

**Town of Weston
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

Thursday March 9, 2017

A meeting of the Finance Committee of the Town of Weston, which was duly called and posted in compliance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, was held on March 9, 2017, at the Weston Town Hall. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

Present for the meeting were:

Finance Committee: John McDonald – Chair, Gabrielle Clemens, Keith Johnson, Sandy Metraux, James Jarrett, James Philipkosky (phone), Lisa Reitano, Ellen Richstone and Gerard Jansen.

Also Present: Donna S. VanderClock, Town Manager; Susan Kelley, Finance Director; Videographer James Tremble, Weston Media Center; Jeff D’Amico, Compass Project Management, Dylan Stevens, Stantec, Dr. Ed Heller, School Committee, Dr. Robert Tremblay, School Superintendent, Alex Cobb, Danielle Black and John Henry from the School Committee, Cindy Mahr, Asst. Superintendent, Pam Bator, Asst. Superintendent and Midge Connolly, Interim Superintendent. Also present was Dr. John McKensie, citizen and Michael Harry, Selectman.

1. Ellen B. Richstone was appointed to serve as Secretary *pro tempore* and charged with keeping the minutes of the meeting.
2. The latest proposal for the Case Campus Master was presented by Jeff D’Amico and Dr. Ed Heller. The changes in the proposal were driven by last May’s town vote, where the original proposal did not receive enough votes to be funded. The original proposal has now been scaled down. A copy of the complete presentation is posted to the website. In summation, the key points were:
 - a. The original proposal was for \$2.5 million, while this proposal is for \$1.8 million or reduced by \$700,000.
 - b. The request going to town will be for \$1.45 Million which takes into account \$350,000 that was not spent in a prior approved phase of the Case Campus Master Plan.
 - c. Major changes from the original proposal include:
 - i. Reduced amount of landscaping
 - ii. Eliminated extra “site finishing’s”
 - d. Major items left in proposal:

- i. Additional parking- in particular paving of the grassy overflow area which can be used for teacher parking, as well as access to the Case walking trails
 - ii. Lighting for safety purposes
 - iii. Repair of existing curbs near the Library which are deteriorating
 - e. Next Steps:
 - i. Funding Approval: Town Meeting: May 8, 2017
 - ii. Construction Start: June 2017
 - iii. Construction Target Completion: October 2017
- 3. The School Committee then presented the FY18 School Budget Proposal which is posted to the website and included the following items:
 - a. The proposed budget (excluding health and post-retirement benefits) totals \$39,302,385 which is a 1.43% increase over the FY 2017 adjusted budget. At several points in the discussion the School Committee highlighted areas that they were working to build flexibility to increase their ability to respond to the impact of large changes (higher or lower) to the student enrollment which occur within 30-60 days of the start of a school year (families moving in/out of town).
 - b. Approximately 2/3 of the increase ties to providing “level service” and the remaining portion of the increase ties to program improvements.
 - c. Salary increases, heavily tied to contractual arrangements total 2.35% with smaller increases in other areas.
 - d. Program improvements include:
 - i. Renovation of the high school library to provide quiet space for students and collaborative space for classes
 - ii. Actions to target the K-8 writing curriculum
 - iii. Continued enhancement of school security districtwide.
- 4. The Committee discussed the need to further distribute its report on school expenditures- and concluded that the current letter would need some updating due to new information received. A vote was taken and with 7 for and 2 abstaining, the Committee decided to hold any further distribution.
- 5. Finally, the Committee discussed the possibility of creating a decision tree or rubric which lays out the basic criteria for which warrants will be “opined on” and which ones won’t. It will also lay out the criteria for a yes/no vote. Ellen, John and Gabrielle will draft up some ideas to discuss at next week’s Committee meeting.
- 6. A motion to adjourn was made, duly seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen B. Richstone