

Weare Finance Committee Minutes for 12-10-15

1. The Weare Finance Committee met at the town offices on Thursday 10 December at 7pm. Members in attendance were Lori Davis, Matt Whitlock, Bill Anderson, Keith Erf, Stephen Wallace, Gregg McDowell, Rochelle Pitkaniemi, and David Recupero.

2. Business.

a. 2016 Proposed Budget. Town Administrator Naomi Bolton provided a detailed review of the 2016 Department Budget Worksheet. Differences between the proposed 2016 budget and the 2015 revised budget were explained. As of 10 December the proposed 2016 budget is \$5.64M as compared to the 2015 revised budget of \$5.38M. This represents a \$260K or 4.8% increase. Administrator Bolton stated the proposed operating budget is expected to undergo a final review next Monday at the selectmen's meeting.

1. Committee Discussion. It is the consensus of the committee that a 4.8% increase is not acceptable. The committee especially notes several new initiatives in the police budget (8.1% increase of \$116K) which do not appear necessary in light of more pressing capital improvement needs (e.g. Highway Garage, Ambulance, Jaws of Life) In consideration of lower costs for fuel/heat/electric and reduced health plan contributions the committee requests a proposed budget not greater than 0.5% over the 2015 revised budget. It is felt that a high increase in the proposed budget would put at risk more pressing capital projects.

b. Weare School Budget (WSB). Finance committee reps attending school board meetings reported the 2016-17 Preliminary proposed budget is \$14.77M as compared to the 2015-16 op budget of \$14.61M. This represents a \$167.5K or a 1.2% increase; the primary driver being technology improvements.

1. Committee Discussion. It is the consensus of the finance committee that special education savings and \$209K annual savings on refinancing of a school bond combined with a decreasing student population should reduce the need for any budget increase over last year. The Weare Budget Workshop will provide further opportunity for discussion and input.

c. Stark School Budget (SSB). Finance Committee reps attending school board meetings reported the Stark proposed 2016-17 budget is \$15K below last year's operating budget of \$13.2M. The proposed budget is also \$100K plus below what is projected to be next year's default budget.

1. Committee Discussion. This reflects a continuing trend of the Stark Board to develop op budgets slightly less than the previous year's op budgets. This is consistent with a slightly declining student population. Even if the Stark budget is reduced, however, there may still be an increase cost share on Weare taxpayers as Weare is comprising an ever increasing percentage of students at Stark. Continue to monitor at the school district budget workshop.

d. Capital Improvement Projects. The committee had a general discussion the CIP and which projects we deemed more critical. Review and final decisions will be made in January when final warrant articles are presented.

3. Calender. Town draft warrant articles are expected to be completed by 28 December. Town deliberative session is set for 6 Feb. School articles and deliberative sessions schedule is

separate. Project the finance committee recommendations will need to be completed in the last half of January; will need to communicate with Administrator Bolton to get a date certain.

4. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 10pm. Next meetings are scheduled starting 4 January 7pm and expected to run each evening 4-7 January to review final warrant articles and develop recommendations