

WEARE FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES 1-31-18

1. The Weare Finance Committee met on Wednesday 31 Jan at 7pm at the Town Offices. Members present were Lori Davis, Bill Anderson, Keith Erf, Neal Kurk, Gregg McDowell, and John Vanloendersloot. Also present was Town Administrator Naomi Bolton.
2. Business. Purpose of the meeting was to prepare remarks supporting the Committee's recommendations on town warrant articles and make recommendations on school warrant articles..
 - a. Town Warrant. Selectmen made no changes to the draft town warrant this week. No changes were made to the Finance Committee's recommendations from the 24 January meeting. Draft remarks to support the recommendations were prepared by the secretary and distributed prior to tonight's meeting. The Committee reviewed the draft remarks and made appropriate changes to complete its recommendations for the town deliberative session. Supporting remarks will be forwarded separately to the Town Administrator.
 - b. Weare School Board Warrant Articles.
 1. Operating Budget. (NOT RECOMMENDED 1-4-1). The proposed budget of \$15.299M is level with last year's approved budget of \$15.302M. The default budget of \$15.139M is 1.05% less than the proposed budget. The Committee believes the School Board had an opportunity this year to actually reduce its budget. The decrease in salary/benefit costs (\$272K) from last year to this year and the low increase in health insurance should have reflected a greater return to the taxpayers. It is the consensus of the Committee that a 1.05% reduction to the default level should be manageable for the district.
 2. Building Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund. (NOT RECOMMENDED 0-6). Proposed article would add \$75K to the fund from any remaining surplus at the end of the fiscal year. The SAU has advised this fund currently has over \$99K in it. The Committee does not support adding funds to an account without good reason. The committee would like to see the Weare Board pursue a similar initiative the Stark Board took on energy improvements that would be revenue neutral. This would reduce, not increase the need for such a reserve fund. Any surplus funds at the end of the fiscal year should be used to reduce the school tax rate.
 - c. Stark School Board Warrant Articles.
 1. Operating Budget. (RECOMMENDED 3-2-1). The proposed budget of \$13.304M is \$230K less than last year's operating budget. The default budget of \$13.166M would result in another \$138K cut. The Committee supports the proposed budget and feels the Stark Board has made a good effort to keep costs down consistent with a slightly lower student population.

2. Teachersq Contract. (RECOMMENDED 5-1) The Committee supports the proposed three year teachersqcontract. The contract is an improvement over last year's failed proposal. Teachersqcontributions to health care costs increase from 15 to 20%. Health Savings Account contributions are reduced by 20%. Employee incentives are increased to opt out of the district health insurance plan, which would reduce health care costs to the district. Salary structure will offer 1%COLA and 1% raise between steps; those off grid would get a flat \$1000. Professional development requirements are also built into the salary matrix.
3. Energy Saving Equipment Lease. (RECOMMENDED 5-1). The Committee supports this tax neutral lease proposal. The timing is right with the current oil fired boiler, tanks, and lines requiring replacement. The School Board has done their homework to develop a proposal which will upgrade equipment and systems with multiple fuel sources of wood chips or propane. They have identified a provider and researched similar operations in the state. The annual energy savings are guaranteed to offset annual energy costs.
4. Buildings and Grounds Expendable Trust. (NOT RECOMMENDED 0-6) The Committee does not support adding \$50K out of any unexpended fund balance to this trust. The SAU has advised the account currently has \$269K in it. Any surplus at the end of the fiscal year should be used to reduce the school tax rate.

3. Administrative.

- a. Minutes. The Committee approved draft minutes for the following meetings held in 17-18 as follows: 13 Sep, 25 Oct, 8 Nov, 29 Nov, 6 Dec, 13 Dec, 3 Jan, 17 Jan, and 24 Jan.
- b. Meetings. The Committee is scheduled to meet Tuesday 6 Feb and Monday 12 Feb; both will be at the Town Offices at 7pm.

4. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 9pm.

Bill Anderson
Secretary