

**JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION between the SCHOOL COMMITTEE and the
HOLLISTON FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
March, 25 2014**

The Committee convened in Room 105 at the Town Hall at 8:45pm. Present from the Committee were Chairman Ken Szajda, Vice-Chair Michelle Zeamer, Dan Alfred, and Beth Liberty. Present from the from the School Committee were Erica Plunkett, Anne Louise Hanstad, Lisa Galeaz-Weber and Brad Jackson, Superintendent of Schools

Executive Session Notes

Ms. Zeamer made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss strategy in preparation for the negotiation of union and non-union compensation issues; Mr. Alfred seconded; followed by roll call vote: Zeamer – yes, Alfred- yes, Liberty-yes, Szajda – yes.

Dr. Jackson walked thru the FY15 contractual obligation detail which included favorable payroll adjustments of \$471,961; payroll increase for collective bargaining employees of \$732,795; payroll increases for non-collective bargaining employees of \$19,165 for a net FY15 contractual obligation/salary figure of \$279,999.

- It was noted that teacher turnover is continuing to provide budget favorability.
- Mr. Alfred expressed concern that the contract may not be fundable in future years and may result in cuts to service if the state does not increase funding or if the school does not continue to experience budget favorability. Mr. Alfred suggested stretching out the steps over a longer period of time to achieve an overall budget at guideline.
- Dr. Jackson stated that it was unrealistic to expect to run the schools at level service with a 1.5% annual increase on an ongoing basis.
- Ms. Hanstad asked if the town can afford to see the schools start to decline due to what she and the school committee believe is underfunding.
- Dr. Jackson stated that fair and competitive wages were required to attract and retain quality teachers, and that the system of steps and lanes is an albatross on all towns.
- Mr. Alfred suggested that the FinCom might be willing to entertain a revised system that would incur one-time costs in exchange for a longer term sustainable budget (e.g. pay more earlier in teacher career with longer stretched out steps to reduce the annual contractual increase)
- A discussion followed in which all participants talked about the need for new ways of thinking about school funding so that a sustainable long term budget could be developed.
- With regards to the ongoing collective bargaining, Dr. Jackson stated that negotiations are not nearing settlement, and that the school committee is not specifically driving for completion prior to the May town meeting.

At 9:30pm Mr. Alfred made a motion to exit from executive session and return to open session, seconded by Ms. Zeamer; a roll call vote followed: Zeamer – yes, Alfred- yes, Liberty-yes, Szajda – yes.

Approved _____9/9/14_____

Released _____3/10/15_____