

Town of Weston
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 7th, 2019

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 Thursday, March 7th, 2019 at the Weston Town Hall. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at approximately 7:05pm. Present for the meeting were:

Finance Committee: Lisa Reitano - Chair, John McDonald, John Sallay, Ellen Richstone, James Jarrett.

Also Present: Susan Kelly, Finance Director. School Committee: John Henry - Chair, Ed Heller and Alex Cobb. School Administration: Superintendent Midge Connelly and Assistant Superintendent Finance Sheri Matthews.

1. John McDonald was appointed to serve as Secretary pro tempore and charged with keeping the minutes of the meeting.
2. There were no resident comments.
3. Sheri began by explaining that the current budget book differs from past practice because it compares actuals to actuals without using some of the allocations made in the past. This revision required a substantial one time effort because she had to revise the prior year numbers before updating the current year, as well as a software change from prior year versions.
4. Next, Midge presented her recommended FY20 School Budget subject to final approval by the School Committee. A copy of the presentation is attached. The recommended budget will increase by 3.74% despite a projected decrease in enrollment of 2.4%.
5. The Committee (Fincom) noted that the high school is projected to drop 49 students (7%). Given the class load borne by high school teachers one could expect this might lead to a reduction in roughly 3.5 teachers rather than just the one teacher reflected in the proposed budget. However Midge indicated they were waiting for high school students to finish their course selections for next year after which they will consider further teacher reductions. The major program improvement is to increase the Director of District Advancement to a full time position. The position's primary responsibilities include the social and emotional well being of the students.
6. The committee asked how we should measure success in the Schools. The superintendent cited several measures including: colleges, MCAS, engagement in learning, number of students enrolled in higher level courses, involvement in activities (music, athletics, clubs etc) as well as the social/emotional wellness of the students. However, the metrics for measuring these were not addressed.

7. Later in the Spring after the union contracts are completed and the FY20 budget is approved, John Henry indicated that members of the School Committee would like to meet with members of Fincom to discuss how best to address the longer-term trends in school budget and enrollment.
8. The committee discussed draft changes to our annual report which must be completed by March 26th as it goes to the printer March 27th.
9. A motion to adjourn was made, duly seconded and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John McDonald