



Town of Concord
Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes – Thursday, March 10, 2022
Public Hearing Room, Town House, 22 Monument Square, and via Zoom

Members present: Ray Andrews, Dean Banfield, Eric Dahlberg, Greg Guarriello, Mary Hartman, John Hickling, Amrith Kumar, Don Kupka, Dee Ortner, Parashar Patel, Christine Reynolds, Brian Taylor, Lois Wasoff

Others Present: Select Board Chair Terri Ackerman, Interim Town Manager Kerry Lafleur, School Committee Chair Cynthia Rainey, members of the public

Chair Reynolds requested to bring the meeting to order at 9:15 PM. Finance committee members agreed unanimously.

Review and vote: recommendations on 2022 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Chair Reynolds identified the articles on which the Finance Committee may choose to vote following the public hearing that preceded the meeting – as follows:

Article 17: Minuteman Regional Technical High School District Budget

MOTION made by Dean Banfield to recommend affirmative action on the article. Seconded by Brian Taylor. Motion carried unanimously.

Article 18: Concord Public Schools Budget

Chair Reynolds noted that the CPS budget remains \$312,585 over the guideline. Parashar Patel acknowledged the work of the School Committee and administration in preparing the budget, but stated that it would be helpful to hear from them on trade-offs they have identified that would allow them to meet the guideline, especially given expected budget increases in the future. Chair Reynolds expressed concern that the school administration has not been willing to make any adjustments in order to meet the guideline. Mary Hartman agreed and stressed that it is up to the school administration, not the Finance Committee, to meet the guideline. Greg Guarriello stated that the Finance Committee develops its guidelines without a full picture of the school department's costs. Ray Andrews stated that the Finance Committee may vote to take no action on the article and let Town Meeting decide. Dee Ortner noted that there are members of the School Committee in attendance and suggested they may wish to offer input into the budget. In response, School Committee Chair Cynthia Rainey added that the School Committee voted to support the budget.

MOTION made by Lois Wasoff to recommend no action on the article. Seconded by Dean Banfield. Greg Guarriello asked what would happen if Town Meeting does not approve the school budget. Interim Town Manager Kerry Lafleur stated that she was not sure and could research what would happen. Dean Banfield stated that what would likely happen is that an amendment would be offered at Town Meeting to adjust the school budget. After some additional discussion on the implications of a vote to take no action and the process for offering an amendment at Town Meeting, the motion carried by a vote of 10-1-1, with Dee Ortner abstaining and Greg Guarriello voting no.

Article 19: Concord Public Schools Capital Projects

MOTION made by Dean Banfield to recommend affirmative action on the article. Seconded by Dee Ortner. Motion carried by a vote of 11-1, with John Hickling voting no.

Article 20: Appropriation to Stabilization Fund

MOTION made by Dee Ortner to recommend affirmative action on the article. Seconded by Greg Guarriello. Motion carried unanimously.

Article 21: Concord Carlisle Regional High School Budget

MOTION made by Dean Banfield to recommend affirmative action on the article. Seconded by Brian Taylor. Motion carried unanimously.

Article 21: Concord Carlisle Regional High School Capital Projects

MOTION made by Mary Hartman to recommend affirmative action on the article. Seconded by Brian Taylor. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Terri Ackerman of 89 Heaths Bridge Road stated that the share of the total town budget that goes to the schools continues to grow over time.

Ned Perry of 362 Bedford Street noted that it has happened in the past that amendments have been offered at Town Meeting to reduce the school budget.

Adjourn

MOTION to adjourn made by Dee Ortner. Seconded by Eric Dahlberg. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Eric Dahlberg