



Town of Medway
FINANCE COMMITTEE

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December 14, 2016 – 7:00 PM
Sanford Hall, Town Hall
155 Village Street

Present: Frank Rossi, Chair; Rohith Ashok, Vice Chair; Todd Alessandri, Clerk; Ellen Hillery, Jeff O'Neill, Michael Schrader (7:16 PM).

Absent: Dan Doherty, Meghan Hoffman, Jim Sullivan.

Staff Present: Michael Boynton, Town Administrator; Brenda Hamelin, Animal Control Officer for Medway/Millis; Dr. Armand Pires, Superintendent of Schools; Don Aicardi, Director of Finance and Operations, Medway Public Schools; Gabrielle Abrams, Assistant Superintendent.

Others Present: Glenn Trindade, Chair, Board of Selectmen; Cindy Sullivan, Vice Chair, School Committee.

At 7:06 PM Chairman Rossi called the meeting to order.

ETR – Animal Control:

The committee reviewed an ETR Request from the Animal Control Officer with supporting documentation.

Present: Brenda Hamelin, Animal Control Officer for Medway/Millis.

Ms. Hamelin explained that the existing truck was purchased in 2011 and currently has 130,000 miles. An incident in October sent the truck to the repair shop, after which worked for a while, then it would fail again. This happened several times. The shop staff felt they did not have a large enough diagnostic computer so sent it out to a shop in Millis. On November 7 it was determined that there were likely some missing pieces in the timing chain, and the sensor for the Check Engine Light was not working properly. Had this light been operational, it would have alerted her to a problem much earlier. Long story short, she needs a new vehicle, the cost of which will be split between Medway and Millis per the joint agreement. Brief discussion followed on the fact that the Ford Ranger could not accommodate a

large animal crate and a F-150 truck would be more suitable. Ms. Hamelin added that she was planning to request a vehicle in the FY18 budget if the existing one could have lasted a while longer.

Mr. Alessandri reported that there is \$93,000 in the Reserve Fund. Chairman Rossi explained that the use of the fund is for “unbudgeted, unanticipated and necessary” expenses. Ms. Hamelin added that the Town of Millis approved its share of the expense at a meeting this week.

Mr. O’Neill moved that the Finance Committee approve the transfer of \$14,897 from the Finance Committee Reserve Fund to #01292002 5852 Animal Control – Vehicle, as requested; Mr. Ashok seconded. No discussion. 5-0-0.

Update from the Town Administrator:

Mr. Boynton updated the Finance Committee on the Selectmen’s Budget Policy as it related to the Five-Year Plan. Projections are estimates and are subject to change. Basic instructions were included when the budget preparation memo went out. Brief discussion followed.

Chairman Rossi distributed two handouts provided by Mr. Boynton. The first is a report on solar energy savings from the Energy Manager that had been requested at a previous meeting.

The second handout is a report on the demographics of Medway veterans utilizing benefits, categorizing them by their time period of service. There are some veterans who hail from the WWII era, and only three from after Vietnam. While there are currently fewer than 25 people in this program, there is no way to know how many more will submit claims in the coming years. Brief discussion followed during which it was emphasized that there are people who are eligible for benefits, but opt not to seek them. Selectman Trindade clarified that younger veterans often refuse to apply for benefits until they absolutely need assistance which eliminates any way to predict what the monetary impact might be.

Discussion – Strategic Plan 2016-2019, Medway Public Schools:

The committee reviewed the Medway Public Schools Strategic Plan presented in PowerPoint format.

Present: Dr. Armand Pires, Superintendent of Schools; Don Aicardi, Director of Finance and Operations, Medway Public Schools; Gabrielle Abrams, Assistant Superintendent; Cindy Sullivan, Chair, School Committee.

At this time, Dr. Pires began the PowerPoint presentation. He pointed out that it is important to recall that more than 1,000 individuals provided data and other input toward this strategic plan. Some goals are general educational goals seen in many school systems while others are unique to Medway.

Some highlights of the presentation follow:

Goal #2 -- Social/Emotional Wellness: We have seen negative outcomes that have emerged in later years, which now are starting to appear in younger ages/lower grades. There is concern about the future of this generation which impacts the way educational constructs are prepared. Historically, it was a simple teacher:student ratio with an assistant; now many other factors are considered before putting those classrooms together and implementing educational plans are necessary.

Goal #4 – Positive Learning Culture: Do we have schools that are safe and welcoming? Can students take academic risks and challenge themselves? The role of teachers is much different than it was even

fifteen years ago, including increased communication with parents and families, more responsibilities at the district level and continuing educational needs and learning of their own.

Goal #5 - Medway is fortunate in that there are a lot of educated parents who have great skill sets to offer the schools as volunteers.

We are continuing to look at our practices to make sure they meet the needs of our students as well as the leadership. The work years ago is very different now, and educators need to stay abreast of changes in the field. The expectation now is that there is a high level of collaboration with colleagues, continual implementation of innovative teaching techniques, and other changes.

Responding to a question from Mr. Schrader, Dr. Pires stated that we feel like there can be improvements even if we are meeting the needs of most students. There are students whose needs are outside the current standards.

Ms. Abrams emphasized that one of the highlights of this process was to improve student achievement, a word that has different meanings for different people. The word “achievement” was changed to student “learning” which involves alternate and unique ways of learning and which more accurately reflects the concerns of parents. Brief discussion followed on ways to insure that students have unique opportunities for personal growth as well.

Mr. Alessandri noted that he teaches strategic planning and worked with Dr. Pires on this. How do we know when it is time to modify these goals? Dr. Pires responded there are action plans associated with each goal. This was designed to be a three-year plan, and it may take longer as there is an incredible amount of work involved. As we go along, we will evaluate each step along a timeline to see how work progresses and revise some of the finer points under each initiative as necessary.

Continuing, Dr. Pires credited the School Committee with the push to work on this plan at a time when there was going to be a change in superintendents. We need to constantly consider the financial impacts of changes as they relate to a particular initiative, and whether there is a sense of urgency for implementation.

Responding to a question from Chairman Rossi, Dr. Pires stated that committee members are learning about the necessary hard work, and we try to make sure that the budget presentation makes sense. When the new ideas come up, it's nice to be able to see how it fits into an established plan, if it fits at all. We want to have a plan that is flexible, one that can adapt to our changing needs and those of the students. We will absolutely tie initiatives to the plan, but the budgetary projection is only estimated. It is not clear at this time how much these things will cost, and it's important to note that not every initiative or goal has a dollar sign attached. Sometimes it is a change in our methodology.

General discussion followed on the increase in autism spectrum disorder diagnoses, behavioral intervention strategies, stresses and pressures on teachers, teacher retirements and attrition, new assessment tools, comparison to other communities, etc.

Chairman's Report:

Chairman Rossi asked if members had seen emails going around about the \$1.8 million override that was voted to fund the high school. The rest of the cost was bonded. Brief discussion followed.

Clerk's Report:

Mr. Alessandri, Clerk, reported that after this evening's vote on the Animal Control Vehicle, the Finance Committee Reserve Fund will have a balance of \$78,103. He expressed concern that there could be additional requests from the Veterans' Services Officer as there is more than half the fiscal year to go. He added that there are no veterans of the military action in Iraq who are coming forward.

Liaison Reports:

The Finance Committee representative to EPFRAC, Mr. Schrader reported that the public meeting on the playground project occurred last week. The next step is that the link to the survey has been emailed to those signed up for the Town newsletter, and it is posted on the Town website and the Town's Facebook page. Do residents want each park to be unique or just general park facilities in each one?

Review of Meeting Minutes:

The committee reviewed draft minutes from November 9, 2016 and November 14, 2016.

Mr. O'Neill moved that the Finance Committee approve the minutes of November 9, 2016 as amended; Mr. Ashok seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 6-0-0.

Mr. Ashok moved that the Finance Committee approve the minutes of November 14, 2016 as presented; Mr. O'Neill seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 6-0-0.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule:

The next regular monthly meeting of the Finance Committee is scheduled for January 11, 2017 at 7 PM.

At 8:38 PM Mr. O'Neill moved to adjourn; Mr. Ashok seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanette Galliardt
Night Board Secretary