

FARMINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Chairman Ryan Morgan called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. with the following members present: Andrew Buckland, Joshua Bell, Michael Fogg and Stephan Bunker. Town Manager Richard Davis, School Board members Claire Andrews, Kenneth Charles and Iris Silverstein, Channel 11, and members of the press and public were also in attendance.

ITEM 1: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Chairman Ryan Morgan led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ITEM 2: To Meet with the Superintendent of Schools to Discuss the RSU 9 Budget for Fiscal Year 2016

Ryan Morgan introduced RSU 9 Superintendent Dr. Tom Ward who thanked the Selectmen for meeting with him tonight. Dr. Ward explained that his goal in meeting with each Town within the district is to give an update on his knowledge to date of school funding. He handed out and reviewed an information sheet on "Education Funding Law Implementation - State/Local Share of Education Costs" dating back to 2007. Of particular interest was the State of Maine's rise and decline of its level of funding since 2007, even though it is legally obligated to fund education at 55%. Other points of interest were: formulas used for funding schools; education costs; unfunded State mandates; the fact that Governor LePage's proposed budget is projected to increase the educational mill rate from 8.1% to 8.47%, and is an automatic increase that the towns have to raise in order to receive their State allocations; the impact on Town property taxes because of the educational mill rate and State Revenue Sharing; the projected 4.2% increase in the District's budget; the District's focus on Special Education this year; the ever increasing student census; the savings of implementing day treatment programs versus out-of-district student placement; per pupil expenditures K-12 last year of \$8,600, which places RSU 9 in the bottom one-quarter to one-third; and the inability to be competitive with teacher, ed tech, bus driver, custodian and administration bargaining/contracts. Discussion with the Selectmen included: explanation of EPS by Dr. Ward and what being above or below it relates to; the representation role of School Board members for the District vs. the Town and the need for the Farmington School Board members and Selectmen to additionally work together to address the Town's needs; the increasing student census and school populations; the financial and time resource costs for special needs children, particularly mental health resources; potential initiatives for revenue streams; the continual federal grant applications that purchase items or fund programs that don't have to be added to the budget process; quantification of academic success vs. Town/District investment; the initiatives, supports, and interventions that are necessary to help kids stay on a positive track toward success

