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**Board of Selectmen  
Minutes of Triboard Meeting  
February 27, 2013**

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**I. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Chairman Salafia called the Triboard Meeting of the Board of Selectmen/ Finance Committee/School Committee to order at 6:04 P.M. on Monday, February 27, 2013 in the Selectmen's Conference Room at the Town Offices. Present from the Board of Selectmen: Chairman Salafia-Y, Selectman Vispoli-Y, Selectman Major-Y, and Selectman Kowalski-Y.

Finance Committee Chair S. Jon Stumpf opened the meeting for the Finance Committee. Present from the Finance Committee (Roll call): Joanne Marden, Mary O'Donoghue, Paul Fortier, and Linn Anderson, Jeannie Moffitt.

Chairwoman Colby opened the meeting for the School Committee. Present from the School Committee: Annie Gilbert-Y, Richard Collins-Y, Dennis Forgue-Y, and Paula Colby-Clements-Y.

Also present: Town Manager Reginald S. Stapczynski, Assistant Town Manager Steven S. Bucuzzo, Finance Director Donna Walsh, Superintendent Marinel McGrath, and Assistant Superintendent Paul Szymanski. The meeting was duly posted and cablecast live.

**II. Opening Ceremonies**

Chairman Salafia led the members in a Moment of Silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**III. Budget Workshop**

On behalf of the School Committee Paula Colby-Clements thanked the Triboard for coming together this evening and to remember they are all stewards of the Town. The goal of the School Committee is to work with available funds, and to have confidence in what true available funds are. At a recent School Committee Workshop they outlined high-level concerns of over-arching issues and how to approach them. For example: the CIP for FY-14, the budget proposed shows no room to fund more projects in future years, what do we do, how do we handle new projects? It is time to think about a discussion on the free cash/stabilization fund policy and to manage the Town's finances in a fiscally responsible way and ensure we have meaningful discussion.

Dennis Forgue said the School Committee' role is to advocate for the students. Scheduling earlier dialogue between the Boards on available funds helps to avoid budget battle discussions on issues such as Chapter 70 dollars, healthcare costs, future contracts, etc. The Foundation Funding level for Chapter 70 is supposed to be about 17% and we need to push for equity across districts.

### III. Budget Workshop (Cont'd)

Chairman Salafia said the Chairs of the three boards have held weekly discussions throughout the year and are committed to these conversations.

Brian Major listed the requests of the School Committee which included: Building a budget with available funds, questions about the debt tool, funding one-time expenses (CIP projects) with one time funds; establishing budget timeline early in the year and continuing through-out the budget process, gain confidence and agree on available funds, include Chapter 70 funds in assumptions, consider putting healthcare out to bid, establishing a strategy for OPEB funds, and discuss contract negotiations for next year.

Paula Colby-Clements said their greatest future concerns include exempt debt, salaries-long-term, percentage of non-exempt uses, and contract negotiations. Short term objectives include implementation of the Munis control module to look at salaries, implementation of the Strategic Plan, and creation of 'what if' scenarios. Annie Gilbert talked about reviewing the definition of available funds, looking at all revenue sources differently to see if there is money being left on the table through the current approach, and questions if we should continue to put free cash into the stabilization fund knowing what the CIP needs are.

Joanne Marden added that they should talk about two critical items: 1) Assumptions and numbers and, 2) what is the base being used. Free cash in excess of the policy can be used on one-time projects, and be a percentage not a dollar amount. The Town Manager said the Town regained their AAA rating with Moody's and the status of available funds is important to keeping this rating. The policy is to keep close to 6-8% of funds in reserves, we have about 6.9%.

The Boards discussed the budget assumptions which include \$7.9M from State Chapter 70 funds, \$9.8M in local revenue, \$1.5M in New Growth, \$1.43M Health Insurance costs, and \$0.4M for OPEB. They feel it is too early to have confidence in the State numbers being talked about. It was suggested to contact the local legislators to find out what their level of comfort is with the State numbers, particularly the Foundation Fund and invite them to attend the School Committee budget presentation at the Triboard Meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

The Boards agreed to have a follow-up conversation in June to talk about Free Cash, Stabilization, use of the debt tool, use of cash reserves, management of non-exempt debt (long and short term) within Prop 2.5, health insurance (long-term), and retired teachers health insurance and to have a shared understanding of available funds, how they look at allocations, and how to prioritize how the money gets allocated. In the meantime, the Chairs of the three Boards will arrange for small group discussions (posted sub-committees) with the information from the meetings to be brought back to the full Boards.

V. **Adjournment**

At 7:02 P.M. the Triboard meeting adjourned and the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee moved to the Joint Session. The School Committee on a motion duly made and seconded adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo  
Recorder