

Weare Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday January 20, 2021 7:00 pm

Opening

The Meeting of the Weare Finance Committee was called to order at 7:01 pm on January 20, 2021 via Zoom Video Conference by Tom Downing, Committee Chair.

Present

Eileen Meaney – Town Moderator, Naomi Bolton – Town Administrator

Tom Downing

Megan Thellen

Leah Borla

Tom Clow

James Drury

Tammi Hagman

Rachel Cisto (late)

Gary Evans (absent)

Neal Kurk

Bill Anderson

Nicole Herbst

Dennis Aubin

Christine Hague

Jackie Coe – Superintendent

Chris Roy

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the 01/06/2020 minutes as amended was made by Nicole Herbst. Megan Thellen issued a second. Minutes were approved by Members Tom Downing, Megan Thellen, Leah Borla, Tom Clow, James Drury, Bill Anderson, Nicole Herbst and Chris Hague. Neal Kurk and Dennis Aubin did not approve of the minutes as amended.

Outstanding Actions

None to discuss- **Notes for audio setup-Audio and microphone off on the laptop. Call in with external speaker and no internal microphone.

Sub Committee Reports

Weare School and JSRHS – Bill Anderson clarified that there may be a delay with the deliberative session due to COVID concerns. The moderator stated that there were concerns about having the meeting inside and may postpone until warmer weather. Chris Hague stated that Henniker must be involved as well due to JSRHS. There is a concern regarding the additional expense of two separate votes. Nicole Herbst asked why they cannot proceed with an online session. Tom Downing deferred to Jackie Coe who stated that the Town Moderator has the authority over the ballot so the School Moderator may not have the authority to make that determination. Because Henniker and Weare are linked it is difficult to separate the ballot votes. This is a decision between the select boards of each town.

Review

Weare School Budget Discussion

Procedural discussion

Motion to Recommend Article 03: Article read by Megan Thellen. Tom Clow motions to recommend. Megan Thellen issued a second to recommend Article 03.

Discussion: Chris Hague believes the District has cut as much as possible. Bill Anderson – clarification on numbers that were distributed by Megan Thellen regarding the budget. Megan Thellen used the town NAV and not the school. Tom Clow asked if the town was going to use the same NAV as the school. Naomi Bolton clarified that there was a miscommunication regarding the use of the NAV. Tom Clow asked if they would match it this year. Neal Kurk stated that it would be too late since the communication has already been distributed. Chris Roy – The tax rate sheet is the revenue page and will be changed.

Neal Kurk asked Megan Thellen to clarify the default budget number. Megan adjusted the numbers to match the documents. The NAV was changed to match.

Bill Anderson – total tax impact if every article was approved town and school tax rate of \$27.21 versus current of \$23.25. Warrant article only is approved (\$1.90) increase would still be a \$475 increase. He noted that he would vote no based on his belief that the school could make deeper cuts. New adjusted NAV numbers: All Approved \$26.77 (tax impact \$2.82) increase if all approved and if No \$25.44. Numbers based on the house estimated cost of \$250,000.

Neal Kurk asked Superintendent Jackie Coe to clarify the salary lines as they relate to Article 03 and Article 04. There is a \$95k difference if they replace the 4 retiring higher salary teachers with lower paid teachers.

Jackie Coe clarified that the school cut the supply line and they will be absorbing the cost of transportation costs again in the next budget.

Bill Anderson mentioned that there will be additional CARES act money but there are no details on how this money is set to be spent yet.

Megan Thellen – did the budget reflect the current enrollment changes?

Jackie Coe -yes

Vote on Article 03: All in favor as written: Tom D. No, Megan Yes, Leah Yes, Neal No, Chris No, Tom C. Yes, James No, Dennis No, Tammi Yes, Nicole No, Bill No

Motion to recommend has failed. Motion to Not Recommend Article as written Dennis Aubin made motion, Neal Kurk issued a Second

Motion to Recommend: Tom D. Yes, Megan No, Leah No, Neal Yes, Chris Yes, Tom C No, James Yes, Dennis Yes, Tammi No, Nicole Yes, Bill Yes

Motion to Not Recommend Passes 7 to 4 reasons as follows:

- Current economic conditions
- Retirees salaries offer additional room in budget
- Priority should be given to other articles

Motion to Recommend Article 04: Read by Tom Downing. Tom Clow motions to recommend. James Drury Issues a second.

Discussion: Tom Clow agrees with the article but believes the phrasing needs to be adjusted for clarification purposes. James Drury and Tom Downing agree that the wording is vague but the committee should vote on the article as written.

Neal Kurk– if article is defeated the teachers will not get any raises or increases. If passed they will get step and inflation raises. The district will save \$95,000 if not passed. Is this reasonable contract and is it presented properly? Neal Kurk feels that it is misleading, and he will be voting no.

Nicole H., Leah B., Megan T. and Tom C. voiced support for teaches. Nicole stated the that teaches are front line workers and deserve to be compensated for what they have done

this year. Megan also voices that we would most certainly lose teachers. Chris mentioned that the Gov. mentioned businesses have done very well and that we are on an upswing and we are hoping that positive employment numbers will put us in a better place. Tammi Hagman asked Jackie Coe if they are having issues hiring teachers. Jackie Coe stated there are always attracting teachers to Weare but the difficulty is escalated due to COVID. James Drury noted as a homeschool family he supports the school system, that said he believes that it will take longer to recover from the current conditions he does not believe this article should be approved. Tom D is concerned about the wording but can work around it. He stated he believes that the extension was an admirable act by the teachers. He believes that the tax impact is small and that he will approve.

Neal Kurk - \$26.60 tax impact. Clarification that the taxpayers would pay during 2021 but may dispersed outside of 2021.

Vote to Recommend Article 04: Tom D Yes, Megan Yes, Leah Yes, Neal No, Chris Yes, Tom C, Yes, James No, Dennis No, Tammi Yes, Nicole Yes, Bill No, Rachel Yes

Motion to recommend Article 04 has passed by a vote of 8 to 4

Motion passes to recommend Article 04 points noted below

- Frontline workers
- Rehiring issues
- Proposal from the teachers was fair with no increases but the step increases

JSRHS Budget Discussion

Article 03 – Read by Megan Thellen. Motion to recommend the Article issued by Tom C. Second issued by James Drury

Discussion: Neal Kurk – the difference is only \$1000. Neal believes that they did a very good job with the budget. Bill Anderson – budget accurately reflects spending. Tom C. would support. Nicole – anything in budget that trigger an increase in the next year budget? Jackie Coe – unknown at this time.

Voting to Recommend: Tom D Yes, Megan Yes, Leah Yes, Neal Yes, Chris Yes, Tom C. Yes, James Yes, Dennis Yes, Tammi Yes, Nicole Yes, Rachel Yes, Bill Yes

Motion passes with all FC member that are present voting yes.

Motion to Recommend JSRHS Article 03 passes. Points noted below

- Very small difference

- Funds reflect actual spending
- Budget remained mostly flat

Article 04 – Read by Tom D. Motion to Recommend the Article James Drury and a second was issued by Tom Clow

Discussion: JSRHS budget reflecting more accurately. The tax impact is \$21 Bill Anderson does not support the article with the same reasons as the WSD. Tom C. and Tom D. would both support recommending this article mirroring WSD. James will also not support recommending the article same as WSD. Tom D. stated that he believes COVID has been very taxing on the kids and teachers with remote and hybrid learning.

Vote to recommend article 4 Tom D yes, Megan Yes, Leah Yes, Neal No, Chris Yes, Tom C Yes, James No, Dennis No, Tammi Yes, Nicole Yes, Rachel Yes Bill No

Motion to Recommend JSRHS Article 04 passes with a vote of 8 to 4

Vote to recommend Article 04. Points listed below

- Frontline workers
- Rehiring issues
- Proposal from the teachers was fair with no increases but the step increases
- More critical in the math and science area to fill positions.

Article 05: Read by Megan Thellen. Motion to recommend Article James Drury and a second was issued by Neal Kurk

Discussion: Tom C can they do indefinitely until rescinded? Is it only year to year? Chris Roy – any year the business manager will let them know what the 5% amount would be, and they can utilize anything up to the 5%

Neal Kurk pointed out that \$489,521 would reflect the 5% for this year. Chris Roy – we are voting on a practice as the number would change each year. Neal believes this is a contingency fund that is not necessary especially during this time. Tom C would not support this article as it is not specific in usage. Bill agrees with both Tom and Neal in not recommending this article. Chris Roy stated that there was no specific need assigned with this article. Bill pointed out that there is another fund that can be available. Megan believes that the verbiage is of indefinitely until rescinded is concerning.

Vote to recommend Article 05: Tom D No, Megan No, Leah No, Neal no, Chris No, Tom C No, James No, Dennis No, Tammi No, Nicole No, Rachel No, Bill No

Motion to not recommend James Drury, second Tom Clow.

Tom D Yes, Megan Yes, Leah Yes, Neal Yes, Chris Yes, Tom C. Yes, James Yes, Dennis Yes, Tammi Yes, Nicole Yes, Rachel Yes Bill Yes

Motion to recommend JSRHS Article 05 Fails by unanimous vote of FC members present.
Points listed below

- Indefinite until rescinded
- Prefer year to year
- No specific project
- State funding has already been approved for CIP

Old Business – No old business

New Business: None noted

Agenda for Next Meeting

Next meeting to deliberate warrants and budgets. The meeting will be set for January 26th at 6:30 pm and the 27th at 7:00 pm. The next meeting agenda will be distributed prior to the meeting but it is anticipated that the full budget including warrant articles.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:39 pm by Tom Downing, Committee Chair. The next general meeting will be at 7:00 on on January 20, 2021 via Zoom.

Minutes submitted by: Leah Borla, Secretary

Approved by: