

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SHEPARD MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MINUTES OF APRIL 2, 2019**

PRESENT: Mr. Marc W. Richard; Chairman, Mr. Dario F. Nardi; Vice-Chairman and Mr. John A. Nason, Clerk

ATTENDEES: See List

Meeting called to order at 7 PM and Mr. Richard led with the Pledge of Allegiance.

DISCUSSION ON FY 2020 BUDGET

Mr. Richard turned the floor over to Vice-Chairman Nardi. Mr. Nardi began the discussion on the proposed FY 2020 budget. As many know, the Quaboag Regional School District has proposed over a million dollar request above minimum. This would be devastating to the taxpayers should this number be approved. In addition, should the number pass, the town will need to seriously look into making drastic cuts in general government. This could include a reduction in hours for many staff members and could possibly include cuts to positions all together.

Dr. Kustigian was in attendance and stated numerous times that the minimum contribution was just not adequate. The Board of Selectmen have voted to fund the same number as last year, which is just over \$532K. Mr. Nardi questioned the increase in new teacher position while there has been a continual decrease in student enrollment. This alone does not bode well with either the Selectmen or members of the Finance Committee. All three members of the West Brookfield Board of Selectmen were in attendance as well and echoed the position of Warren's officials that West Brookfield just cannot afford another increase. They stated that they are holding their position at their number from last year (approx. 364K).

Dr. Kustigian stated a number of times throughout the night that the system (formula) was broken to which no one disagreed, however the fact remains that the continuous methodology of putting it on to the taxpayers has to stop. Mr. Nardi stated that the time has come for the school to live within its means.

Chief Lavoie stated that the general government lives and dies by the school budget and that they are not held to the same standard. Tax Collector, Kerry Schmidt stated that we're paying for teacher raises from the elderly who are not getting raises. She sees the results of this effect every day in her office. Madeline Witaszek stated that the numbers do not make sense to her and she feel that there is a discrepancy. It was also noted that there is an approximate \$680K in E&D money.

Jason Morgan, member of the QRSD School Committee lobbied on the schools behalf and feels that they have been working diligently in trying to provide a solid education to our kids while watching the budget. Additional discussion took place about checking into shopping for a better premium with insurance to postponing the meeting till the state releases their budget.

One thing that can be agreed upon by all in attendance is that both towns' officials and the school are trying to do the best for the students and residents alike.

With no further discussion, the following motion was made: Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Nason; second: Mr. Nardi - unanimous at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Acerra
Administrative Secretary

John A. Nason, Clerk

