

**Town of Holliston  
Finance Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 7, 2017**

The meeting convened at 7:04pm in Room 105 at Holliston Town Hall. In attendance: Chairperson Dr. Ken Szajda, Vice Chairperson Michelle Zeamer, Clerk Vincent Murphy, Daniel Alfred, Suzanne Nersessian and Tim Maxwell.

Ms. Nersessian made a motion to approve the minutes of February 14, 2017 and Ms. Zeamer seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with a vote of 5-0, with Mr. Alfred abstaining.

Opening the review of the FY18 budget request from the School department, Dr. Szajda noted that there would be no discussion of OPEB; that the discussion should be respectful; and that due to ongoing negotiations there could be no discussion of contract labor costs. Representatives of the Budget Subcommittee of the School Committee Joan Shaughnessy and Ann Louise Hanstad presented the request.

Ms. Hanstad recognized the loss of longtime and much-loved teacher Therese Cacavalle. Ms. Shaughnessy acknowledged the work of the Finance Committee, especially Mr. Szajda, in holding off an override. Ms. Shaughnessy respectfully acknowledged the 1% guideline, but asserted that it is disruptive to present 1% budget when level funding is 2% over. She further stated that a restoration budget creates a 3.9% increase and that there would be capital requests for May meeting. Ms. Nersessian confirmed with Ms. Shaughnessy that the budget included all initiatives to be funded.

The Finance Committee discussed strategies for funding full-day kindergarten. Ms. Hanstad stated that the School Committee would take the suggestions under advisement. Further discussion included the long-term goal of restoration of two school psychologist positions, as the current proposal only has one (1) position being requested; the replacement of the out-of-date school data system; the Curriculum Leadership position; and Superintendent Dr. Bradford Jackson presented the need for restoration of a Strategic Improvement Initiatives position.

Ms. Shaughnessy told the Finance Committee that there are capital requests for May Town Meeting for items needed for next school year. One for Chromebooks for Grade Nine and another for an upgrade to the iPass system.

Mr. Alfred commended the schools for what they do and the School Committee for working with the Finance Committee this budget season and remaining flexible to potentially accepting a lower than initially proposed School Budget. He said that the Finance Committee may be able to get to a level service funding of the budget despite the increases in compensation that were higher than the guidelines set by the Finance Committee. However, he urged the School Committee to make a determination that if they believed their new initiatives in the original proposed budget that are being eliminated from the proposed budget were so critical that they

should seek a Proposition 2 ½ override. If the School Committee made that determination then they should first approach the Board of Selectmen and eventually the Town to seek a Proposition 2 ½ override for those new initiatives.

Dr. Szajda thanked the School Committee and acknowledged the fiscal difficulty of coming up with a \$1.2m increase. He said the dialogue would continue. Dr. Jackson listed topics that had come up during the night's meeting with the Finance Committee for further information and discussion: kindergarten fees; school psychologists; iPass and time saving; job description for Digital Learning position; costs that have been saved; savings from Lights project; line item budget to be posted; year over year grant trends; and revolving fund information.

Mr. Alfred made a motion to adjourn and Ms. Nersessian seconded. The motion passed 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Vincent J. Murphy, Jr.  
Clerk