

## Minutes of the March 16, 2023 Finance Committee

Members	Absent	Other
Shaun Galliher	Heather Brown	Bob Graves, Town Administrator
Jim Chivers	Sara Baumann	Leslie Blake-Davis, School Supt. CBRSD
Bonnie Conner	Russ Parks	Greg Boino, School Dept. Director of Finance
Mary Rice		Rich Peters, School Committee Chairman
Tracy Lussier		
Candy Galeucia		

The meeting was opened at 6:30 pm.

Chairman Galliher welcomed the C.B.R.S. D. Superintendent, Finance Director, and School Committee Chair to our Finance Committee meeting to discuss the current Budget. Hinsdale's assessment has increased 4.19% over last years.

Chairman Galliher noted that Hinsdale's assessment has increased 100K or more per year for the last 4 years and we just don't have it. Our Town is facing many needed projects such as the bridge on Main Street, poor road conditions, the Dam at Plunkett Lake, Highway Equipment, Fire Department Tanker, Police reform issues, and we just capped the Landfill for over 2 Million. The Town is in a very hard position trying to fund some of these necessary projects and the School increase is just not acceptable.

Chairman Galliher asked where the effort was to reduce the budget. Leslie Blake-Davis explained all the additional positions that were funded with Grants due to Covid such as School Adjustment Counselors, Math Intervention specialists, and Mental Health Support. She also said that 30 to 40% of students need these services post Covid. These Grants end September of 2023 and they want to extend these positions for next year. The Committee members questioned this need and the additional expense involved.

Finance Committee members explained that our Town is struggling and they should at least try, some concessions. Hinsdale did not support a yes vote, along with three other Towns on the new school, and now this huge increase is not going to set well with most residents. Leslie Blake-Davis said they are trying to balance what the students need and what the Towns can afford to pay.

Greg Boino, Director of Finance and Operations, reported some of the projects they have in the budget for next year such as upgrading camera's at all schools, new server and IT upgrades, Contractual Salary increases and benefits. We also discussed the new Track, maintenance of Nessacus, payments still being made on the old WRHS that is now gone, enrollment numbers, pre-school, School Choice, State Aid, Transportation reimbursement, and completing corrections on the new building.

Chairman Galliher said there seems to be no effort to offset those costs somewhere else in the Budget. Bob Graves added that we are not able to fund the needs of our Town at this time, and now a huge increase in the School costs. Several Finance members pointed out that they doubted the School Budget

would pass at Town Meeting, and asked that they go back and work on reducing it.

Chairman Galliher asked where the update of the Regional Agreement stands. Leslie Blake-Davis said they have two articles left and are close to the final draft. The only agreement they have found is dated 1958 and needs to be updated. She explained that DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) Legal department is working on it and needs to approve it. That was debated by our Committee and Bob, that DESE has no legal stance in this. The actual Authority of DESE has been debated by us before. It has been three years now that this has been in the works and we still don't have it completed. That ended the portion of our meeting on the School Budget.

Chairman Galliher and Bob went over some of our Town Budget items Bob reported on the Fire Department Tanker status. The annual amount of 57K, that was approved at last May's ATM, will be put on the Warrant. Bob is working with Lynne Baumgartner Treasurer, and the Fire Department to try to secure a loan for 65% of the total cost, and if successful, apply to USDA to grant fund the remaining 35% (461K). He pointed out that the Select Board signed a contract without the necessary funding.

Chairman Galliher went over the Capital Plan and unfortunately we need to eliminate some of those items because we just cannot fund them this year. Some issues we need to fund are the Winter Roads account that is expected to go over budget, the bill for Salt, 18K,

that was not paid by the former Road Superintendent and needs to go back into that account to name a few of the bigger expenses. The Committee discussed the request for a paper shredder for the landfill that effectively would reduce our costs of hauling and pay for itself in 3 years.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 8:03 pm, the motion passed unanimously. The next regular meeting of this Committee is Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the downstairs Community room at Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary A. Rice, Secretary