

*Draft Minutes*

Town of Brattleboro Finance Committee

January 25, 2017

5:00 PM

*Minutes by Maya Hasegawa, Acting Recording Clerk*

Attending

Maya Hasegawa  
Ralph Meima  
Franz Reichsman, Chair

Guest: David Schoales

Meeting was called to order at 5:12 PM

The Chair announced and accepted the resignation of Paula Melton from the Committee.

The minutes from December 14 and December 28 were approved.

There was a discussion of the Town School budget with David Schoales. Maya and Franz also reported on their meeting with WSESU Business Manager Frank Rucker. Highlights:

+ There is a change in the number of "equalized pupils" in large part because the number of pre-school and kindergarten pupils was overestimated for FY2017, while the actual number was used for FY2018. The result is a decrease of 89 equalized pupils despite an increase of 5 actual pupils. The result is an increase in the level of spending per equalized pupil.

+ The large capital expenditure will be \$946,000 for the Green Street School pellet boiler. \$350,000 will be borrowed with the remainder coming from grants and a transfer of money from the operating budget.

+ The budget also includes funding for a full time social worker and full time tech coordinator to be shared among the three schools.

There was also discussion of Act 46 consolidation. Depending on the February 21 vote in Dummerston on the Vernon exit from the supervisory union, there are a number of options, but it appears that an April vote on a plan to form a supervisory union for the remaining four towns will be likely if Vernon is allowed to exit.

Whatever happens, the individual town school budgets will remain in place for the next year. However, if a combined supervisory union is formed before July 1,

then the new district will be eligible for an eight cent decrease in its tax rate during the subsequent budget year.

Franz reported on the energy measures voted on by the Selectboard. The decision was to move an almost new oil heating system from the fire station to the library. The current price of oil plus the cost of a pellet burner makes the option of a pellet system for the library financially unattractive. The new police and fire stations are scheduled use a propane heating system, based on numbers provided to the town administration by the building consultant, Steve Horton.

The Selectboard has voted to adopt a final budget proposal to forward to town meeting for consideration. The final version includes the changes discussed at the prior Selectboard meeting, including the use of fund balance to limit the tax increase to 3.5 cents per \$100 valuation.

Ralph reported that the surveys were ready to go out and requested that committee members try taking them so he and Avery could see what the results looked like. The links were sent by email.

Maya will draft the town budget report; Franz the high school and town school reports. They will be reviewed at the February 8 meeting, with final approval due by February 22 for distribution to town meeting representatives.

The next meetings are February 8 and February 22 at 5:00.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM.