

**Town of Concord  
Finance Committee  
Meeting Minutes - April 8, 2019  
Pre-Town Meeting**

**Present:** Thomas Tarpey, Dean Banfield, Mary Hartman, John Hickling, Karle Packard, Scott Randall, Christine Reynolds, June Rzepczynski, Phil Swain, Brian Taylor and Andrea Zall

**Absent:** Peter Fischelis, Grace Hanson and Richard Jamison (one vacancy)

**Others Present:** School Committee Member Robert Grom; Recording Secretary Anita Tekle

**Meeting Opened**

Mr. Tarpey called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm in Room 247 inside the Library at Concord-Carlisle High School.

**Annual Town Meeting Preparation**

**Article 25 –Real Estate Transfer Tax for Affordable Housing** Mr. Tarpey explained that the Select Board is offering a revised motion under Article 25, which exempts from the 1% transfer tax the first \$600,000 of the purchase price. He noted that the Finance Committee (FC) had voted on March 14 to support the transfer tax at a lower rate of 0.5%. He suggested that the effective result of the revised motion is very similar to what was proposed by the FC.

Mr. Banfield made a **MOTION** that was seconded by Ms. Hartman to recommend Affirmative Action on the Select Board’s revised motion on Article 25.

Mr. Swain spoke in opposition to the motion, feeling that a real estate transfer tax affects all property values. He was opposed to Article 25 as originally proposed, and continues to be opposed. A **VOTE** was taken on Mr. Banfield’s motion, which **FAILED TO PASS** (with 5 voting in favor and 6 opposed). Ms. Hartman noted that the Select Board’s revised proposal will bring in less revenue than the FC’s planned motion to reduce the tax to 0.5%. Concern was also expressed as to the lateness of the proposed amendment to Article 25—why hadn’t the \$600K exclusion been brought up earlier when more thoughtful discussion could have taken place? It was also noted that \$600K is above the average condominium price in Concord, and the rationale for choosing that figure was unclear.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Packard and seconded by Mr. Banfield, it was unanimously **VOTED** to rescind the March 14, 2019 FC vote concerning a recommendation on Article

25 (i.e., to reduce the transfer tax to 0.5%). During the discussion, it was clear that several FC members did not support a real estate transfer tax in general.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Hickling and seconded by Mr. Taylor, it was **VOTED** (with 6 voting in favor and 5 opposed) to recommend **NO ACTION** under Article 25.

**Article 14—Middle School Feasibility Study** Mr. Swain distributed a copy of his PowerPoint presentation for the FC’s revised motion under Article 14, to reduce the appropriation from \$1.5 million to \$750,000, along with support material about the impact of a new middle school on Concord’s future debt. He noted that he had spoken with staff at MSBA and reviewed the information available on the MSBA web site for middle school projects. Included in the information he distributed was a chart showing costs for similar middle school projects in other communities, where the median cost was \$750,000. He did not feel that the School Department’s consultant’s estimate is consistent with recent expenditures elsewhere. Mr. Packard noted that the MSBA process is different from other public building projects in that the feasibility study includes a pre-schematic design component, and the cost estimates are based on the pre-schematic design. Under this scenario, the final contractor is required to work with the estimates provided in the schematic design, which is challenging, but evidently required and legal for school projects. Mr. Swain noted that if Concord is approved for MSBA funding, the feasibility study would have to be redone.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm and the group moved to the Gymnasium for Town Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anita S. Tekle

### **Documents Used or Referenced at Meeting:**

- Town Meeting Handout for Article 23—Affordable Housing Development (Finance Committee, dated 4.5.2019)
- Select Board proposed amendment for Article 25—Real Estate Transfer Fee for Affordable Housing
- Chart of Revenue from Single-Family transactions only at 1% of value 2012-2017
- PowerPoint presentation for Article 14 Finance Committee’s proposed amendment to reduce appropriation
- Background Material to support Finance Committee’s proposed amendment for Article 14 (dated 4.5.2019)