

**Finance Committee
Selectboard
March 8, 2017
Town Offices**

The regular meeting of the Finance Committee and Selectboard of the Town of Whately was called to order on March 8 at 6:00 pm by the Chair, Paul Antaya. Present were Finance Committee members Bob Fydenkevez, Dan Kennedy, Tom Mahar, Jim Kirkendall, and Joe Zwenski; Selectboard members, Paul Newlin, and Fred Orloski; Town Administrator Brian Domina and Administrative Assistant, Maryellen Cranston.

Motion was made, and seconded, to approve the minutes of March 1, 2017. Vote was unanimous.

Review the recommendations from the Personnel Committee for salary adjustments and COLA – After discussion, a motion was made, and seconded, to accept the 2.5% COLA as recommended by the Personnel Committee. Vote was unanimous. After extensive discussion, motion was made, and seconded, to accept the salary adjustments for 6 positions as listed. Vote was unanimous. One of the tasks of the Personnel Committee will be to determine comparable towns to use for comparison going forward.

Review FY18 School budgets – Also present were Lynn Carey, Patti Cavanaugh, Pete Crisifulli, Darius Modestow, Don Skroski, Bob Halla, and Bill Smith. After brief introductory remarks from Dr. Carey, Patti reviewed the changes to the Frontier and Elementary school budgets. Extensive discussion occurred regarding the impact of students leaving the district for charter schools as well as the impact of school choice students on the budget. What is the number where it is no longer feasible to accept school choice? Can we get smaller enrollment that allows us to save money? A suggestion was made to develop a survey to find out why students are leaving. Software has been purchased to track how many students ride the bus. Patti will provide information to Brian regarding the cost to educate a student at Frontier.

Whately Elementary – Preschool will now be a full day program along with providing after school care. It is critical to take a look at school choice in Whately. We cannot continue to use school choice funds to sustain the budget. Lynn and Pete will develop a plan for going forward. How much longer can each town support their elementary school?

Items not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting - Fred reminded the group about the April 3rd meeting. Fred expressed concern about our tax rate. He feels rates of adjoining towns are more consistent. Fred wants to show that we are maintaining a level tax rate. The Town needs to smooth out capital expenses for the future. Brian explained the relationship of property values and the tax rate.

Next meeting is March 22 at 6 pm.

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:12 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Domina, Town Administrator

Document List

FY18 Cost of Living Allowance Projections

3/1/17 Consumer Price Index Overview Table – New England

School Budget Spreadsheets

- Whately Elementary School
- Frontier Regional
- Franklin County Technical School
- Smith Vocational

Tax Rate Comparison Graph