

**Town of Mansfield  
Board of Selectmen  
Minutes of April 6, 2010**

**Present:** Chairman Baldwin, Vice Chairman Moran, Clerk Jess Aptowitz, Selectman Dentino, Selectman Levine, William Ross, Town Manager

Chairman Miller, Vice Chairman Losiewicz, School Committee Members DelVecchio, Perry, Trowbridge

Chairman Gazzolo, FinComm members Arnold, Chambers, Ratliff, Goldberg, Lavin, Lazzara

**Joint meeting with School Committee and FinComm**

Sup. Hodges stated that due to decreases in health care adjustments the school committee was able to recognize some savings and with the use of one time funds the committee has been able to reduce the budget gap to 1.8 million.

Even so, the committee has reduced staff, equipment replacement, sports/activities fees, and supply expenditures. As personnel have retired, they have tried to go without replacing them.

Due to unanticipated savings in utilities and lane change overages, the committee was also able to save funds there.

Selectman Moran asked if the 1.8 million shortage is personnel. Ms. Hodges stated yes.

Selectman Levine asked Ms. Hodges about the 16 positions that were proposed in the original budget. Are these really cuts? Ms. Hodges stated those are considered cuts in the budget as they were requested expenditure in the original FY11 budget.

FinComm Chairman Gazzolo stated the original budget model for the school committee wasn't supposed to have additional staffing. They had planned on the level services so the gap is better than anticipated.

Chairman Baldwin asked the School Committee (again), what are you going to do for revenue next year? An override will only carry you for this year. Sup. Hodges briefly described a three year plan that would entail a deficit of roughly a million dollars each year.

Selectman Moran stated that is exactly the problem he has been talking about. He is concerned with any model that already has a deficit built in. The town cannot sustain this level of spending. Chairman Baldwin stated she concurs; we need to cut the model to what we can afford now.

Chairman Baldwin stated the FinComm has warned the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee repeatedly that cuts will need to be made. The town cannot sustain this level of spending. Two years ago the town gave the school side \$500,000 out of stabilization and the town side took it on the chin last year and made significant cuts. The school side needs to sacrifice this year to make their budget #.

Selectman Dentino asked the school committee "what do you plan to do if an override fails at town meeting?" They have a plan B that includes reducing teachers, sports and after school activities to make the cuts.

Chairman Baldwin has asked the school committee for a budget breakdown, in addition, Chairman Gazzolo has asked for the same thing a couple of times and the school committee has not produced anything.

However, Selectman Dentino feels for the schools as they are caught in a difficult spot. We need to deal with what we have now, not anticipated revenue or decreased enrollment.

The school committee and the Board of Selectmen need to come to town meeting with a balanced budget. If an override was on the warrant, then the extra funds could be appropriated.

Mr. Ross also commented that the state is looking at changing the way municipal retirements are handled. We could have a number of employees retiring in the next couple of years and we need to plan for that. Most of our resources are tied to salaries and benefits but we need to save for infrastructure and maintenance as well.

Selectman Levine stated that the town side pays the school side's debt, health insurance and that is a significant amount of money. Why is the school committee always talking about having to lay off teachers, why aren't they looking at other areas of the budget such as administrative staff? They would have the least impact on student learning.

Sup. Hodges states that they need their administrative staff to process work and handle parent/student requests. They have reduced administrative staff in the past and cannot handle any more staff cuts without affecting the process.

Selectman Moran states again that he hears what they are saying but he cannot support an override and still have the town in deficit the following year. Cuts have to be made this year to reflect the revenue we currently have to work with.

School Committee Chairman Miller asked the Board of Selectmen to vote on an override this evening. However, Selectman Dentino stated he would like to wait and close the warrant later to allow for more discussion time.

Chairman Baldwin has no problem with voting this evening but is willing to wait if the board wants to.

Mr. Ross stated the special town meeting must be posted by April 20<sup>th</sup>. As such the warrant must be signed and closed two weeks prior.

Selectman Moran stated we don't have much time to wait and the outcome is bound to be the same but we will try to work out a solution within the current timeframe.

Chairman Gazzolo stated he does not feel you need a specific warrant article (for an override) before the warrant closes.

Selectman Levine went on record as not being in favor of operational overrides. She would support an override for a catastrophe but not operations.

**Motion:** To postpone closing the warrant to April 16<sup>th</sup>. (Levine/Dentino) 5:0 passes

## Adjournment

**Motion:** Adjourn meeting at 8:55pm (Moran) 5-0 Passes

Jess Aptomity

Signature of Clerk

April 28, 2010

Date of Approval