

TOWN OF WEST BOYLSTON

JOINT MEETING OF THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT BOARD AND THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting held April 26, 2010

Upon notice duly posted, the Finance Committee of the Town of West Boylston met on April 26, 2010 at 6:45 p.m. Committee members present were Chris Berglund, Ray Bricault, Greg Zakarian, Alex Bartholomew, John Owanisian, Patrick Crowley and Patricia Altomare. Guests in attendance: Marcia Cairns, Superintendent Thomas Kane, Lisa Bouchard and Chief of Police Dennis Minnich.

The Chairman, Chris Berglund, opened the meeting by distributing to all the members a CD copy of the Finance Committee Handbook. Then, after review and upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously **VOTED**: to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2010 meeting.

The next order of business was a presentation from Marcia Cairns of the West Boylston Council on Aging. The highlights of Ms. Cairns' presentation are as follows:

- The Council on Aging services are mostly provided by volunteers. Ms. Cairns is the only paid employee.
- The Town has 2100 seniors. That number has doubled over the past 10 years.
- Approximately 1/3 of the Town's seniors use the Senior Center.
- Among the services provided are classes, help with tax filings, crafts, exercise, bowling league, meals etc.
- Since 2003 the budget has been reduced 42% but the amount of seniors has increased 100%.
- The seniors pay a fee for travel via the WRTA van. That money is deposited into a revolving fund which is used to pay for the driver's salaries, gas etc.

At 7:00 p.m., with the arrival of Patricia Altomare, the Capital Investment Board now had a quorum and hence the CIB Chair, Ray Bricault called the Board's meeting to order.

The next order of business for the joint meeting of the Finance Committee and the Capital Investment Board was the presentation by Thomas Kane, Superintendent of Schools and the Chair of the School Committee, Lisa Bouchard. The highlights of their presentation are as follows:

- The number of students attending Assabet Vocational has been updated and it now appears that 69 students will be attending Assabet. This number is 3 students less than the previous estimate and thus an additional \$40,000+- is now available for the school's budget.
- In addition, the Town Manager has re-adjusted the budget and has moved an additional \$12,000+- into the school department.
- Mr. Kane noted that the cost of vocation education has tripled over the past years. This is a cost that the Town must pay and one that the School Department has no

control over. The present cost per student at Assabet is \$15,000+ plus we pay for transportation.

- 75% of the School Department's budget consists of salaries. This percentage has actually gone down over the past years.
- Full day Kindergarten tuition pays for the program.
- Maj. Edwards is level funded.
- Four teachers were cut from the Middle School last year.
- Staffing is being held at the High School but electives have been cut over the past few years.
- We have 6 special education children that are placed out of district. The cost for those 6 children is \$378,000+- plus the cost of transportation. Whether special needs children remain within our school system or are placed out of district depends on parents with the ultimate decision being made by a State mediator.
- The cost per student averages for vocation education students and for special education students is not within the control of our School Department. These are mandatory costs, which essentially means that whatever isn't spent on these children is then allocated to the "average" student.
- School Choice income pays for transportation and utilities. We are seeing a decline in School Choice enrollment mainly due to our lack of space i.e. as we eliminate teachers, we eliminate the ability to accommodate school choice children. Additionally, we are seeing competition from other schools as they improve their schools and opt to accept school choice (Wachusett, Shrewsbury etc.) The number of West Boylston students opting for other public schools has risen.
- The School Department would like to see an adjustment to the format of future budgets whereby the cost of vocational education would be taken out of the School Department's domain and itemized as a Town fixed cost.
- The School Department will have two capital requests. The repair or replacement of the High School's hot water heater and the replacement of floor tiles at Major Edwards.

The next order of business was a presentation from the Chief of Police, Dennis Minnich. The highlights of Chief Minnich's presentation are as follows:

- The money allocated to the Police Department per the latest Town budget represents a 2% increase.
- The Chief noted that with this funding there may be cuts from training.
- Likewise, as his Purchase Services account presently has \$4.00 in it, he will need to ask for funding for that account.
- The Chief is also going to make a capital request for 2 police cruisers. More than half of our cruisers have more than 100,000 miles on them.
- The Department has been "swapping" shift so that over-time has been reduced.
- Chief Minnich also updated the Committees regarding the status of regionalizing the dispatch center.

There be no further business to discuss, upon motion duly made and seconded the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Altomare
Clerk of Finance Committee