

WEST NEWBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Date, Time, Location: **Wed. March 8, 2023, 7:17 PM** (Pentucket, Rm. #1012)

Attendees (& initials): Chris Wile (CW), Rob Phillips (RP), Walter Burmeister (WB), Dan Innis (DI), Jim Sperelakis (JS), Ross Capolupo (RC), Angus Jennings (AJ). Guests/Participants: Town Acct: Jenny Walsh (JW); SB: Wendy Reed (WR)

1. Call to Order: 7:17 PM
2. Public Comment: None
3. Approval of Minutes: None. 2/22 & 3/1 minutes deferred to 3/15 mtg
4. FY24 Budget Line Item Reviews:

- Pentucket Regional School District: \$9,474,666 requested, a \$347,933 (+3.8%) increase vs FY23. The FinCom met immediately upon conclusion of the Pentucket Budget presentation, led by Superintendent Justin Bartholomew (JB) and attended by the Selectboards and Finance Committees of the 3 Pentucket Towns, West Newbury, Groveland and Merrimac. During the presentation, held at the new Pentucket regional high/middle school bldg., JB highlighted the budget approved by vote of the Pentucket School Committee the prior evening, 3/7/2023, as follows:
 - Operating Budget = \$45,057,522
 - Capital Budget = \$5,662,568
 - Total Budget = \$50,720,090

In his presentation, JB highlighted the inadequate increase of only +0.51%, i.e., \$68,640, in Chapter 70 education funding from the state, which amounts to \$30 per pupil. This puts the School District in a predicament that will almost assuredly require a hefty Prop 65 override in Groveland and Merrimac. 2 out of 3 Towns need to pass their allotment for the overall budget to pass. Details are available at www.pentucketbudget.com

RP asked the amount of the year-to-year increase in WN's portion of the School Budget, not factoring the impact of school stabilization offsets. AJ replied \$347,933, a 3.8% increase from FY23 to FY24. If the proposed \$200,000 school stabilization transfer (draft article #3) passes spring Town Meeting, it would reduce our total School District Budget (noted above) by that amount. WB & DI made comments that the WN representatives to the School Cte. should be invited to, and participate in, a future FC mtg., to improve our understanding of the school funding dynamics, as well as allow the FinCom's input into the Pentucket budget process. Motion to approve: RP. 2nd: CW.

Approved 6-0

5. Town Manager Updates: AJ/CW mentioned that it may be a good idea for FC members to attend the upcoming 3/13/23 Selectboard meeting, as the Water Dept. related articles will be discussed, as well as Whittier Tech's budget and the updated Veteran's operating budget number. AJ also mentioned a citizen's petition, regarding potential alterations to the Mass. state flag, that will likely be included in the warrant, despite it's relatively late submittal. AJ felt this is acceptable, as it is a non-binding article, and part of a larger state-wide effort. AJ also mentioned a Conservation Cte. public hearing/informational meeting, planned on Wed. 3/29, to present and discuss the proposed wetlands bylaw to the public. The FC plans to discuss this potential wetlands bylaw at our meeting on 3/22/23.
6. Communications: CW handed JS (secr.) a copy for filing, of a letter from the Pentucket Regional School District, specifying it's FY24 operating budget, and West Newbury's assessment of \$9,474,666. This letter is dated 3/8/2023, reflecting the results of the 3/7/2023 School Comm. Mtg. vote, and is signed by Superintendent Justin Bartholomew and Treasurer Rebekah Hayden. AJ also has a copy.
7. Future FinCom meeting schedule (all start at 6 PM):
 - W. Mar. 15, 2023 (JS cannot attend)
 - W. Mar. 22, 2023

Adjournment: Motion to Adjourn: CW. 2nd: DI. **Approved 6-0** at 8:13 PM