

FARMINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
*****SPECIAL MEETING*****

Monday, February 27, 2017

Chairman Joshua Bell called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M. with the following members present: Stephan Bunker, Michael Fogg, and Matthew Smith. Andrew Buckland was unable to attend. Town Manager Richard Davis and Town Secretary Linda Grant were also in attendance.

ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Joshua Bell led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ITEM 2: To Hear a Presentation from Dr. Thomas Ward Regarding the RSU 9 Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2017-18

Dr. Tom Ward and RSU 9 Director Douglas Dunlap were present. Dr. Ward thanked the Selectmen for scheduling tonight's special meeting for this presentation, and handed out and reviewed a hard copy of the power point presentation that he compiled for the RSU 9 Board of Directors. With the aid of the power point handout, Dr. Ward's explanations included: how the Town's assessments are determined; the law passed in 1984 mandating education be funded at 55% is still not being upheld since 1988, leaving the State of Maine back at the 1984 rate of 47% - which includes 44% plus the addition of any increases and the teacher retirement which the State is now responsible for; the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) funding model is falling short because it does not work correctly when State funding is not at 55%; eight of the ten towns within the district had a decrease in their monthly school assessment in 2016-2017, and there are indications that there will be a decrease again this year; the fact that 75% of the school budget expenses pertain to personnel and the challenges involved in staying competitive with the salaries and wages; the efficiencies of operating the new Mt. Blue Campus versus the deficiencies in the infrastructure of the old building that the District was facing versus the 3% interest cost being paid now on that facility; basic bus transportation costs are reimbursed by the State but they are not reimbursed at the proper level for transportation costs for after school programs or co- and extra-curricular activities; because the Board of Directors chose to go through the budget line by line three years ago the Budget Committee was dissolved two years ago and the Administrative team now compiles the budget; the Directors present considerations for cuts; the first of the 2017-2018 budget requests came in at an increase of 5.4% but the Administrative team has cut it down to 2.6%, which is what has been presented to the Directors to go through; expenses have consistently gone up because costs have gone up; their focus is on contingency because

ITEM 2: To Hear a Presentation from Dr. Thomas Ward Regarding the RSU 9 Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2017-18 (Cont.)

they do not have reserve accounts for protection; only spending for teaching curriculum is allowed and all personnel is very mindful of that; Day Treatment Programs (DTP) were started several years ago versus sending students out of the district in an effort to cut down on costs - last year providers were finally trained at a level that allowed billing Maine Care so it is now a viable source of revenue; they are now trying to bill for the Life Skills Programs (LSP), and unlike the DTP students who don't come every day due to mental health issues and therefore cannot be billed for if not present, LSP students come every day, so the revenue will be more consistent; how staffing/positions and students per class room factor into the State calculation for funding public education; the district realizes a great deal of supplemental financial support from the Music Boosters and Sports Boosters clubs so that they do not have to cut co- and extra-curricular programs; the State currently only funds 50% of System Administration, and Governor LePage's budget is proposing to not fund it at all this year; there will be a bond paid off in 2018 and another paid off in 2019 so they will most likely be putting out another bond issue at that time for capital improvement of the district's existing buildings; more State revenue and property tax relief are key. Comments and discussion from the Selectmen added in with the explanation included: more explanation, as complicated as it may be, needs to be given of the funding formulas, with Dr. Ward responding that transparency is key to the Directors and him; dissolution of regional meetings; verification was received that once an Administrative budget is set the dollar amounts cannot be changed - any change would have to come in the form of cutting employees (reduction in force) unless there is union representation to prevent it; in order to be able to bargain employee contracts in good faith 2% has been added to the budget for the past three years to cover all negotiations; in order for a town to receive its State subsidy it needs to pay 100% of its local share but only 85% was being paid; the State is considering starting a State Teacher Contract, with regional adjustments, to take the pressure off the school districts, making it more equitable across the board; co- and extra-curricular courses/activities are necessary to allow students to be competitive and help them get into better schools; single solicitation for Adult Education instead of from both the school district and the County budgets; consideration of going with contractual transportation versus custodian/bus drivers, and the current struggles with hiring of same; the annual budget dates have been moved up this year to accommodate the possibility of a second budget vote, putting the setting of the budget on April 11th, the annual budget meeting on May 2nd, and the budget referendum on May 16th, with the trifold expected to be out by late April; and review of Tech Center courses. Director Dunlap thanked the Selectmen for the opportunity to attend tonight's presentation, and gave them an overview of his life and career in Farmington, as well as his first term in his position as an RSU 9 Director.

ITEM 3: To Discuss Other Business

- A) Matthew Smith reported that he and his wife are going through the Farmington Police Department sponsored Citizen's Police Academy, and highly recommends it for any Town official.

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Matthew Smith moved to adjourn at 8:04 P.M.; Stephan Bunker seconded.**

VOTE AFFIRMATIVE 4 ABSENT 1 MOTION CARRIED
(Andrew Buckland)

Minutes respectfully submitted by Linda H. Grant.

Andrew R. Buckland – Secretary