
**MINUTES OF TRI-BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2009
BOARD OF SELECTMEN, FINANCE COMMITTEE & SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

Board of Selectman Chair Alex Vispoli reconvened the meeting of the Board of Selectmen's Executive Session with the School Committee to the Tri-Board meeting to order at 7:45 P.M. Present from the Board of Selectmen: Chairman Vispoli and members Ted Teichert, Brian Major, Jerry Stabile, and Mary Lyman.

Finance Committee Chair Joanne Marden opened the meeting for the Finance Committee with members Richard T. Howe, Mark Merritt, Cynthia Milne, Jon Stumpf, Steve Stapinski, Paul Fortier, and Peggy Kruse in attendance.

School Committee: Chair Deb Silberstein reconvened the meeting for the School Committee at 7:45 P.M. with members Dennis Fogue Richard Collins, David Birnbach and Annie Gilbert in attendance.

Also present: Superintendent Claudia Bach, and Business Administrator David Keniston. Town Manager Reginald S. Stapczynski, and Finance Director Anthony J. Torrisi.

II. Executive Session

The Board of Selectmen and School Committee met in Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining strategies prior to the beginning of the Triboard Meeting.

III. Opening Ceremonies

Chairman Vispoli led the meeting in a moment of silence and a salute to the flag.

IV. FY-2010 Budget/October 7, 2009 Special Town Meeting

Chairman Vispoli reviewed the schedule for tonight's agenda which will begin with an overview by Finance Chair Joanne Marden after which the meeting will be opened for public input followed by a reports from the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

A. Overview from Finance Committee Chair Joanne Marden

Chairman Marden introduced and welcomed Peggy Kruse as the newest member of Finance Committee. Ms. Marden said the focus of tonight's meeting would not be on detailed budget information but an opportunity for members as a group, to identify ideas to solve the budget crisis and to determine what will be presented at Town Meeting. Chairman Marden gave a brief history of the \$92M budget voted on at Town Meeting and where we stand now with a net deficit of \$1,416,109. A review of opportunities to reduce costs includes a possible savings in employee health insurance due to reductions in staff. The challenge is to reduce the operating budget by 1.5% for both the Town (\$495,638) and School Department (\$920,471). A private warrant article for the local options meal tax has been submitted and if passed could mean approximately \$207,000 in revenue.

IV. FY-2010 Budget/October 7, 2009 Special Town Meeting (Cont'd)

B. Public Input

Diane Costagliola, 7 Belknap Drive is hopeful the local options meals tax will pass and provide another revenue source besides property taxes. She cannot imagine how the school system could absorb additional cuts in the amount of \$920,000 without having a tremendous impact on the school system in light of cuts already made. Mrs. Costagliola hopes the Boards will take into consideration the Special Education mandated expenses that the School Department does not have control over when determining the distribution of reductions.

Vicki Gallagher, 22 Greybitch Road said 25% of the school budget is regulated to Special Education and the 1.5% portion of the deficit assigned to the School department would be detrimental to the regular education students and feels the Special Education mandates should be separate from the School Department budget.

Brad Heim, 15 Chongris Circle does not expect the three boards to take positions against each other and said the Triboard needs to lead for the good of the community and do what needs to be done to deliver all programs. He suggests looking at cutting from the snow plowing budget, the recycling budget and the Public Works budget before cutting teaching positions and technology from the School Department budget. This should be an Andover Community budget.

Chairman Vispoli reported that the three Boards met on June 15 to craft a roadmap and instituted the services of a facilitator to assist them in working together especially around areas of common savings. The Boards are willing to resolve the budget deficit together and not duplicate past errors. They are working in the spirit of unity to find common ground in these unprecedented times. Deb Silberstein said that even though they may disagree, the Board members have deep respect for each other and want to reach an agreement before the next Triboard meeting of October 1st. Chairman Marden said not all changes in the budgets are cuts and sometimes we vote for more money at Town Meeting than needed and the Town-School departments are inter-dependent upon each other.

Police Chief Pattullo said the Town Manager directed the Department Heads to identify areas to cut well before today and all departments have been making cuts and trimming programs. The infrastructure of the Town is important for sustaining businesses. Other than using stabilization funds, free cash and reducing the CIP, what is the School Committee's plan?

Chairman Vispoli stated that this year is different from others and our mission is to work with available funds. The Town Manager was charged with the task of creating a plan to meet expenses using available revenue without reducing the CIP or using reserves. The three Boards, Town Manager, and the Superintendent have worked together to try to understand where they are in the process, and although they have not met the number to reduce the deficit, they are close. Chairman Marden said she has looked at the Town Manager's plan and is comfortable with the changes presented.

Chair Deb Silberstein said the School Committee met to plan aggressive cost savings and identify additional efficiencies. The Superintendent's plan meets the target number imposed and is consistent with recommendations made in May. In addition to reductions presented at the May 2009 Town Meeting, the School Department has realized \$393,000 in net savings by re-negotiating transportation contracts, and cut \$40,000 from Technology. To arrive at the \$957,000 the Town Manager and Board of

IV. **FY-2010 Budget/October 7, 2009 Special Town Meeting (Cont'd)**

D. Report from School Committee Chair Deb Silberstein

Selectmen's recommended they cut, the School Department could eliminate eleven teaching positions; however the School Committee wanted to look at other alternatives for reductions. Dennis Forgue said updated Out-of-District Special Education information received today will be closely monitored to see if anything could be contributed towards the deficit. Dr. Fink will present the Quarterly Report on Special Education at the next School Committee meeting and has reported that the freeze on out-of-district tuition does not apply to collaborative schools only to public/State programs. The School Committee is \$320,376 shy of meeting the Town Manager's target number and have sent a letter to the Andover Teachers' Association requesting consideration of a 1% reduction in their 2010 increases which would have closed the budget gap were it accepted. The School Committee Proposal was rejected. Annie Gilbert said it is more difficult to implement cuts than to make them and every further reduction brings more complications to operating the schools which impacts where we want to be for FY2011. It is important that reductions be sustainable and that we choose wisely where cuts are made.

E. Discussion with three boards – Identify areas of agreement/propose possible solutions

The Boards had a lengthy discussion to identify areas where savings could be realized such as: outsourcing of payroll, restructuring of technology, food service revenues from the Gr. Lawrence Technical School contract, hiring freeze, use of remaining balances from previous years' CIP, Medicare, creating more In-District Special Education Programs, supporting the meals tax, substitute teacher account, increasing class size, and Federal Stimulus Funds. Richard Howe urged the Board members to take a further look at what essential services are and what "nice to haves" are.

F. Next Steps

Selectman Vispoli and School Committee Chair Deb Silberstein agree that the next step in the process would be to form a sub-committee of two members from each board to meet and continue to pinpoint areas to close the budget gap, arriving at a specific proposal to present at Town Meeting. The sub-committee will meet on September 23rd prior to the October 1st Triboard meeting.

V. **Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

Warrant Article 6 – Amend FY2010 Capital Projects Fund Appropriation

School Committee member Dennis Forgue motioned to not insert Warrant Article 6 – Amend FY2010 Capital Projects Fund Appropriation. The motion was seconded by School Committee member Annie Gilbert and voted 4-0 to not insert.

Warrant Article 8 – Transfer to Water Reserves

School Committee member Dennis Forgue motioned to not insert Warrant Article 8 – Transfer to Water Reserves. The motion was seconded by School Committee member Annie Gilbert and voted 4-0 to not insert.

VI. Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles (Cont'd)

Warrant Article 1 – William Wood Memorial

Selectman Major motioned to insert Warrant Article 1 – William Wood Memorial. The motion to insert was seconded by Selectman Lyman and unanimously approved.

Selectman Major motioned to recommend approval of Warrant Article 1 – William Wood Memorial. The motion to support Warrant Article 1 – William Wood Memorial was seconded by Selectman Stabile and unanimously approved.

Warrant Article 2 – General By-Law Amendment – Private Property on Main Street Sidewalks

Selectman Major motioned to insert Warrant Article 2 – General By-Law Amendment – Private Property on Main Street Sidewalks. The motion to insert was seconded by Selectman Lyman and unanimously approved.

Selectman Major motioned to recommend approval of Warrant Article 2 – General By-Law Amendment – Private Property on Main Street Sidewalks. The motion to support was seconded by Selectman Lyman and unanimously approved.

Warrant Article 3 – General Bylaw Amendment – Outdoor Dining

Selectman Lyman motioned to insert Warrant Article 3– General By-Law Amendment – Outdoor Dining. The motion to insert was seconded by Selectman Major and unanimously approved.

Selectman Lyman motioned to recommend approval of Warrant Article 3– General By-Law Amendment – Outdoor Dining. The motion to support was seconded by Selectman Major and unanimously approved.

Warrant Article 4 – Sale of Building at 16 Pearson Street

Selectman Teichert motioned to insert Warrant Article 4 – Sale of Building at 16 Pearson Street. The motion to insert was seconded by Selectman Lyman and unanimously approved.

Selectman Lyman motioned to recommend approval of Warrant Article 4 – Sale of Building at 16 Pearson Street. The motion to support was seconded by Selectman Stabile and unanimously approved.

Warrant Article 6– Amend FY2010 Capital Projects Fund Appropriation

Selectman Lyman motioned to insert Warrant Article 6–Amend FY2010 Capital Projects Fund Appropriation. The motion to insert was seconded by Selectman Stabile and unanimously approved.

Selectman Lyman motioned to recommend approval of Warrant Article 6 Amend FY2010 Capital Projects Fund Appropriation and was seconded by Selectman Stabile. There was no vote taken.

Warrant Article 7-Amend Appropriations-The Budget and Warrant Article 8 – Transfer to Water Reserves.

Selectman Major motioned to not insert Warrant Article 7 Amend Appropriations-The Budget and Warrant Article 8 – Transfer to Water Reserves. The motion was seconded by Selectman Lyman and unanimously approved to not insert.

V. **Special Warrant Articles (Cont'd)**

Warrant Article 9 – no motion / no insertion.

Warrant Article 10 – to amend Article 4 of the 2009 Annual Town Meeting

Selectman Major voted to insert Warrant Article 10 – to amend Article 4 of the 2009 Annual Town Meeting. The motion to insert was seconded by Selectman Lyman and unanimously approved.

Warrant Article 11 – Transfer to Water Reserves

Selectman Major voted to insert Warrant Article 11 – Transfer to Water Reserves. The motion was seconded by Selectman Lyman and voted 5-0 to insert.

VI. **Adjournment**

Selectman Teichert motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Selectman Stabile and voted 5-0 to adjourn.

Finance Committee member Stephen Stapinski motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Finance Committee member Richard Howe and voted 8-0 to adjourn.

School Committee member Dennis Fogue motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by School Committee member Annie Gilbert and voted 5-0 to adjourn.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recorder