Dept. need to start thinking outside the box vs. continuing to go in the same direction. Discussion ensued.

Ms. Bronk questioned if the BOS understands where the Town is at.

Present before the FinCom: Alan Slavin, BOS Liaison

Selectman Slavin stated the feeling he got from the School Committee's budget presentation was that the School Department is defeated. He stated there is no question that things (in the School Department) are going in the wrong direction & the system is not working. He stated there is a real problem. Lengthy discussion ensued.

Mr. Worthen asked what Selectman Slavin feels about getting a group together to discuss options, look outside the box, & to suggest long term solutions for the Town. Selectman Slavin explained that the BOS voted re: forming focus groups w/ information to share w/ the Town.

**C. Review departmental budget discussions schedule (January 17<sup>th</sup> & January 18<sup>th</sup>).**

Mr. Trudell asked if the BOS has been invited to attend these meetings. Ms. Bronk stated the FinCom secretary will look into this.

Mr. Trudell asked if the Capital Planning Committee will be scheduled at one of these meetings. Ms. Bronk stated she will ask Mr. Heath.

Mr. Trudell expressed the importance of the BOS being involved w/ these budget discussions. Ms. Cottuli stated an invitation should be extended to the BOS to attend these discussions if it has not been done already.

Ms. Bronk suggested FinCom members write down questions they would like to ask at these discussions. She stated there are some budgets that need to be thoroughly looked at, for example, the WPCF budget, the Police Dept. budget, & finding out where the CPC budget stands. Ms. Cottuli suggested Ms. Bronk extend to the CPC Chair that the CPC contact the FinCom at their earliest convenience to meet w/ the FinCom if they will be presenting any articles at Town Meeting.

**D. Upcoming FinCom dates:**

1. Departmental budget discussions: Thursday, January 17, 2013 & Friday, January 18, 2013.
2. School Committee public hearing on FY2014 School Department budget: Wednesday, January 16, 2013 @ 7:00 P.M. Wareham Middle School auditorium.
3. FinCom public hearing on FY2014 budget: Wednesday, January 30, 2013.

V. NEW BUSINESS (Unanticipated items)  
(NONE)

VI. LIAISON REPORTS  
(NONE)

VII. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: DECEMBER 19, 2012

**MOTION:** Mr. Gray moved to approve the meeting minutes of December 19, 2012. Ms. Cottuli seconded.

**VOTE: Unanimous (6-0-1)**  
Mr. Cammarano abstained

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE & TIME

See item IV. D. Above.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION:** Ms. Cottuli moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 P.M. Mr. Cammarano seconded.

**VOTE: Unanimous (8-0-0)**

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Barraso  
Kelly Barraso, Transcriptionist

Date signed: 1/30/13

Attest: Donna Bronk (KB)  
Donna Bronk, Chairman  
WAREHAM FINANCE COMMITTEE

Date copy sent to Town Clerk: 1/31/13

