Town of Concord

Finance Committee
22 Monument Square
Concord, Massachusetts 01742-0535

AGENDA

Concord Finance Committee

March 28, 2019

Select Board Room
Town House
7:00PM

1. **Minutes- January 24, 2019; February 11, 2019; February 25, 2019; and March 7, 2019.**
2. **Correspondence**
3. **Annual Town Meeting Preparation: Review Warrant Articles & Recommendations as needed**
4. **Discussion of Definition of Guidelines Spending**
5. **Chair's Report**
6. **Observer Reports**
7. **Finance Director's Report**
8. **Citizen comments**

Reminders

- ***Next Regular Meeting:*** April 25, 2019
- ***Town Meeting:*** Monday, April 8, 2019 and subsequent evenings until adjournment
- ***When Finance Committee members anticipate being absent from a meeting, it would be appreciated if they would notify Chair Tom Tarpey by email at:*** tarpey@massgravity.com

Draft 2.13.2019; Revised

Town of Concord
Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes – January 24, 2019

Present: Thomas Tarpey, Dean Banfield, Mary Hartman, John Hickling, Richard Jamison, Karle Packard, Scott Randall and Christine Reynolds

Absent: Peter Fischelis, Grace Hanson, June Rzepczynski, Phil Swain, Brian Taylor and Andrea Zall (one vacancy)

Others Present: Town Manager Chris Whelan; Select Board Chair Tom McKean; School Committee Member Robert Grom; Finance Director Kerry Lafleur; LWV Observer Susan Frey; Recording Secretary Anita Tekle

Meeting Opened

Mr. Tarpey unofficially opened the meeting at 7:05 pm in the Select Board Room at the Town House, noting that we did not have a quorum. He noted that the meeting was being recorded and broadcast live on MMN. At 7:15 pm the eighth member arrived and a quorum was reached, so the meeting was officially opened.

Review of 2019 Warrant Articles

Article 6—Town Budget Mr. Whelan reported that the 2019 Annual Town Meeting (ATM) warrant is at the printer and will be mailed Tuesday, to be delivered to homes by February 11. He is pleased to reduce the FY20 Town Budget request so that it is within the FC guideline. He explained that he was able to do so through the identification of additional revenue and a decrease in his request for capital expenditures. He will explain the details at the FC Hearing on February 11. He is recommending a cost-of-living adjustment for non-union employees of 2.5% for FY20. The additional School Resource Officer (SRO) has been built into the budget for FY20, with some funding from the MEWS Stabilization Fund. In response to a question from Mr. Banfield, Mr. Whelan indicated that the MEWS funds will be used as follows: $90,000 each in FY20, FY21 and FY22.

Ms. Hartman asked for a clarification of the $350,000 increase in Line Item 12, Fire Department. Mr. Whelan explained that in the past, all budget numbers were displayed net of any inter-fund transfers from other non-General Fund sources. The Auditor has requested that the gross numbers be shown and appropriated, and this change has been made in the 2019 ATM warrant, with the gross numbers also included for the FY18 and FY19 columns. In the past only General Fund portion was shown. He also confirmed that these numbers do not include any employee benefits, which account for approximately 25% above the salary amounts. He noted that many employees choose to take health insurance benefits from a spouse. Insurance, unemployment, workers' compensation, retirement costs are shown in the Joint Accounts line item towards the end of the budget.

Mr. Jamison inquired about the SRO, and why it is budgeted in the Town rather than the School Department. Mr. Whelan explained that the skills required are primarily law enforcement, and it is

important that the individual report to the Police Chief. In an emergency, the individual can be assigned elsewhere. Mr. Banfield also noted that crossing guards are budgeted in the Police Department. Mr. Whelan acknowledged that he has received citizen feedback that the Town, Schools and the Town of Carlisle are not always sharing costs equitably; however, the SRO position will not be used at the high school, so only Concord is involved.

Ms. Hartman asked about the increase in employees for FY20. Mr. Whelan responded that there are seven new positions—4 Firefighters; 1 Park Maintenance employee; 1 part-time staff member in the Town Manager's Office; and 1 person in the IT Department. The proposed Archivist position at the Library is still an open question. The Town pays for two full time employees at the Library Archives/Special Collections. The Town Manager had proposed that one of these individuals report to the Town Clerk and assume responsibility for Town records and archives. The Library Trustees have offered to have one of the two Archives/Special Collections employees assist with Town records management, but they feel that Special Collections requires two full time employees. So this is still in flux, with the hope that it will be resolved prior to the February 11 public hearing. In response to a question, Mr. Whelan noted that there is a page in the Town budget devoted to a listing of FTE positions that are supported by the General Fund. Ms. Hartman asked whether any non-General Fund money is available to support the three new non-firefighter positions. Mr. Whelan responded that these positions would be fully paid for through the General Fund.

Mr. Whelan noted that he anticipates that General Fund support of the White Pond Beach will be reduced in the coming years, with modest operational subsidies anticipated for the first two years. The Attorney General has not yet approved the dissolution of the White Pond charity, so this land transfer has not yet been finalized. The conservation restriction for some of the White Pond land is under review by the Select Board. Ms. Reynolds inquired whether the legal fund is adequate in light of the Nagog Pond lawsuit. Mr. Whelan responded that the Water Fund (Enterprise Fund) is responsible for paying any of the Nagog Pond legal bills. He explained that Concord believes that it has exclusive rights to the use of Nagog Pond. The Town of Littleton has an urgent need for water and have asserted their rights to Nagog in court. Concord believes that the 1985 Water Management Act supersedes the earlier home rule petition when Concord acquired Nagog Pond, and that is what is being clarified by the Court. Concord currently has a permit to build a new treatment facility at Nagog. He noted that from 1920 to 1965, Nagog was Concord's only water source, and it is important that Nagog continue to be integrated into Concord's water resource program. Mr. Whelan reported that negotiations about Estabrook Woods have failed, and that issue has moved towards litigation.

Mr. Banfield asked whether the White Pond Beach would be operated by the Recreation Department. Mr. Whelan responded that there are four land parcels at White Pond—two will be managed as conservation land under the Natural Resources Commission, and the remaining two (totaling approximately seven acres) would be under the jurisdiction of the Recreation Department. He anticipates that beach memberships and swim lesson revenue will generate enough money to cover operating costs. Mr. Tarpey asked whether there is a plan that the Town assume ownership of the road-

way to White Pond (boat launch area). Mr. Whelan noted that this is a county road, which must be maintained to provide access for fishing. The State continues to control this road, but they approached the Town a couple of years ago offering to provide capital funds to repair the road, in exchange for the Town agreeing to maintain the road once improvements are made. The State would continue to handle major repairs, but the Town would agree to provide maintenance (plowing, pothole repair, etc.). Mr. Whelan indicated that no internal combustion motors are allowed on White Pond, which limits the size of the boats that may be launched.

Article 7—Municipal Capital Projects Mr. Whelan reviewed the Town's capital projects for FY20, which total $3,950,000. He has proposed $500K for renovating Town buildings. $600K is proposed for Cambridge Turnpike reconstruction, which is to be added to $7.5 million received from the State (following the 10-11 acres of pavement added to the Crosby's Corner state project, which had a huge impact on the drainage of Cambridge Turnpike). The cost of reconstruction is expected to be closer to $9 million, so the additional funds will come from money which has been set aside for this project the past couple of years. The $600K will provide for a contingency for the project. Reconstruction will be the full length of the roadway, from the Concord Museum to Crosby's Corner, and will involve relocating a gas main. He anticipates road closures and traffic disruption for a year. Staff will work with the Concord Museum and Millbrook Farm to assure access and provide directional signs for customers. He noted that the bridge over the Milldam is built on peat which goes down to a depth of 90', and is complicated and costly to rebuild. The project will begin in earnest once the roadway is thawed.

Mr. Whelan provided a breakdown of the proposed $1.4 million for Park Improvements, as follows: $500K White Pond; $700K Gerow property; $100K Rideout playground completion; and $100K Emerson basketball court. He noted that CPA funds will be used to supplement the White Pond ($250K), Gerow property ($200K) and Emerson Playground ($300K) projects. In response to a question from Mr. Banfield as to whether private funds would be available for improvements to the Emerson playing fields, Mr. Whelan indicated that private funds were used to renovate the fields at Ripley, but are not planned at Emerson. Under Article 7, Mr. Whelan also noted that $550K is available to provide furniture, fixtures and equipment for the Library expansion project.

Article 20—Records Management Bylaw Mr. Whelan explained the proposal for the Town Manager to appoint a Municipal Archivist reporting to the Town Clerk, in lieu of one of the full-time positions currently at the Library Special Collections. He indicated that this issue is still under review, since the Library Trustees have expressed some concerns about the proposal. He is not committed to making the Archivist position full time. He explained that recent changes to the Public Records Law have added considerable responsibility and workload onto the Town Clerk, and additional staff assistance is needed. Currently, the Library archives/special collections staff spends very little time assisting with Town archives, many of which are located at the library.

Article 27—Transfer of Property for Affordable Housing Mr. Whelan explained that this proposal would transfer a portion of the Gerow property on Commonwealth Avenue to the Concord Housing Authority (CHA) for the purpose of constructing one unit of housing. The transfer would cre-

ate a viable house lot and is adjacent to a house that is already owned by the CHA. In response to a question from Mr. Hickling, Mr. Whelan indicated that one house lot on the property is consistent with the wishes of the Gerow family, who sold the property to the Town at a discount.

Article 43—Debt Authorization—Water Main Replacement Mr. Whelan explained that this is a multi-year project, and Town Meeting approval is required for the borrowing. Repayment of the debt would be from the Water Fund.

Articles 23-26 Affordable Housing Funding Mr. Whelan explained that Article 23 requests $500K from free cash to support affordable housing, with the understanding that these funds will be needed for the next couple of years while other sources of funds are pursued and authorized in the state legislature (Articles 25 & 26—Real Estate Transfer Tax and Building Permit Fee Surcharge). It is anticipated that state legislation for these two projects may take time. He noted that any interest received under Article 24 (Trust Fund) would remain with the Fund and be used for affordable housing purposes. In response to a question from Mr. Jamison about Article 23, Mr. Whelan indicated that the intent of this article as currently written would be that the request would be ongoing whenever the level of free cash is above 5%, and would provide annual town meeting approval. He noted that the Town's free cash policy is to maintain it at a level of 5-10% of the annual operating budget, although it has not been at the 5% level for many years. Mr. Whelan stated that it is unclear whether funds accumulated in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund would need to be appropriated by Town Meeting in order to be spent, or whether Select Board approval would be sufficient.

In response to a question from Ms. Hartman, Mr. Whelan indicated that "low income" housing counts towards the Town's 10% goal, while "moderate income" housing does not count, although both types are considered affordable housing. In response to a question from Mr. Jamison, Mr. Whelan indicated that construction of ten units of affordable housing per year would be required in order to maintain Concord's 10% affordable housing level. Concord is currently at 10.5%, but that number is expected to drop to 9.5% following the 2020 federal census, without counting the Junction Village project. It was noted that Governor Baker has proposed adding a real estate transfer tax for the purpose of funding climate change initiatives. This may affect Concord's ability to pass special legislation for an affordable housing real estate transfer tax. Mr. Whelan noted that the Regional Housing Manager manages the lottery for the acquisition of available affordable housing units.

Ms. Hartman asked whether any progressive zoning changes are being proposed to ease the construction of affordable housing, such as in-law apartments. Mr. Whelan noted that Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) provide for greater density in exchange for affordable housing units and energy improvements. He noted that the best way to promote private construction of affordable housing is to provide density or financial incentives to developers.

Ms. Reynolds asked what he would envision being done with the Peabody building, should it be declared surplus by the School Committee. Mr. Whelan indicated that the location would not be conducive for Town department use, but a combined housing/child care facility may be considered. He noted that the parcel is approximately eight acres of land. Mr. Banfield questioned the financial

burden of the Town's reuse of the property, given the School Department's assessment of the condition of the building. Mr. Jamison inquired about the financial status of the Beede Center. Mr. Whelan responded that the financial situation has improved over the past two years, following the layoff of some staff and other operating improvements. Beede ended in the black in FY17 and experienced a small surplus in FY18.

At 8:10 pm Mr. Whelan left the meeting and was thanked for his assistance and cooperation.

Approval of Minutes

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Hickling and seconded by Mr. Jamison, it was unanimously **VOTED** to approve the minutes of January 17, 2019, as amended.

Mr. Tarpey expressed his appreciation to Ms. Tekle for the exceptional quality of the minutes on an ongoing basis.

Finance Committee Report Assignments

Mr. Tarpey noted that several sections of the FC Report will need to be assigned to members for drafting, with a fair amount of writing still to be done. He noted that he has reviewed the past ten years of FC Reports and liked some charts that appeared in the older reports, but were not used in recent years. He also noted that all of the reports have been "award winning," so Concord's standards are high. Mr. Tarpey agreed to distribute through Ms. Lafleur the charts that he would like to add, for consideration by FC members at the next meeting.

Debt Service Presentation & Discussion

Ms. Lafleur distributed a "Debt Service--Impact of Existing & Projected" handout of a PowerPoint presentation, reviewing non-exempt projects (within the levy limit) and exempt projects (outside the levy limit). She noted that Alcott School will be coming off of the debt schedule in FY26; Thoreau School in FY27; and Willard School in FY30. Mr. Jamison commented that 100% of Concord's schools will have been replaced within a 10-year period, if the middle school project is approved. Ms. Lafleur noted that the Town could not have financed the school projects without doing so outside of the limitations of Proposition 2½. She noted that all debt costs impact taxpayers, whether they are financed within or outside the levy limit. It was noted that the median tax bill is approximately $12,366/year and the proposed middle school alone would increase that cost by $800-$1,000/year. Ms. Hartman commented that the design of the school significantly influences the construction cost.

The question was asked about what a new middle school would do to the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR). Mr. Randall commented that the total budget increase for FY20 is $3 million/year, and if we were to add another $10 million onto that (i.e., one year increase in debt service for a $90 million project), then the middle school project would be so much bigger than anything else we are considering. The only options are to stretch out new construction projects, hope for a decrease in construction costs, or defer some projects. The FC looked at the chart that looked at the Town's debt

capacity in coming years, assuming maintaining a constant FY20 level—what could be financed as we retire existing exempt debt without increasing the current total amount of debt?

Ms. Lafleur reviewed a rough estimate of anticipated large-scale capital projects:

• Middle School	$90 million
• Public Works Complex	$30 million
• Public Safety Complex	$20 million
• Municipal Buildings	$15 million
Estimated Total	$155 million

She noted that when she presented these estimates to the department heads, the response was that they were too low. She emphasized that the estimates were developed for modeling purposes only. She noted that none of this anticipated debt has been included in the five-year projections of tax increases, since it has been the FC's past practice to not include unapproved debt in this analysis. She noted that currently, exempt debt costs the median household approximately $900/year in property taxes. If we add the anticipated projects to the cost to the median household, then the cost would peak in FY25, with the current $900 rising to $2,851/year. Mr. Tarpey noted that if these estimates were to be added to the five-year tax projection, then we would hit the tax peak in 2025. He suggested that, while we have not included non-approved debt in these projections in the past, it may be appropriate to do so now, since taxpayers are entitled to know the impact of these projects if they were to be approved. Ms. Hartman asked how taxpayers would be informed of these costs, and Mr. Tarpey noted that the estimates are included in the FC Report, and could be brought up at Town Meeting under discussion of the SGR article. An effort could also be made to encourage residents to read the FC Report.

Ms. Lafleur reviewed the levy ceiling and debt limit. The debt ceiling is 5% of the Town's total assessed valuation—i.e., a community has legal authority to issue debt up to the ceiling. Concord's FY19 debt limit is $322,353,176. Concord's outstanding debt as of 6/30/2018 is $52,215,725, of which $38,994,907 is subject to the debt limit. Projects that are outside of the debt limit are water, sewer and electric utility projects (which are paid by the utility customers and are not part of the property tax bill) and school building projects which are partially financed by the MSBA. She noted that projects that do not receive MSBA funding (Willard & possibly the new middle school) are subject to the debt limit. Ms. Lafleur spoke informally with the Town's bond rating agency to determine if a significant increase in Concord's debt (anticipated $155 million) would negatively affect the Town's Aaa bond rating. The response was that adding either a new school project or several municipal projects would not negatively impact the bond rating, but it would make Concord an outlier in the debt burden per capita. The rating agency indicated that it would be important to maintain Concord's level of free cash and OPEB funding. Concord currently has a low per capita debt level, but we would go from the lowest to the highest if we were to add $155 million in new debt. Mr. Hickling asked whether Moody's used a metric to assess the Town's bond rating and debt vs. valuation. Ms. Lafleur was unsure. It was agreed that the debt numbers and charts were sobering. It was suggested that a version of the debt chart be included in the five-year tax projection report.

Mr. Tarpey asked whether the estimated timing of the municipal projects was accurate. Ms. Lafleur noted that she had met with the Town Manager and staggered the timing of projects based on his priorities. She noted that she had modeled the debt costs based on a small debt issuance in FY24 and a major financing in FY25, with an aggressive repayment schedule. She noted that the three elementary schools were financed with 2-3 debt issuances, with this model based on one. It was suggested that the Town set aside funds to mitigate the impact on taxpayers of upcoming debt. There was considerable concern about the significant impact to taxpayers in the coming years.

Mr. Tarpey noted that the SGR will be presented under Article 18 at the February 25 public hearing. Ms. Hartman clarified that the five-year tax projection is the projected tax burden for taxpayers for the five fiscal years succeeding the upcoming fiscal year for which funds are being appropriated at an ATM, with estimated costs based on all known factors. So at the 2019 ATM, with appropriations being made for FY20, the five-year projection would be for FY21-25. Mr. Tarpey commented that the SGR is an expression by the FC as to what would be a prudent rate of tax growth relative to taxpayers' ability to pay. It was noted that the large anticipated capital projects would most likely be well outside of the SGR guardrail.

Citizen Comments

None

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita S. Tekle
Recording Secretary

Documents Used or Referenced at Meeting:

- Draft 2019 Annual Town Meeting Warrant
- Handout of Debt Service—Impact of Existing & Projected PowerPoint presentation by K. Lafleur (dated 1.22.2019)

Draft 3.12.2019

Town of Concord
Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes – February 11, 2019
Committee Meeting followed by Public Hearing

Present: Thomas Tarpey, Dean Banfield, Peter Fischelis, Mary Hartman, John Hickling, Karle Packard, Scott Randall, June Rzepczynski, Phil Swain and Andrea Zall

Absent: Grace Hanson, Richard Jamison, Christine Reynolds and Brian Taylor (one vacancy)

Others Present: Several Public Officials (as noted below) and about 45 members of the public for the hearing; Finance Director Kerry Lafleur; LWV Observer Maureen Kemeza

Committee Meeting Opened

Mr. Tarpey opened the meeting at 6:30 pm in the Hearing Room at the Town House. Ms. Lafleur shared a PowerPoint presentation that she had prepared entitled "Impact of Existing and Projected Debt Service," dated 1.24.2019. This document had previously been reviewed by the Finance Committee (FC) at the January 25, 2019 meeting. Mr. Tarpey noted that Ms. Lafleur's draft debt study showed $155 million in capital needs (for both the Town and Schools), all scheduled to begin in rapid succession within the next five years. Mr. Tarpey commented that the formation of a capital planning committee may be in order, similar to the one that was formed in 2002.

Mr. Packard thought that this was a great idea, and is consistent with what the FC has been seeking. Mr. Banfield confirmed that this would not be a standing committee. Mr. Hickling asked if the 2003 Capital Planning Committee report could be made available to the FC. Ms. Hartman asked for a copy of the handout that had previously been shown (scope of services) concerning the Municipal Facilities Study.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Swain and seconded by Mr. Banfield, the following was unanimously **VOTED**:

> To renew the request to the Select Board to establish a Capital Planning Committee, and to authorized the Chair to send a letter to the Select Board Chair urging the formation of such a committee to review town-wide capital needs.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm. This was followed by a 15-minute break before the public hearing. Mr. Randall left the meeting at this point.

Public Hearing on Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Chair Tarpey opened the public hearing at 7:00 pm in the Hearing Room at the Town House.

Article 3 – Meeting Procedure

Mr. Tarpey explained that this article requires that every motion at town meeting to appropriate funds must identify the source of funding, and that all appropriation articles remain open and subject to amendment until the adjournment of the Annual Town Meeting. This procedure has been adopted by town meeting for many years. ***There were no comments or questions.***

Comments from the Moderator

Mr. Tarpey introduced Town Moderator Carmin Reiss who spoke of two initiatives for the 2019 Annual Town Meeting.

1. In an effort to generate more interest in town meeting, comments and questions will be accepted by email for the public hearings and town meeting, as time allows. These may be sent to publicinfo@concordma.gov. Town Clerk staff will assist in verifying that individuals sending emails are registered Concord voters. She noted that the Town of North Andover has tried this exercise with some success. There are no provisions for voting from home, since that is not allowed under Massachusetts state law.
2. On the second night of town meeting we will have a pilot demonstration of electronic voting, provided free of charge by Turning Technology. The goal of this pilot is to increase participation, ensure accuracy, and allow for a speedier tally of votes. This technology is currently in use in 11 other communities (9 with open town meetings). Any voter who does not wish to participate will be provided a paper ballot. Voters will be asked to complete a questionnaire following the demonstration, so that a decision can be made whether to use electronic voting in some circumstances going forward.

Article 4. Ratify Personnel Board Classification Actions

Personnel Board Chair Ellen Quackenbush introduced Article 4 and explained that during the year, the Town Manager and HR Director find the need to add, delete or change job titles; add new titles to the classification table; or reclassify a position due to a change in a job description. Many of these "classification actions" cannot wait until the upcoming annual town meeting. The Personnel Board reviews these actions, as recommended by the HR Director, and gives temporary approval, subject to town meeting ratification. This year, there are 13 such classification actions. She noted that some of these changes are being made in order to "prolong the life" of the classification plan—it is cheaper making annual "adjustments" rather than conducting a full-scale reclassification study at a cost of $60-70,000. ***There were no comments or questions.***

Article 5. Classification & Compensation Plan for Regular-Status Positions

Personnel Board Chair Ellen Quackenbush introduced Article 5, which is the pay and classification plan for non-unionized town employees. She noted that approximately 60% of town employees are non-union. The pay schedule provides a minimum, mid-point, and maximum pay range for each position. The maximum of the ranges have been increased by 2.5% for FY20. In addition, a few other changes have been made to accommodate changes in the market. The plan does not determine the actual salary increases to be received by employees—those amounts are determined by the Town Manager and Personnel Board following town meeting, and are based on the approved budg-

et, employee performance, and time in a position. She noted that the changes explained in Article 4 have already been incorporated into the schedules for Article 5. ***There were no comments or questions.***

Article 6. Town Budget

Town Manager Chris Whelan began his presentation with an expression of sadness on the recent passing of Laurel Landry, who had served as Executive Assistant to the Town Manager for over 30 years. His warm tribute noted her invaluable contributions for many years to the smooth running of the public hearings and town meeting, for which we are all indebted.

Mr. Whelan then introduced the Town Budget, which he noted conforms to the Finance Committee's (FC) budget guideline. He noted one change made in the budget presentation, at the request of the Town's Auditor and in an effort to increase transparency—the appropriated funds listed are the gross numbers, including transfers from the Enterprise Funds. In the past, only the net numbers were listed (gross numbers less transfers from the Enterprise Fund). These adjustments have been made in the three columns listed in Article 6. Mr. Whelan noted the following highlights in new spending proposed for FY20:

Amount	Explanation
$900,000	Salary Increases—2.5% pay increase for town staff (both union and non-union employees) plus step increases for those employees not currently at maximum.
26,000	One new part-time employee in the Town Manager's Office (half-time position)
41,000	Sustainability Director—General Fund portion of salary
50,000	White Pond & Gerow Park Maintenance Staff (new position)
20,000	Start-up funds for White Pond operations for summer 2019
72,000	New IT Technician to provide technical services for the Library & Police Dept.
90,000	Four new Firefighter positions to staff the West Concord ambulance 24-7 (currently being staffed only 8:00 am to 8:00 pm)—General Fund portion of salaries (the remainder will be funded through the MEWS Fund).
30,000	Council on Aging staff—increased hours and wages for the senior services staff due to increased activity in the department (aging population)
20,000	Miscellaneous—inflationary costs
$1,249,000	**TOTAL**

In response to a question from Ms. Hartman, Mr. Whelan noted that the $900,000 in proposed salary increases is the amount budgeted from the General Fund, following transfers from the Enterprise Funds. The gross amount of these increases is $1.2 million. Mr. Whelan noted the increased cost of health insurance (estimated at 8%, which is lower than originally anticipated). The Town continues to meet its OPEB liability. He noted that the operating budget includes $1,945,000 in capital improvements, continuing with Concord's tradition of designating 5% of the operating budget to fund town capital improvements within the levy limit, without borrowing. He noted that these expenditures are listed on pages 53-55 of the Town budget book.

Mr. Whelan noted that the number of Town employees is increasing by just 9.94 FTEs, as delineated on page 83 of the Town budget book. He acknowledged that this is a significant increase. Mr. Banfield inquired about the position of Municipal Archivist, the title of which is included in the new Pay

& Classification schedule, but was not mentioned in Mr. Whelan's presentation. Mr. Whelan explained that his proposal is to utilize an existing position to fill these functions, with no new funding. The title is needed, but no new funding is requested. He acknowledged that this is a departure from earlier conversations about this position.

Resident Jan Cuypers expressed concern about the increase in FTE positions, and asked whether consideration was given to balancing these increases by decreases elsewhere, given changes in technology. Mr. Whelan noted that the Police Department had not had a staffing increase in 15 years (one new position). The four new firefighter positions were requested six years ago, and the request is being implemented now due to an increased demand for services. Mr. Whelan recognized that adding employees is costly, and agreeing to fund them will be a community decision. Resident Susan Bates asked whether the new firefighters will be EMTs, and Mr. Whelan indicated that all firefighters are required to be EMTs. There are currently six firefighters stationed at the Walden Street station in the evening, and three at the West Concord station. The West Concord ambulance currently runs from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, but with the four additional firefighters (one more per shift), the second ambulance could run 24/7.

Resident Cynthia Rainey asked a question about the costs shared by the Town and CPS, as listed on page 35 of the budget book (Joint Town-CPS). Finance Director Kerry Lafleur responded that health insurance is approximately 60-40 (CPS-Town). The joint retirement costs are more heavily weighted towards the Town, since teachers are not part of the Town's retirement system. In response to a question about field maintenance and snow removal, Mr. Whelan indicated that the Public Works Department removes snow from the public streets and parking lots. The School Department is responsible for removing snow from the school campuses. The Town maintains all of the fields, except for the high school fields. The DPW maintains the upper fields at the high school (using a grant of approximately $50,000 from the Friends of CC Fields), but the School Department maintains all other fields at the high school. Resident Diane Proctor asked how much of the $50,000 received from Friends of CC Fields comes from Carlisle donors or Carlisle sports groups. The answer to this question was not known.

Article 7 – Appropriate Funds – Municipal Capital Projects

Deputy Town Manager Kate Hodges reviewed the capital projects being proposed under Article 7, which total $3,950,000.

Department	Project	Amount	Explanation
Town Manager	Renovation/Construction & Acquisition of Town Buildings	$500,000	13 municipal office buildings (not including school buildings); new facilities dept. established in 2018; 5 of the Town's 14 depts. are staffed 24/7
Town Manager	Park Improvements	$1,400,000	White Pond beach opening June 2019; Gerow renovations to begin Spring 2019; Rideout Playground, Phase 1 completed Fall 2018; Phase 2 to start Spring 2019; these funds

			augmented by CPA funds
Planning	Land Acquisition for Open Space	$100,000	Hope to acquire 4.78 acres of the Ralph Waldo Emerson property
Public Works	Road & Parking Lot Reconstruction	$800,000	Road & parking lot improvements
Public Works	Cambridge Turnpike Reconstruction	$600,000	
Human Services	Library, Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment	$550,000	
	TOTAL	**$3,950,000**	

In response to a question from Mr. Swain, Ms. Lafleur indicated that the $3.95 million is comparable to what has been spent in recent years—generally between $4 and $4.5 million. She noted that all requested projects were funded this year. In response to a question from Mr. Hickling, Ms. Hodges indicated that the total cost of the White Pond improvements in FY20 are $750-800,000, with $250,000 coming from CPA funds and $550-600,000 coming from Article 7. The total costs do not include any funds anticipated to come from the White Pond Associates. Once those funds are received, they will be used to help fund Phases 2 or 3 of the improvements.

Resident Jan Cuypers asked about anticipated capital expenditures in the coming years. Ms. Lafleur noted that the projects funded under Article 7 are the smaller capital projects which require borrowing, which are funded annually in the range of $4-4.5 million. Any larger requests would be funded under separate capital articles (such as school buildings or other large building projects).

Article 8 – Authorize Expenditure of Revolving Funds under MGL c. 44, δ53E½

Finance Director Kerry Lafleur explained that this article authorizes spending limits on the four revolving funds that were adopted by the Town under this particular statute—Regional Housing Services, Road Repair, Senior Services, and Tree Preservation. Mr. Banfield asked about the nature of fees and fines. Public Works Director Richard Reine responded that these would be life cycle maintenance fees and utility/pavement cuts for trenches, driveways, etc. Resident Dee Ortner asked for an explanation of the Regional Housing Services. Regional Housing Director Liz Rust responded that the $265,000 annual spending limit is the total amount contributed from all the member communities, and covers salaries and consultants. Concord's portion of this fund is $38,000, of which 50% comes from the General Fund and 50% from CPA funds. Mr. Whelan clarified that Concord is the lead community for the region, which is why the full amount needs to be authorized. In response to a comment made by Ms. Lafleur that the four revolving funds in this article do not involve the use of taxpayer money, Ms. Hartman clarified that the $38,000 portion of the Regional Housing Services does include taxpayer money (50% from the General Fund and 50% from CPA funds), and this point should be clarified at town meeting.

Article 9 – Authorization to Accept MGL c. 32B, δ20 – OPEB Liability Trust Fund

Finance Director Kerry Lafleur explained that in 2008 an OPEB Trust Fund was adopted for Concord through special legislation. Subsequently, in 2016, the State Legislature adopted enabling legislation for OPEB Trust Funds. Town Counsel recommends that Concord adopt the 2016 legislation in order to provide clear legal structure, make the Trust irrevocable, and clarifies that the Trust is to

be used solely to pay the OPEB liability. There is currently $18 million in the Fund, and Concord is approximately 32% funded. Under the statute, the Town will make a decision as to whether to have one sole Trustee (Town Treasurer) or to appoint a board of trustees. At this time, the recommendation is that a sole trustee (Town Treasurer) be appointed to oversee the fund, but that a formal reporting requirement be established, with some consultation with the Trustees of Town Donations.

In response to a question from Resident Jan Cuypers, Ms. Lafleur noted that $18 million is in the OPEB fund now, and annual contributions are made. No expenditures are being withdrawn from the fund at this time. She anticipates that that will be reviewed as the Town becomes closer to fully funding the OPEB liability, after 2030. In response to a question from Mr. Hickling, Ms. Lafleur noted that the model as to how to proceed to utilize the fund once it is fully funded will be developed by the Select Board and Trustees of Town Donations at some point in the future.

Article 17 – Use of Free Cash

Finance Director Kerry Lafleur explained that "free cash" is the undesignated fund balance. Funds are added to free cash when the actual revenue received exceeds estimates and/or when actual expenditures are lower than budgeted. The certified free cash balance as of June 30, 2018 is $11,683,672, which represents 10.7% of the FY19 general fund budget. Concord's free cash policy is to maintain a balance between 5% ($5,322,425) and 10% ($10,644,849) of the general fund budget. The current balance exceeds the policy maximum by $1,038,823. The recommendation under Article 17 is to allocate $1 million of free cash to reduce the tax rate, leaving a "surplus" balance of $38,823. Mr. Banfield inquired about putting some of the free cash balance into a stabilization fund for future tax rate reduction (in the event of a future large tax issuance), and whether this would be allowed. Ms. Lafleur responded that there is no mandate as to how to allocate the free cash that is within the 5% and 10% range, so some of these funds could be used for a stabilization fund, as long as the balance does not go lower than 5%.

Article 18 – General Bylaw Amendment – Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR)

Mr. Tarpey presented this article, which is proposed by the Finance Committee as a General Bylaw amendment, amending the Finance Committee Bylaw. The proposal inserts a new Section 4 which instructs the FC to (1) project the likely total tax burden on citizens for five years; and (2) to recommend a SGR for the upcoming fiscal year and for each of the five following fiscal years. Mr. Tarpey explained that the FC considers sustainable growth in taxation and budgets to be that which balances over the long term the desirability of socio-economic diversity in the Town, the quality of our schools and municipal services, and the unique position of Concord in our nation's history. Mr. Tarpey explained that part (1) above was initiated by resident Phebe Ham and adopted by Town Meeting in 2009, and part (2) is an outgrowth of discussions that the FC has had since 2017. He further explained that the FC finds itself reacting to Town and School budget requests, and would prefer to provide some guidance to the budget entities going forward. He anticipates that the SGR will be discussed annually, using publicly available indices, and is likely to change from year-to-year, adjusting to the changing needs of the Town. He emphasized that the FC's role is advisory, with no ability to "direct" or "command."

Mr. Tarpey displayed a chart which showed Concord's growth in tax burden, as compared to its peer communities. He noted that Concord is in the high range. In response to a question from Mr. Swain about the SGR for the coming year, Mr. Tarpey indicated that it is still under review, but should be identified for display purposes at town meeting. Resident Terry Rothermel commented that one of the data points referenced in Article 18 is incorrect—Ms. Ham's proposal and the vote occurred in 2011, and was the result of two high school funding articles brought to town meeting at that time. Mr. Rothermel questioned why the FC's desire to elevate this process to the level of a bylaw, noting that the FC Bylaw had been in place for almost 100 years. Mr. Tarpey responded that the bylaw amendment is being proposed to assure that these ideas and practices are not forgotten, noting that his understanding is that the current bylaw was adopted in 1951. Mr. Rothermel further commented on the choice of the contemporary term "sustainable." Mr. Tarpey took issue with the implication that sustainability is a "fad," noting that the FC is committed to not just looking at financial issues one year at a time, but also has a responsibility to future taxpayers. He noted that the FC Bylaw could be amended in the future if needed. The current FC members feel that the concept of SGR is a useful exercise and would appreciate a discussion of the issue at town meeting. Mr. Swain noted that he had supported the SGR proposal and is confident that this would provide useful information to the FC each year.

Resident Cynthia Wood suggested that the SGR concept as currently proposed is too vague to provide useful guidance. She felt that more specifics would be needed—are we talking about the growth in property tax rate or budget growth? Mr. Tarpey responded that the FC will reexamine the proposal with the goal of clarifying both the concept and the presentation. Ms. Wood also questioned why the SGR is being presented as a bylaw. She suggested that this could be done already without a bylaw, noting that the FC would be well within its rights to choose the information that it provides to taxpayers. Resident Stephen Carr recalled one year when the Select Board and Town Manager recommended no salary increase for non-unionized town employees, and the FC recommended otherwise. He cited this example of the FC's influence and wisdom respected by voters. Mr. Tarpey thanked all for the comments, which will be considered by the FC.

Articles 23-26 Affordable Housing Articles

Todd Benjamin, Chair of the Affordable Housing Funding Committee (AHFC), provided some background on the proposals being brought to town meeting under these four articles. He emphasized the guiding principles of the AHFC:

1. Wide perspective that is fair and does not rely solely on one group;
2. Success requires change and leadership to assure that it is implemented, and the benefits are worth it;
3. Support affordable homes now to best fit the town;
4. Residents have more control now, since Concord is above the 10% minimum for affordable housing and can avoid a Ch. 40B at this time;
5. These articles are the beginning of the process—important that we start now.

He then reviewed the recommendations made by the AHFC, not all of which were accepted by the Select Board and made their way to the Warrant. He noted that Article 23 impacts current residents; Article 25 impacts incoming residents; and Article 26 impacts builders or homeowners planning additions.

Article 23—Appropriate $500,000 from free cash for Affordable Housing Development Mr. Benjamin noted that this proposal would only apply if the Town's free cash were above 5%. This would be a temporary strategy, intended to be used until Articles 25 and 26 are approved by the state legislature and are operational. He noted that the Town of Brookline uses free cash for affordable housing purposes. In response to a question from Mr. Swain, Mr. Benjamin noted that Concord's current level of affordable housing is 10.52%. He also noted that this number includes some market rate units, since the State counts all the units of a large development as affordable, even though some of them are rented at market rate. So the effective rate of affordable housing is approximately 5.34%. The reason why Concord still needs to increase its affordable inventory is due to an increase in the total number of housing units in Concord (the base) upon which the 10% is calculated.

In response to a question from Ms. Hartman, Mr. Benjamin noted that we are talking about both moderate income housing ("workforce housing") and affordable housing (with units counted towards the inventory). In response to another question from Ms. Hartman, Mr. Benjamin confirmed that any use of free cash for affordable housing purposes would need to be voted each year, and would only be done on a temporary basis until other sources of funding become available. He suggested that one unit of affordable housing could be built with $500,000, but those funds could be leveraged for more state/federal funding programs.

Article 24—Authorization to Accept MGL c. 44, δ55C Mr. Benjamin explained that this statute is a well-tried strategy for holding and disbursing trust funds that are created for the purpose of affordable housing. He noted that more than 70 communities have established such funds under this enabling statute. In response to a question from Mr. Banfield, Mr. Benjamin noted that expenditures from the trust fund would not require town meeting approval, allowing the Town to enter into real estate transactions as opportunities arise.

Article 25—Special Legislation to create a Real Estate Transfer Tax Mr. Benjamin explained that this article would ask for special home rule legislation to allow Concord to impose a real estate transfer tax of 1% of the purchase price, to be paid by the buyer. He noted that similar transfer taxes are currently imposed by several Cape Cod & Islands communities. In response to a question from Mr. Rothermel, Mr. Benjamin noted that the current plan would be for the tax to apply only to residential property transfers. Select Board Chair Tom McKean noted that the Warrant Article was modeled after other towns in Massachusetts, and could possibly be amended in the future to include commercial property. Resident Dee Ortner suggested that businesses in Concord would benefit from more affordable housing units since those residents would provide a pool of employees.

Resident Tom Matthews asked whether consideration had been given to increase the CPA surcharge from 1.5% to 3.0%. Mr. Benjamin responded that this had been considered, in part because the

state matching funds for CPA have declined. Mr. Matthews noted that 30% of Concord real estate sales are residents moving within Concord (up or down), so these residents would be hit twice by a transfer tax. Mr. Benjamin noted that exclusions were considered, and although not contained in the current proposed article, the home rule petition could be amended going forward. Mr. Matthews questioned why this tax is being put onto the buyer—why not the seller? Mr. Benjamin noted that the seller is already contributing to affordable housing while residing in Concord. Mr. Matthews commented that if this home rule legislation were to pass, then Concord would be the only Massachusetts community outside of Cape Cod that would have this tax, which would place an added burden on the 400 owners who sell homes in Concord each year.

Resident Terri Ackerman noted that Section 4 of the proposed legislation would allow fees to be dedicated to either the Concord Housing Development Corporation or the new Concord Affordable Housing Trust Fund established under Article 24. She asked what the intent was going forward, if Article 24 were to pass. She suggested that the Motion for Article 25 include a reference as to where the funds would go if Article 24 were to pass—i.e., the funds would be deposited into the Concord Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Ms. Hartman noted that the real estate transfer tax collected by Cape Cod communities is not all earmarked for affordable housing—some is used for other public purposes. Resident Richard Bailey noted that Somerville and Cambridge have pushed for a real estate transfer tax, but this has not yet been approved by the Legislature. In response to a question from Ms. Hartman, Mr. Benjamin noted that an estimated $3 million would be raised annually from a real estate transfer tax.

Article 26—Special Legislation for Building Permit Fee Surcharge for Affordable Housing Mr. Benjamin explained that this article is a follow up to one proposed by Charles Phillips two years ago, and recognized Mr. Phillips' effort to bring this concept into the public discourse. This proposal would add a surcharge to building permit fees, with the surcharge resulting in fees being designated for affordable housing purposes. He estimated that $900,000 to $1 million would be raised annually under this proposal, if approved by the Town and State Legislature. He summarized the funding proposals as follows, in terms of potential revenue:

Article 23—Free Cash (would sunset)	$500,000/year
Article 25—Real Estate Transfer Fee	$3 million/year
Article 26—Building Permit Surcharge	$1 million/year
Total	$4.5 million

Moderator Carmin Reiss suggested that a third column be added to the building permit fee chart, so the total amount being charged will be clear—current fee, proposed surcharge, and total building permit fee. Select Board member Alice Kaufman suggested that if Articles 25 and 26 were both to pass, there is a possibility that a buyer would pay twice (transfer fee + building permit surcharge), which she felt would be unfair. One resident commented that with funds available in the Trust Fund, the community could move more quickly when property becomes available. Deed restrictions would be placed on the property to assure that it remains affordable. He hoped that the Town could pass the four proposed articles as a package at town meeting.

Resident Carol Wilson asked whether the AHFC had done any outreach to realtors or builders in an effort to incentivize an increase in private development of affordable units, such as a reduction in the building permit fees or property taxes. Mr. Benjamin noted that there is a realtor on the AHFC.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita S. Tekle
Recording Secretary

Documents Used or Referenced at Meeting:

- 2019 Annual Town Meeting Warrant
- PowerPoint Presentation "Impact of Existing & Projected Debt Service" (dated 1.24.2019)

Draft 3.12.2019

Town of Concord
Finance Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting & Public Hearing
February 25, 2019

Present: Thomas Tarpey, Dean Banfield, Peter Fischelis, Grace Hanson, Mary Hartman, John Hickling, Richard Jamison, June Rzepczynski, Phil Swain, Brian Taylor and Andrea Zall

Absent: Karle Packard, Scott Randall and Christine Reynolds (one vacancy)

Others Present: Several Public Officials (as noted below) and about 50 members of the public for the hearing; Finance Director Kerry Lafleur; LWV Observer Maureen Kemeza

Mr. Tarpey called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, prior to the public hearing. The purpose of this meeting was to begin considering the FC's position on the Town Meeting warrant articles.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Tarpey and seconded by Ms. Hartman, it was unanimously **VOTED** to consider a "consent agenda" and only discuss those articles about which FC members have questions. Mr. Tarpey read off the article numbers/subjects, and no objections or questions were raised on the following articles: 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 17 and 46.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Swain and seconded by Ms. Rzepczynski, it was unanimously **VOTED** to recommend Affirmative Action on the following articles:

- Article 3 – Meeting Procedure
- Article 4 – Ratify Personnel Board Classification Actions
- Article 5 – Classification & Compensation Plan for Regular Status Positions
- Article 7 – Appropriate Funds – Municipal Capital Projects
- Article 8 – Authorize Expenditure of Revolving Funds under MGL ch. 44, δ53E½
- Article 9 – Authorization to Accept MGL ch. 32b, δ20—Other Post-Employment Benefits
- Article 17 – Use of Free Cash
- Article 46 – Unpaid Bills

Article 6–Town Budget Mr. Swain noted that the budget had come in within the FC Guideline. He also noted that some expenditures included in this budget will require larger appropriations in the future (such as the addition of 4 new firefighter positions), so support of the FY20 budget implies support in future years. Mr. Banfield noted that in order to meet the FC Guideline, it was necessary to tap the Stabilization Fund for additional funds. He questioned how expenditures from the Stabilization Fund are appropriated. Ms. Lafleur responded that the motion made under Article 6 at town meeting will include an appropriation from the Stabilization Fund, although mention of this was not included in the warrant. Ms. Lafleur referred to page 174 of the Town Budget book, where the FY20 draw-down of $245K from the Stabilization Fund is noted. Mr. Tarpey asked for a breakdown of the Stabilization Fund creation and expenditures, so that this could be further discussed at the March 7 meeting. No position was taken on Article 6 at this time.

Article 18—General Bylaw Amendment—Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) Ms. Rzepczynski noted that the FC members all support the concept of a SGR, but we heard criticism from several citizens at the hearing questioning the need to codify the concept. She suggested that the FC consider fine tuning how the concept is presented—the generic presentation needs more clarification. Ms. Hartman suggested that the message is getting lost with the method we are putting forward for the SGR. If Article 18 passes, then SGR is still advisory, but she wonders what would happen if Article 18 were to fail—how would the FC pursue the concept going forward? It was suggested that a more comprehensive discussion of Article 18 be deferred to the March 7 meeting.

Article 23—Appropriate Funds—Affordable Housing Development Ms. Hartman recommends that No Action be taken on Article 23. She feels that tapping free cash for affordable housing burdens the same people—it is ironic to use property taxes to fund affordable housing, when many folks are already struggling to keep up with the high property taxes in Concord. She suggested that if we have excess free cash that it be placed into a Stabilization Fund to offset future capital needs. She also questioned whether $500K from free cash would be a good deal, since we would only gain one or two units. In the past, the Town appropriated $1 million to fund 83 units (with private and other funds picking up the bulk of the costs).

Mr. Banfield made the following **MOTION**, which was seconded by Mr. Swain:

> To recommend **NO ACTION** be taken under Article 18.

During the discussion, Mr. Tarpey expressed the opinion that the need for affordable housing is compelling. He noted that the $500K request this year would most likely be followed by similar requests from free cash in the subsequent 3-4 years. These funds will provide a kick starter while we await legislative approvals for other affordable housing initiatives. He admitted to not initially supporting the use of free cash for this purpose, but was convinced by the hard work and testimony of the Affordable Housing Funding Committee (AHFC). Ms. Hartman noted that in reading the report of the AHFC, the use of free cash was not one of the primary recommendations. Mr. Hickling expressed support for the No Action motion. Mr. Jamison expressed concern that other groups would feel free to go after free cash if this were to pass, and felt that this would start a slippery slope. Mr. Swain expressed support for affordable housing in general, but not for this article. He noted the recent support of the FC for Junction Village funding. Ms. Zall suggested that Concord should come up with a better way to finance affordable housing, emphasizing the importance of opening up Concord to more people who wish to live here.

A **VOTE** was taken on Mr. Banfield's motion, which **PASSED** on a vote of 10 to 1 (with Mr. Tarpey opposed).

At this point the meeting concluded to begin the public hearing.

Public Hearing on Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Chair Tarpey opened the public hearing at 7:00 pm in the Hearing Room at the Town House. Mr. Tarpey noted that the hearing was being broadcast live by MMN and would be available for later viewing. The focus of tonight's hearing will be the CPC recommendations and the school articles.

Article 22—Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Appropriation Recommendations Terri Ackerman, Chair of the CPC explained that Concord has adopted a surcharge of 1.5% to fund Community Preservation Act projects (community housing, historic preservation, open space, and recreation). She noted that the State currently matches Concord's appropriation by 19%. In FY20, an appropriation of $1,811,419 is recommended. She noted that requests totaling $2.5 million had been received. She reviewed the projects as follows:

Project/Description	Category	Amount
Town of Concord—Regional Housing Services Program	Community Housing	$19,000
Town of Concord—Junction Village Assisted Living	Community Housing	$300,000
Concord Free Public Library Corp.—Expansion & Renovation of the Main Library & the Heywood-Benjamin House	Historic Preservation	$500,000
Concord Home for the Aging—110 Walden Street Preservation Project	Historic Preservation	$20,800
Town of Concord—Gerow Recreation Area Improvements	Open Space Recreation	$100,000 $100,000
Town of Concord—White Pond Beach Access Improvements	Open Space Recreation	$75,000 $175,000
Town of Concord—Warner's Pond Dredging Project	Open Space Recreation	$50,000 $25,000
Town of Concord—Emerson Land Acquisition	Open Space	$90,000
Town of Concord—Heywood Meadow Stone Wall Extension	Open Space	$21,619
Town of Concord—Old Calf Pasture Habitat Restoration	Open Space	$5,000
Town of Concord Public Works—Emerson Field Improvements	Recreation	$300,000
Staff & Technical Support	Administration	$30,000
TOTAL		**$1,811,419**

Ms. Ackerman noted that the total cost of the Library project is $10 million, so the CPC funding is only a small portion. She also noted that the Warner's Pond dredging project is a multi-year project. Ms. Hartman inquired of the status of the Junction Village affordable housing project. Ms. Ackerman responded that the applicant had been rejected for state tax credits last year, and is in the process of reapplying. A response is expected in June/July 2019. Mr. Fischelis asked for a confirmation that the $30,000 administration appropriation was to fund administrative staff, signage, and the like, and would be ongoing. Ms. Ackerman confirmed that was correct. Resident Diane Proctor questioned whether the Junction Village request for state tax credits was the second such request, feeling that it was in fact the third request. Marcia Rasmussen, the Director of Planning & Land Management responded that the 2019 application to the State was the second such request, but the FY20 request to the CPC was the third of three applications.

Article 10—Minuteman Regional Technical High School District Budget Carrie Flood, Concord's Representative to Minuteman, noted that she will be completing her eighth term on the Minuteman Regional School Committee. She reviewed guiding goals of the school, which include creat-

ing successful educational opportunities for students; promoting excellence in teaching; integrating high quality technical education with academic instruction; demonstrating practical connections between multiple disciplines; and fostering a safe, healthy learning environment. She noted that 60% of Minuteman graduates go on to college. She reviewed Minuteman's accomplishments. She noted that enrollment history has been relatively stable among member communities. Enrollment has declined among non-member communities, mostly due to changes in state regulations regarding eligibility for students in non-member communities. She noted that costs per pupil continue to rise, despite Minuteman's reduction of 15+ teaching positions. Enrollment initiatives have started, and admission requests have increased. Minuteman hopes to welcome one or two new towns to the district in the near future. Ms. Flood noted that the major factor in a community's assessment is the four-year rolling enrollment for the community. Debt service is peaking in the next few years. Concord's FY20 assessment has increased 45% due to increased enrollment and Concord's share of the new building costs. ***There were no comments or questions.***

Article 11—Concord Public School Budget Superintendent Laurie Hunter emphasized that zero-based budgeting (ZBB) had been used to develop the FY20 budget. The process included a review of all budget areas, including legal, salaries, staffing, contracted services, special education, and supplies & materials. In addition, the central administrative staff has been reorganized, resulting in a reduction of three FTEs. The former legal firm used by the School Department charged $1,100/hour, while the new firm charges $220/hour, with no loss of quality.

Dr. Hunter highlighted the budget drivers for FY20, including the following:

Budget Driver	**FY20 Budget Increase**
Contracted Services	$287,331
Employee Separation	$286,002
Salary-Aides	$149,661
Substitutes	$176,861
Salary-Teachers (double-step to align w/ CCHS teachers)	$1,101,036
Supplies & Materials	$420,085
Salary—Clerical	$70,893
Salary—Maintenance, Custodial, Bus Drivers	$155,704
Total	**$2,647,573**

She also highlighted the FY20 savings that were identified through the ZBB process:

Cost Savings	**FY20 Budget Decrease**
Legal	$14,337
Salary—Non-Union	$38,500
Salary—Support Staff	$82,038
Salary—Tutors	$748,269
Special Education Tuition	$716,.515
Total	**$1,599,659**

Dr. Hunter reported that during Phase 1 of the Retirement/Separation Incentive program (FY18), 8.5 teachers retired, resulting in FY20 savings of $185,491 (since new teachers are hired at a lower rate of pay). Under Phase 2 (FY19), 9.0 teachers retired, resulting in FY20 savings of $228,212. Dr. Hunter summarized the FY20 budget request for CPS is $39,390,163, which represents an increase

of $1,143,268 (2.99%). She considers this a level-service budget. She noted that this increase is $143,268 above the FC Guideline. When asked what she considered the benefit of ZBB, Dr. Hunter indicated that the process resulted in savings of $1.6 million. Jared Stanton, Director of Finance & Operations, suggested that without the savings identified by ZBB, the CPS budget increase would have been $2.7 million. Dr. Hunter noted that ZBB will be used on an ongoing basis in coming years. Ms. Hartman noted that $1.6 million was identified in cost savings and the budget increase is $1.1 million—so where did the other $500K go? Dr. Hunter responded that those savings went towards funding other portions of the $2.6 million budget drivers, many of which are contractual. In addition, she felt a need to restore some areas of the budget which had been cut in previous years. Mr. Banfield noted that the supplies budget was one of the areas of "add back," so what is being presented is not really a level-service budget. He asked whether the budget could be further reduced by $143K to comply with the FC Guideline.

Dr. Hunter responded that all principals were asked to provide an itemized list to justify every line item. Mr. Swain asked whether the budget includes new Assistant Principals at all elementary schools. Dr. Hunter responded that this idea is still under review, and any decision on adding an Assistant Principal will be cost-neutral. In response to a question from Mr. Hickling, Dr. Hunter indicated that the two-year early retirement incentive program will be completed in FY19.

Resident Ned Perry noted that the slides that were presented showed no historical data in terms of budget costs of prior years. He recommended that the slides be improved in this regard for town meeting, so that citizens can better understand what is being requested. Resident Miguel Echavarri commended Dr. Hunter and her staff for providing more transparency in the budget documents. He commented that obtaining accurate budget information from the School Department in the past was a challenge, and the "actuals" column frequently did not match the "budgeted" columns. He appreciates the effort that went in to assure that actual expenses are being charged to the same line item where they are budgeted, to better track expenses.

Article 12—CPS Capital Projects Superintendent Laurie Hunter presented the capital budget for CPS for FY20, which is included in the Town Manager's 5-year capital plan. She noted that for the 2019-2020 school year all 6th grade students will be housed at Peabody and all 7th-8th grade students will be housed at Sanborn. She noted that this will alleviate a lot of current issues and offer a great benefit to the middle schools. The capital projects are as follows:

Capital Item	**Amount**
Replace CPS Telephone System	$200,000
Security Upgrades—Thoreau & Willard (cameras)	$30,000
Middle Schools:	
Contingency	$100,000
Reconfiguration (Sanborn science lab & art room)	$217,000
Carpeting and Asbestos Abatement	$273,000
Painting	$80,000
TOTAL	**$900,000**

Dr. Hunter noted that the carpeting and painting projects at the Middle Schools are wellness and health issues. She indicated that the three elementary schools are in good shape, and she is exploring other sources of funds to upgrade some items. She reported that Ripley is in need of upgrades ($2.8 million), but this year she is focusing on the three areas noted above: phone system, security upgrades, and Middle School upgrades for current students. Mr. Swain commented that these items don't feel like a ZBB, and he questioned how the $900K expenditure is justified. He also asked whether Carlisle will be paying its fair share of any upgrades at Ripley. Dr. Hunter responded that a discussion about managing shared costs will take place at an upcoming School Committee meeting, noting that the Regional High School is not currently being charged for any portion of the cost of bus parking. She also responded that she worked closely with Ms. Lafleur in developing the capital budget, which she started from scratch.

Mr. Banfield questioned the energy units at Alcott and Thoreau. Dr. Hunter responded that the estimated life expectancy is 10-15 years, and some have lasted only seven years. Some of the heating units are bringing in cold air. Mr. Echavarri noted that the phone system upgrade is being fully charged to CPS, and questioned why Carlisle was not included in the cost sharing. Dr. Hunter responded that she will first discuss the bus depot cost-sharing, and will make a decision once she sees how that goes.

Article 13—Authorization to Accept MGL c. 71, δ71E—School Property Fund School Superintendent Laurie Hunter reported that under the current system, any rental income that is collected by CPS goes into the Town's General Fund. This state law enables any rental income to be returned to the CPS budget. She estimated that the rental income is about $15,000/year. ***There were no comments or questions.***

Article 14—Concord Middle School Feasibility Study Superintendent Laurie Hunter started her presentation by indicating that there are still a lot of moving pieces for this article. She explained that funds are for a feasibility study to review the site and determine where on the current Sanborn site a new building would fit, and then to prepare a schematic design of a new school. This would not be a detailed design. The plan at this point is to build one new building on the current Sanborn site. She noted that applications for MSBA funding support were made in 2017 and 2018, and both times were rejected. There is lots of competition for funding and she feels that it is unlikely that Concord will rise to the level of MSBA support in the near future. Although self-funding will be more expensive, waiting for MSBA support is risky since systems failures and cost escalations are likely. She noted that the Sanborn building is 55 years old, and Peabody is 49 years old.

Dr. Hunter reported that in 2016 a Facilities Planning Committee was formed. Finegold Alexander Architects were hired to answer the following questions: (1) What would it take to remain in the current buildings for 10 years? (2) What are options and estimated costs for a renovation project? (3) What are options and estimated costs for a new building? Finegold's findings were that the two buildings are deteriorated, obsolete and at the end of their lifespan; the two-campus configuration is inefficient and expensive; and the current situation creates struggle for the school community, resulting in sub-optimal educational experience. Finegold estimated the cost of remaining in the two

buildings for 10 years and attaining an appropriate educational environment at $34-47 million. The operational inefficiency of operating two buildings is estimated at $548K/year. Dr. Hunter reviewed the current outdated infrastructure of the buildings: original heating lines, plumbing lines and electrical systems; PVC roofs are at the end of their projected lifespan; septic systems are 50 years old; ventilation and air circulation are non-existent; hazardous materials are in both buildings; no fire suppression system; concrete flaking off the Peabody building.

Dr. Hunter displayed a chart identifying the 12 schools that received MSBA funding in 2018. She explained that schools are rated "1" to "4" in terms of building condition, with 1 being in the best condition and 4 being "emergency repairs needed." Under this MSBA rating system, Sanborn and Peabody were rated 2. Of the 12 schools receiving funding in 2018, two were rated "1"; seven were rated "2"; one was rated "3"; and one was rated "4". All schools rated 1 for general environment and were average or under rated in capacity. Finegold has suggested that a 125,000 s.f. building would deliver the desired educational programs, at a projected cost of $648/s.f. This would bring the total estimated cost to $81 million in 2019. She emphasized that the cost will increase substantially each year that we wait, noting the construction cost growth of 6.93% per year from 2010 to 2016. For estimating purposes, the likely cost of a new middle school will be $90+ million. The estimated peak-year impact on the median household tax bill would be $1,015. Although the School Department plans to reapply for MSBA funding in 2019, she questioned the value of waiting. She also emphasized that a lot of items that Concord would want in a new middle school would not be included in the reimbursement rate, such as an auditorium and regulation gymnasium. She estimated that the MSBA reimbursement rate would be 20-25% ($18-22.5 million). This amount would be significantly consumed by waiting.

Mr. Taylor asked whether the wealth of a community factors into its eligibility for MSBA funding. Dr. Hunter noted that Brookline did not receive any MSBA funding for its new high school, but did receive funding in 2018 to replace a 100-year old building. Mr. Swain noted that MSBA funding was approved in recent years in Lexington, Belmont and Wellesley, so some "wealthy" towns are obviously eligible for funding. He also noted that asking the town to self-fund a new middle school is a lot to ask, given that we are approaching a peak debt period, and given that we fully funded a new Willard School and recently built a new high school. He also noted that the School Department had reported to the FC in 2014 and 2015 that the two middle school buildings had a life expectancy of 15 years. In 2015 at the FC public hearing prior to town meeting, the Deputy Supt. for Finance reported that following a discussion with the Facilities Manager, it was determined that the middle school buildings are both sound and with proper upgrades, the buildings could last an additional 30 years. He commented that the FC and taxpayers relied on these statements when making a decision about funding earlier requests. He asked Dr. Hunter for an explanation.

Dr. Hunter responded that she looked at the capital plan that was on paper in those years, and millions of dollars were planned to keep the two middle school buildings up-to-date. At some point, the School Committee questioned whether those dollars would be wisely spent, and improvements stopped following the replacement of the heating systems in 2014-15. The current message is of

heightened urgency for the buildings. Mr. Swain emphasized that the hard questions need to be asked, particularly whether we are at the point to add to the Town's debt.

Resident Maureen Kemeza commented that the "feasibility study" title for Article 14 is really more than that—she sees this as a request to "green light" the building of a new middle school at the Town's expense. She does not feel comfortable with the request. She noted that the Finegold Report provided two options—(1) build a new school; or (2) build an addition onto Sanborn. She questioned why the second option wasn't considered, which would cost half as much as a new school. She asked that the School Committee and Department be more transparent in its presentation. Dr. Hunter responded that the Finegold Report emphasized the cost effectiveness and improved learning environment of a new building, and she agreed to include more transparency in the future. Mr. Stanton noted that the Finegold Report estimated the cost of constructing a new building at $68 million vs. building an addition onto Sanborn at $60 million.

Resident Louis Salemy introduced himself as having worked on the high school project, and considers himself an expert on MSBA funding. He felt that we were lucky to receive MSBA funding for the high school, crediting the funding to chance political influences. He noted that Sanborn has asbestos that would have to be removed, so he felt any renovation project could not be safely done with the students still remaining on site.

Resident Yuval Erlich commented that it would be a big mistake to perpetuate past mistakes. While we are concentrating on facility costs, the Superintendent is emphasizing the improved learning environment that is needed. He felt that there is no question that a new building is needed—the question is when. If $34 million would need to be spent over the next ten years to maintain the current buildings, to be followed by construction of a new building, then where are the savings? Resident Charlie Blair asked whether a "model" school could be built, therefore saving considerable cost. Dr. Hunter responded that state subsidy incentives for building a model school have decreased considerably. She agreed that while some savings could result in building a model school, she anticipates that some customizing would be required to meet Concord's needs.

Resident Ned Perry noted that about 10 years ago town meeting faced a request to build two elementary schools at once, which was rejected by the voters. Eventually the requests were brought forward separately, at a much higher cost. He urged that we look at cost savings for moving forward now rather than putting it off. Resident Miguel Echavarri commented that "words do matter." Voters were told in 2015 that the two middle school buildings were in good shape and an investment of $6 million over a period of a few years would assure that the buildings would last another 30 years. Then in 2017 we were told that the buildings were horrible and beyond repair. Since any new middle school building project would be under the control of the Town Manager, he was more inclined to support it. Resident Cynthia Wood noted that Article 14 is written to have the funding under the control of the School Committee, while we have been told that the construction would be under the control of the Town Manager. She asked that this be clarified at town meeting, and that a timeline be included to explain the vote we are being asked to take.

Article 15—CCRSD Budget Superintendent Laurie Hunter introduced the CCRSD FY20 budget request of $34,687,733 (Concord's assessment $23,344,987), which she noted was within the FC Guideline. She explained that ZBB was used, and all budget areas were reviewed, including Legal, Salaries, Staffing, Contracted Services, Special Education, and Supplies & Materials. She also reported that there was a reorganization of personnel structures in the central administration.

Dr. Hunter reported that the FY20 budget drivers were as follows:

Budget Drivers	**FY20 Budget Increase**
Contract Services	$147,685
Employee Separation	$96,651
Insurance	$220,392
Athletic Coaches	$125,062
Salary-Support Staff	$111,126
Salary-Teachers	$521,044
Software/Hardware	$118,201
Total	**$1,340,161**

Dr. Hunter reported the following cost savings that had been identified by ZBB:

Cost Savings	**FY20 Budget Decrease**
Transportation	$158,627
Salary—Tutors	$60,297
Special Education Tuition	$101,481
Total	**$320,405**

Dr. Hunter reported that during Phase 1 of the Retirement/Separation Incentive program (FY18), 3.0 teachers retired, resulting in FY20 savings of $67,110 (since new teachers are hired at a lower rate of pay). Under Phase 2 (FY19), 3.0 teachers retired, resulting in FY20 savings of $69,395. Dr. Hunter reviewed the OPEB contribution history for CCRSD, noting that the actual contribution made each year has been lower than the required ARC; however, we are still in a strong position, with the highest contribution rate in Massachusetts among regional schools. The total OPEB fund balance as of June 30, 2018 is $3,734,391. In FY20, $563,444 is being proposed for funding OPEB (vs. a required ARC of $785,368). She feels that this is a healthy contribution. She reported that Moody's has placed CCRSD on a negative outlook—watch list due to a heavy reliance on and low balance in the E&D account. Moody's is not concerned with the OPEB contribution. She noted that CCRSD has been using the E&D account as a revenue source to fund unbudgeted items for several years, and this spending pattern has shifted going forward. She reported the following history of using E&D as a revenue source:

FY18	$700,000
FY19	$689,000
FY20	$350,000

Dr. Hunter summarized the assessment comparison, including debt, for the past two years:

	Concord	**Carlisle**	**Total**
FY19	$22,654,028	$7,367,213	$30,021,241
FY20	$23,344,987	$7,678,252	$31,023,239
Difference	$690,959	$311,039	$1,001,998
%Δ	3.05%	4.22%	3.34%

There were no comments or questions.

Article 16—CCRSD Capital Projects School Superintendent Laurie Hunter explained this proposal, which asks for approval of the Regional School Committee's $2 million debt authorization for the following projects at the high school: reconstruction of access road; installation of lighting along the access road; repair of sidewalks and curbing; and restoration of parking to previous levels. She explained that the $2 million is a very conservative estimate, and firm numbers will not be known until bids are received. She explained that driving the discussion of the $2 million request is a desire to complete construction of the loop road, which had only been patched following construction of the new school. She explained that the other big project is parking, which is not really additional parking—it is a restoration of the parking that was onsite prior to construction of the new high school. She also reported that the bathrooms at Memorial Field are not in compliance with required building codes, but those are not included in this request. To bring this building into compliance, 44 bathrooms would need to be added. The School Committee is considering requesting a waiver of this requirement. Gale Associates evaluated the campus access road as part of the campus feasibility study, noting a number of areas that need attention (cracks, patches, ponding, uneven pavement, potholes, etc.). The condition of the base material on the roadway is unknown, but the $2 million assumes a full reconstruction may be needed. The cost of the roadway reconstruction is $1,224,812.

In discussing the parking situation, she explained that the demand for parking far exceeds supply, and there is a lot of illegal parking going on now. Pre-new high school there were 548 parking spaces onsite. There are currently 413 parking spaces. Several actions have been taken to address the parking deficit, including moving faculty parking to the upper turf lot; renting spaces from the Beede Center; numbering the spaces to improve enforcement; and promoting carpools. Despite these efforts, parking capacity remains inadequate. Most juniors are not allowed spaces, and students arrive at school early in order to grab spots, defeating the intent of the later start time. All of this has added stress for families and staff, and has proven to be a huge distraction. Under this article, 104 additional parking spaces would be created, and would be subject to approval of the Natural Resources Commission to increase the impervious surface to 22%. The estimated cost for the parking spaces is $790,903. Dr. Hunter estimated that Concord's share of the $2 million borrowing would be $210,000/year for 10 years.

In response to a question from Ms. Zall, Dr. Hunter indicated that a parking permit costs $300/year. Resident Nick Pappas, a member of the Climate Action Advisory Board, noted that the Town has very aggressive climate goals, including a goal to encourage and facilitate carpooling; and to develop plans to decrease parking demands. He requested that a parking management plan be prepared, with the idea that a balance is needed. Dr. Hunter noted that she is trying to corral a lot of efforts to solve this problem. Mr. Pappas expressed concern that there is a willingness to throw money at the problem, but not a willingness to change behavior. Mr. Banfield asked how many of the previous parking spaces were used by bus drivers, who are now located elsewhere. Mr. Taylor noted that the increase in the number of spaces being proposed will still not solve the problem, since there will still be a parking shortage. Dr. Hunter noted that many students have no other way to get to after-

school activities except by car. Ms. Hanson asked for the total of capital projects for FY20 for the schools -- $2 million for the high school and $1.5 million for the middle school. Mr. Fischelis asked whether a parking garage was considered. Dr. Hunter responded that a garage had been explored, but was very expensive.

Mr. Swain thanked Dr. Hunter for seeing a problem and trying to fix it. He expressed frustration, however, that two years ago we were told that the number of parking spaces at the new high school would be 30 more than were present at the old high school. While he recognized that Dr. Hunter is addressing an expressed real need, the information provided to us is different from what was received in the recent past. In addition, he questioned the estimated cost of the road repairs, which he felt was too high. Ms. Zall noted the cost per parking space is $7,900, and she asked whether funding is sufficient to handle the drainage issues.

Resident Diane Proctor suggested that consideration be given to splitting the article into two parts, given the disagreement about parking—one for improvements to the access road and one for additional parking. Dr. Hunter indicated that this conversation was held by the School Committee, and a decision was made to keep the two projects together. Miguel Echavarri suggested that parking fees be put towards constructing new spots. Dr. Hunter responded that parking fees are currently used to offset operating expenses at the high school. Mr. Echavarri again emphasized that words matter, noting the inconsistencies that have been told by the School Committee and previous School Administrators. He feels that the current need is difficult to believe, given past statements that parking was adequate.

School Committee Member Wally Johnston commented that when he first came onto the School Committee, the bus transportation issue was at its peak. He naively advocated that students be urged to use the bus more. He has come to realize that the lack of parking has produced a stress issue at the high school, and this appropriation is the simplest way to make the biggest impact to reduce stress.

Resident Yuval Erlich suggested that a plan be created to encourage the use of electric cars which take smaller spaces. He suggested that an incentive be placed for a higher parking fee for larger cars. Dr. Hunter responded that she was not interested in penalizing the students for the car choices that parents make. Resident Julie-Ann Cancio questioned the design of the parking lot and whether it would be paved, lighted, and include drainage. Dr. Hunter indicated that early vetting of parking options has been done. Ms. Cancio suggested that the parking problem could be solved at a lower cost, noting that lights at the Beede Center light her house all night. If the parking lot were to be lighted, then the impact on the neighborhood should be weighed. She noted that turtles are lured out with light. Maureen Kemeza asked whether parking would be available along the access road. Dr. Hunter responded that there is parking now, and this would remain, on one side of the road.

Follow-up on Article 22 – Marcia Rasmussen remarked that after further thought, she is not positive whether 2019 is the second or third round of state funding request for Junction Village. This will be reviewed and a response available with a call to her office

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita S. Tekle
Recording Secretary

Documents Used or Referenced at Meeting:

- 2019 Annual Town Meeting Warrant
- Handouts for Articles 22, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16

Draft 3.24.2019

Town of Concord
Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes – March 7, 2019

Present: Thomas Tarpey, Dean Banfield, Mary Hartman, John Hickling, Richard Jamison, Karle Packard, Christine Reynolds, June Rzepczynski, Phil Swain, and Andrea Zall

Absent: Peter Fischelis, Grace Hanson, Scott Randall and Brian Taylor (one vacancy)

Others Present: School Committee Members Heather Bout, Robert Grom and Court Booth; School Superintendent Laurie Hunter; Finance Director Kerry Lafleur

Meeting Opened

Mr. Tarpey called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Select Board Room at the Town House. He noted that the meeting was being recorded and broadcast live on MMN.

Approval of Minutes

It was agreed to postpone approval of minutes.

Review FY20 Guideline

Mr. Banfield assumed the position of Chair for this portion of the meeting. Mr. Tarpey indicated that information had been received from Town Manager Chris Whelan and Ms. Lafleur responding to a request for more information about the MEWS Stabilization Fund, and he urged members to review it. It was noted that funds withdrawn from Stabilization Funds have not been included within the Guideline in the past, although the use of such funds in the recent past was limited to the repayment of debt. Mr. Banfield noted that the fundamental question for the hiring of four additional staff members, with 75% of the 1st year cost underwritten from the Stabilization Fund, is whether the drawdown cost should be included within the Finance Committee (FC) Guideline. In addition, the FY20 Town budget is being crafted from a variety of sources, and the Town Manager is asking the FC to only consider the portion of the budget coming from the General Fund.

Mr. Tarpey asked whether this has been the past practice in Concord, and whether this is how Guidelines are treated in other communities. Ms. Lafleur responded that the drawdowns from the MEWS fund for public safety costs in FY14, FY15 and FY16 were not considered within the Guideline. Historically in Concord, the Guideline has addressed the increase in the tax burden and not the budget increase. Mr. Hickling suggested that the FC also look at the budget impact of a proposal beyond the first year. Ms. Lafleur indicated that the assumption going forward is that the Guideline would be increased to offset the increased cost of new positions (i.e., to reflect the declining drawdown from the MEWS fund in the coming years). Under her assumption, the cost of the new positions would be ongoing, and the Guideline would be supplemented by the increased amount needed in Years 2, 3, etc. Mr. Banfield disagreed with the assumption that when the Guideline is set, only the increase in property tax is considered. He noted that the operating budget entities are considered separately, and the needs of those entities are taken into consideration to come up with Guide-

line. He noted that the Town Manager was able to meet the FC Guideline by pulling funds from other sources, rather than decreasing the budget, which he found troubling. In particular, Mr. Banfield was concerned about multi-year commitments, which end up tying the hands of the FC in the future. Mr. Tarpey suggested that the general question of what numbers to include in the Guideline be placed on the agenda for a future meeting. Both Mr. Tarpey and Mr. Banfield emphasized that the Town Manager is not being accused of lack of transparency, noting the amount of detail that is included in the budget book, which continues to improve.

Follow Up: Place the issue of expenses to include within the Guideline on a future agenda.

Ms. Hartman asked about the MEWS Stabilization Fund, and whether its intent was to be limited to capital or operating costs. Ms. Lafleur responded that the fund was established primarily to mitigate the impact of the MEWS development on the Town's emergency response capacity, and to offset the costs of the additional ambulance in West Concord. Mr. Hickling distinguished between the short-term impact of the four new positions vs. the ongoing budget costs—we are kicking the long-term impact down the road by utilizing the Stabilization Fund for short-term offsets. He noted that Stabilization Funds established for debt mitigation are different from this MEWS Stabilization Fund—the former reduces a short-term increase in debt service that declines over time, while under the latter, personnel costs are reduced in the short term, but then increase over time. He suggested that these be viewed differently, since their impacts are different.

Mr. Banfield inquired about the Archivist position at the Library. Ms. Lafleur responded that discussions between the Town Manager and the Library Corporation are ongoing as to how to best fund the Archivist position going forward. She noted that there are currently two FTE positions funded by the Town in the Special Collections Department. The Curator position is responsible for special collections, and she also serves as the Town's Municipal Archivist. The volume of work is too high for the current staff. The Town Manager prefers that some of the Library staff be repurposed to allow time to be spent for municipal archives, and some external funding to mitigate the current situation is being considered.

In summarizing the Guideline, Mr. Banfield noted that the Town budget is $25,299,513 (4.42%) and meets the FC Guideline. This amount includes all the new positions that are funded by the General Fund. The CCRSD budget is $19,996,874 (4.44%) and this meets the FC Guideline. The CPS budget is higher than the Guideline by $143,208 (2.99% increase vs. the Guideline increase of 2.61%). During the discussion which followed, Ms. Hartman suggested that we split the difference. Ms. Rzepczynski suggested that the FC propose an amendment at Town Meeting to decrease the CPS budget to the FC Guideline level. Several had anticipated that Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) would produce more significant savings, noting that savings that were generated were outstripped by even higher cost drivers; i.e., we found savings here, but we need to spend it elsewhere, and then some. In response to a question from Ms. Zall, Mr. Hickling noted that all of the requests from the School Department (operating budgets + capital requests) amount to an increase of $6.23 million, reflecting a 10% increase on the FY19 $60 million base for the Schools, which is significant. Mr. Packard noted that the CPS increase of 2.99% is still lower than the increase in FY19. Ms.

Rzepczynski expressed disappointment that for the second year in a row, the CPS budget did not meet the Guideline.

Ms. Reynolds noted that there was a huge bump in the CPS budget due to salary step increases, which were negotiated by the School Committee. While there was transparency, there was concern that no effort was made internally to prepare for and budget for this known increase. Mr. Jamison suggested that the bigger issue with the school budgets is to how to get ahead of the contracts in the upcoming negotiating process. Mr. Hickling suggested that the Town's ability to pay be considered in future Guidelines, with the suggestion that contracts be negotiated differently. Ms. Hartman noted that there were $2.6 million in CPS cost drivers, while only $1.1 million was for salaries. So other items could have been considered for reduction. Mr. Banfield noted in particular that Supplies & Materials were increased considerably, as an "add-back" from reductions in previous years.

Dr. Hunter noted that she cut 3% from last year's Supplies & Materials budget, and for this year only, we need to spend $90K for a three-year software subscription (with $0 cost in each of the next two years). This instructional cost is at the core of the curriculum. She is not comfortable cutting the CPS budget by $143K, noting that she is proud of the CPS budget that is being brought forward. In response to a question from Mr. Packard, Ms. Lafleur noted that there is no change to the previously reported estimated FY20 revenue. Mr. Packard noted that, including the $143K, the tax increase moves from 3.28% to 3.45%. It was noted that this increase only reflects the portion of the budgets within the levy limit; costs for capital improvements or excluded debt would be additional.

Mr. Hickling made a **MOTION** that was seconded by Mr. Packard to compromise on the CPS Guideline to provide for an increase to 2.85% ($71,634 additional funds), for a total of $1,071,634.

Mr. Jamison noted that the Schools did a better job than the Town of holding the budget to a smaller increase over FY19. It was noted that the options would be (1) the School Committee reduce its budget request to meet the FC Guideline before Town Meeting; or (2) the FC propose an amendment at Town Meeting to a lower budget level. Mr. Tarpey felt that the $143K difference was small enough that we should not require them to find savings. Mr. Packard suggested that we ask the School Department to find $71,500 to cut. Ms. Zall inquired as to how to keep the pressure on the Schools if we continue to allow them to not meet the Guideline. She did not support splitting the difference. A **VOTE** was then taken on Mr. Hickling's motion, which **FAILED TO PASS**, with 2 voting in favor (Packard & Hickling), 7 opposed, and 1 abstention.

Mr. Tarpey then made a **MOTION** which was seconded by Mr. Jamison to increase the Guideline to meet the CPS budget as presented, including the $143K overage (2.99% increase). This motion **PASSED** on a **VOTE** of 6 in favor, 2 opposed (Hartman & Hickling), and 2 abstentions.

Review/Approval of Five-Year Forecast Report

Mr. Banfield noted that the model was similar to previous years, with no dramatic changes. The draft model for FY20-FY25 is as follows (most likely; Alternative 1 low; Alternative 2 high):

	Most Likely	**Alternative 1—Low**	**Alternative 2—High**
FY20	4.92%	4.92%	4.92%

FY21	4.38%	3.78%	4.92%
FY22	4.42%	3.92%	4.86%
FY23	4.00%	3.49%	4.47%
FY24	4.31%	3.79%	4.79%
FY25	4.43%	3.90%	4.93%

Mr. Hickling noted that the "Most Likely" option is about twice the rate of inflation, and that a tax rate increase of 4% is higher than what is projected for the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR). The FC discussed the elements to include in the model—3.99% 5-year trend or 3.69% 10-year trend. Mr. Banfield emphasized that the forecast model is an exercise in what we project for tax increases vs. what we wish them to be. Ms. Rzepczynski emphasized that the model is based on historical trends and not what the FC feels is sustainable going forward. The model also does not include capital projects. It was noted that we are projecting current trends as to the "likely" tax burden. The responsibility of the FC is to provide the information and probable consequences of financial decisions; it is up to the taxpayers and voters to make those decisions based on the information.

Ms. Lafleur noted that credit-rating agencies are generally not concerned with Proposition 2½ overrides, but only a community's history of approval/disapproval of overrides; i.e., what is the community's willingness to pay for an override? She also noted that Concord's position of being under the levy limit is unusual among our peer communities. Mr. Hickling asked whether it should be the goal of the SGR to avoid overrides. Mr. Banfield did not believe so, commenting that Proposition 2½ is an artificial limit and Concord has a good history of approving excluded debt. After a brief discussion, it was undecided whether a preset SGR number will be presented at town meeting. Mr. Hickling suggested that the presentation at the hearing was too vague, and at town meeting we should present either a formula or a number for SGR.

The FC then discussed the assumptions behind the 5-year forecast, and made adjustments.

Operating Budget Entities:			
Entity	Most Likely	Alternative 1—Low	Alternative 2—High
Town	3.75%	3.50%	4.50%
CPS	3.5% (all 5 years)	3.0%	4.2%
CCRSD	5.5%	5.0%	5.0%
Non-Operating Budget Categories:			
Group Insurance	8.0%	6.0%	10.0%
OPEB	3.5%	3.5%	7.5%
Retirement	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Debt Service (non-exempt)	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%
Minuteman	$768,846 FY20 + $25k/yr increase	$600,000	$900,000
Debt Service (excluded)	Use existing debt schedules	Use existing debt schedules	Use existing debt schedules
All Other Expense	2.0% annually	1.0% annually	3.0% annually
Revenue Categories with variation from 2% general assumption:			
Excise Tax	2.0%	2.0%	4.0%
Licenses, Permits, Fees	1.0%	0.0%	5.0%
Free Cash	1.0% of operating budget	1.0%	1.0%
CMLP PILOT	0%	0%	0%
New Growth	$1 mill w/ 0% increase	$825K w/ 0% increase	$1 mill w/ 3% increase
State Aid	2.5% annual increase	1.0% annual increase	4.0% annual increase

All Other	Fixed at $125K/yr	Fixed at 125K/year	Fixed at 125K/year

In reviewing and adjusting the numbers above, the following comments were made:

- CCRSD—there are ways Concord can push Carlisle to increase its share of the budget, which may result in lower numbers
- Group Insurance—Medicare is estimated to increase 5.5% over next 10 years (national #)
- Debt Service (non-exempt)—assumes no new exempt projects; does not include new middle school or any other excluded debt
- Free Cash—Fin Com is recommending no action be taken on Article 23 to appropriate $500K from free cash for affordable housing

Mr. Banfield noted that historically, the FC's five-year forecast has been very inaccurate. Estimates have been very low, and do not include excluded debt. Ms. Reynolds suggested that the numbers make little sense without the excluded debt, since the projections do not reflect what taxpayers will actually pay in taxes. It was suggested that the FC publicly acknowledge the assumptions when we are faced with a large capital expenditure, such as the following: "If you vote for x, then your taxes will increase by y. If you don't vote for x, then your taxes will increase by z."

Recommendations on Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Article 22—CPA Committee Appropriation Recommendation Mr. Packard noted that he plans to recuse himself from this article, when it comes up for discussion and a vote.

Article 6—Town Budget On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Packard and seconded by Mr. Banfield, it was unanimously **VOTED** to recommend Affirmative Action.

Article 10—Minuteman Regional Technical HS District Budget On a **MOTION** made by Ms. Rzepczynski and seconded by Ms. Hartman, it was unanimously **VOTED** to recommend Affirmative Action.

Article 11—Concord Public School Budget On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Packard and seconded by Mr. Jamison, it was **VOTED** with 9 voting in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention (Hickling) to recommend Affirmative Action.

Article 12—CPS Capital Projects Mr. Swain made the following **MOTION**, which was seconded by Mr. Packard: To recommend Affirmative Action on Article 12. During the discussion which followed, the point was made that there is a possibility that Article 14 (Middle School Feasibility Study) will not pass, so that the portion of the funds in Article 12 relating to the middle school will be worthwhile. Mr. Banfield expressed the opinion that we are being whipsawed by the School Department about this project. Some of the funds for Article 12 (c. $200K) are to pay for a reconfiguration of the grades (6 at Peabody and 7-8 at Sanborn), and this is being bundled into the larger capital project request. Why is this being proposed now, while a new school is being requested? Ms. Rzepczynski noted that a number of projects have been taken off the table in order to accommodate this $200K expenditure. Ms. Zall was concerned that the public doesn't understand what is being proposed in both this article and Article 14, and she asked that both articles be better explained at town meeting.

Dr. Hunter indicated that the presentation slides on Articles 12 and 14 have been evolving following the feedback received during and following the February 25 public hearing. She anticipates that the language will be crystalized before town meeting. In response to the concerns raised about the proposed grade reconfiguration, Dr. Hunter said that she is just trying to do better by the students currently being served. She also indicated that Ripley renovations are being deferred since the School Department is looking for grants to reduce those costs. A **VOTE** was then taken on Mr. Swain's motion, which **PASSED**, with 9 voting in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention (Hickling).

Article 13—Authorization to Accept MGL c. 71, δ71E, School Property Fund Mr. Swain made the following **MOTION**, which was seconded by Mr. Packard: To recommend Affirmative Action. It was noted that these funds, which are from facility use fees from facility rentals, are currently going to the General Fund. Ms. Rzepczynski noted that the Town owns the facility (which is under the control of the School Committee), so any non-school use fees would more appropriately go to the General Fund. Dr. Hunter explained that she is trying to build a revolving account with these funds so that the gym floors could be maintained, and to cover other related costs. Mr. Swain commented that we are moving the funds from one pocket to another. A **VOTE** was then taken on Mr. Swain's motion, which **PASSED**, with 7 voting in favor and 3 opposed (Rzepczynski, Hickling, Hartman).

Article 14—Concord Middle School Feasibility Study Mr. Swain commented that the Town already has a lot of school debt, and the construction of a new middle school would double our school debt. This would also put Concord in the position of having double the school debt of any of our benchmark communities. He suggested that the FC review the debt charts recently prepared by Ms. Lafleur before the FC discusses construction of a new middle school without MSBA assistance.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Swain and seconded by Mr. Hickling, it was **VOTED**, with 8 voting in favor and 2 opposed (Banfield, Rzepczynski) to postpone discussion of Article 14 until the March 14 FC meeting, to allow time to digest the debt impact of a new middle school.

Article 15—CCRSD Budget On a **MOTION** made by Ms. Hartman and seconded by Mr. Banfield, it was unanimously **VOTED** to recommend Affirmative Action.

Article 16—CCRSD Capital Projects Mr. Swain made a **MOTION** that was seconded by Ms. Reynolds to recommend Affirmative Action in the amount of $1 million for Article 16. Mr. Swain explained that the $1 million is half of what is being requested by the CCRSD, noting that he feels the costs are inflated, and is concerned that any surplus funds would be misused, as has been done in the past at CCRSD. Ms. Hartman suggested the FC show good faith in the Superintendent's ability to manage the funds. Mr. Swain noted that the current administration has been transparent, but the Town has been burned in the past about the misuse of surplus funds. He suggested that if $1 million is not sufficient, then the CCRSD could return to town meeting for additional funds, if needed. Ms. Hartman preferred that the parking and road projects be decoupled. Mr. Banfield noted that the School Committee had discussed this issue, and voted to keep the projects together, feeling that would improve the chances of passage and result in economies of scale. Dr. Hunter agreed that the $2 million is very conservative and high, noting that it would be illegal to use the funds for

anything other than what is being requested. She promised to only spend what is needed. In response to a question from Ms. Zall, Dr. Hunter noted that Gale Associates was responsible for the $2 million estimate.

A **VOTE** was then taken on Mr. Swain's motion, which **FAILED TO PASS**, with 2 voting in favor (Swain, Reynolds), 7 opposed, and 1 abstention (Zall).

A **MOTION** was then made by Mr. Banfield and seconded by Mr. Jamison to recommend Affirmative Action on Article 16 in the amount of $2 million, which **FAILED TO PASS**, with 4 voting in favor (Tarpey, Jamison, Banfield, Packard), 5 opposed (Hickling, Rzepczynski, Swain, Hartman, Reynolds) and 1 abstention (Zall).

A **MOTION** was then made by Mr. Swain and seconded by Mr. Hickling to recommend **NO ACTION** be taken under Article 16. Mr. Tarpey noted that he understood from speaking with Dr. Hunter that any surplus funds would be returned to the towns. Ms. Rzepczynski noted that she does not support funds for a new parking lot, which does not solve the parking problem. She conducted spot checks of available spaces, and found that 40 cars were parked on Laurel Street, there were 43 open spaces on the main campus, and 19 open spaces at the Doug White fields. Every senior who wishes to have a parking spot has one. She suggested that the issue is more that some students are taking spots which are not their own, and the adults at the high school have not provided a procedure to solve the problem. She suggested that the students be given an opportunity to identify solutions to the problem that are consistent with the Town's green initiatives, and she expressed confidence that this could be done. She does not feel that the root of the problem will be solved by the current proposal of additional parking spots. When Ms. Rzepczynski surveyed other area schools, she found that parking privileges are only for seniors.

A **VOTE** was then taken on Mr. Swain's motion to recommend that No Action be taken, which **PASSED**, with 7 voting in favor and 3 opposed (Tarpey, Banfield, Jamison).

<u>Article 18—Sustainable Growth Rate—General Bylaw Amendment</u> Mr. Swain made a **MOTION** which was seconded by Mr. Packard to recommend Affirmative Action, with the details to be ironed out in the presentation. He noted that the FC had already voted to support placing the article on the warrant. Ms. Hartman felt that the goal of Article 18 is honorable, but she had concerns about the methodology and the use of a bylaw. She suggested that the proposal is not yet ready for "prime time." She suggested that a standing town meeting vote would be preferable to a bylaw, and was concerned that the town meeting discussion would unnecessarily debate the details of the SGR. She was also concerned of the impact if Article 18 were to fail—how would the FC recover? Some have suggested that the proposal is a power play by the FC. Mr. Hickling noted that he had heard that the article is not needed for the FC to accomplish its goal of establishing a SGR—this could be done without a town meeting vote. Mr. Banfield saw some value in binding future FCs to follow this practice—institutionalizing the policy provides durability, which itself has value; however, he agreed that it would be preferable to back off from putting the SGR into a bylaw. In response to a question from Mr. Packard, Ms. Lafleur noted that a town meeting vote is not needed for the FC to establish

policies, noting that the Select Board and Town Manager frequently establish administrative policies. Mr. Swain suggested that we remove the bylaw component of the article, changing the article to requiring the FC to establish a SGR. Mr. Tarpey noted that Moderator Carmin Reiss had indicated to him that the bylaw component could be eliminated from the article. Concern was expressed by several members that the proposal still needs further development and discussion, with a lot of work remaining and not a lot of time prior to town meeting. Mr. Banfield disagreed, feeling that the SGR number could be calculated since the formula has already been decided. Mr. Packard suggested that the FC try the SGR on its own for a couple of years, and then possibly bring it to town meeting in the future, when more information is known.

Mr. Hickling was concerned whether the FC could still establish the SGR if it were to be defeated at town meeting. He noted that he has heard that voters are requesting more specifics, which are not included in the article, and would be needed for town meeting. Mr. Tarpey felt that a precise number is less important than the exercise that would be done prior to the budgets being established. Mr. Swain noted that the formula could be changed by the FC in future years. It was suggested that a schedule be established so that the SGR piece would be established by late summer, prior to the start of the Guideline process—this would then become part of the "growth rate exercise." He noted that the five-year tax projection could possibly be fettered together with the SGR. Mr. Jamison commented that the public is confused about what is being proposed, and emphasized the political risk if Article 18 were to fail. Ms. Zall suggested that the FC communicate clearly that it is making recommendations about expenditures and tax increases, and is not changing laws.

It was suggested that a presentation be made by Mr. Tarpey at town meeting to explain the intent of the SGR, and this could be done when the FC first speaks at town meeting (perhaps prior to the Town Budget), noting that the comments apply to all operating budgets. Mr. Hickling suggested that the presentation include an explanation as to why we need a SGR; i.e., the FC sees increasing costs on the horizon and does not feel that this is sustainable. Mr. Swain made the following **MOTION** which was seconded by Mr. Packard: to defer the vote on Article 18 and to make a decision at the March 14 meeting as to how to proceed, allowing time for reflection. Mr. Banfield expressed support for Mr. Tarpey's ability to make a successful presentation on Article 18 at town meeting. Mr. Tarpey noted that the consensus in the room at the recent League of Women Voters town meeting forum was to support the need for a SGR. Mr. Hickling agreed, but feels that the question is still open as to how to best accomplish this goal.

A **VOTE** was then taken on Mr. Swain's motion, which **PASSED**, with 9 voting in favor and 1 opposed (Hartman).

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Anita S. Tekle
Recording Secretary (from videotape of meeting)

Documents Used or Referenced at Meeting:

- 2019 Annual Town Meeting Warrant
- Worksheet of Finance Committee Recommendations on Warrant Articles
- Email from Chris Whelan to Tom Tarpey RE: funding for new firefighters (dated 3.7.2019)
- Email from Kerry Lafleur to Chris Whelan RE: relaying funding questions from FC (dated 3.5.2019)
- Email from Kerry Lafleur to Thomas Tarpey & Dean Banfield RE: Emergency Response Stabilization Fund (dated 3.2.2019)
- Town Meeting vote on Emergency Response Stabilization Fund (Article 29 of 2012 Annual Town Meeting)
- Chart of Emergency Response Stabilization Fund History FY12-FY18 (dated 3.27.2019)
- Memo from Miguel Echavarri to Finance Committee RE: CMS Feasibility Study (dated 3.7.2019) and transmittal from Kerry Lafleur
- PowerPoint presentation on Guidelines & Five-Year Forecast (dated 3.7.2019)

— Correspondence —

Kerry Lafleur

From: Kerry Lafleur
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2019 12:03 PM
To: Martyn Botfield (martynbotfield@gmail.com)
Subject: Questions for the Finance Committee

Dear Mr. Botfield:

Thank you for your e-mail of March 20. The questions and concerns you enumerate are all meaningful ones, which I hope are being considered by the several entities charged with the responsibility to design and effect Concord's affordable housing plans. A partial list of these entities is: Affordable Housing Funding Committee (AHFC), Concord Housing Development Corporation (CHDC), Housing Authority. All can be located through the town's web pages.

The Finance Committee has not discussed any of the matters about which your e-mail inquires, as they are not within our purview. The Finance Committee has discussed the four articles on the warrant for this year's town meeting, which refer to the AHFC's proposed plans for funding affordable housing, in town. Although the questions you pose in your e-mail may be essential ones in the planning of affordable housing, they are not at issue in any of the four warrant articles proposed by the AHFC, for discussion at our upcoming town meeting.

Your questions indicate a significant amount of knowledge, thought, and concern about the issue of Concord's affordable housing. I hope you will consider volunteering for service on one of the entities engaged in working out an equitable, cost-effective solution to this need.

Regards,
Tom Tarpey, Chair
Concord Finance Committee

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Martyn Botfield** <martynbotfield@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 20, 2019 at 10:11 AM
Subject: Questions for the Finance Committee
To: <finance@concordma.gov>
Cc: <selectboard@concordma.gov>

Dear Finance Committee,

Thank you for contributing your time to advise the Town on financial matters.

I have several questions regarding impact projections provided by the Finance Committee to the Select Board to inform decisions around funding for affordable housing. In particular, I am interested in understanding the choice to focus on conversation of single-family units.

Multi-unit developments receive highly favorable treatment under 40B. For example, a multi-unit development with 25 affordable units and 75 market rate units contributes 100 units to the SHI. The SHI deed restriction for new construction is ≥30 years. The SHI deed restriction for "rehabilitated" housing is 15 years.

1. Given the above, *and setting aside all other missions*, what is the most cost-effective way to meet the 40B obligation over a 30-year window?

2. What models (single-family conversion, new multi-unit construction, 20-80 mix of single-family and multi-unit, etc) were explored to reach this conclusion?

3. What is the total cost burden to Concord (sum of cash outlay, unrealized property taxes, cost of services, etc) for meeting 40B requirements using single-family rehabilitation vs new multi-unit private construction?

4. What assumptions were used in building the models?

5. Please provide output of all financial analyses, comparative analyses, tax receipt models, total taxation impact models, services impact models, school enrollment impact models, etc that were performed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Martyn Botfield

47 Walden Terrace

(978) 257-3398

Kerry Lafleur

From: Julie-Ann CANCIO <jaca2@bellsouth.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 26, 2019 3:59 PM
To: finance mail
Subject: Warrant Article 16/ Concerns

Please forward to all Fincom members...
Dear All,
This letter is a follow up to my attendance at the March 20 CCHS forum for Warrant Article #16 for the proposed additional high school parking lot and the loop road construction repairs and lighting.

I want to reconfirm some concerns and remind you all about some things that may have been overlooked in the rush to get both these projects on for this Town Meeting. With respect to the landfill area, there was a total of about 4.4 acres of total landfill area identified and marked off. Only approximately 3.5 acres of it were actually capped with the engineered barrier during the cap construction. There are contaminated soils, that were not included in last Summer's barrier cap construction that lie under the the Walden Street side entry loop roadway asphalt and skate park. During the cap planning process, the existing roadway asphalt was deemed acceptable by the DEP to serve as an environmental cap for the underlying contaminated soil for that area. Digging or breaking this existing asphalt up and or digging down into the contaminated soil below the asphalt area to put in new roadway base or to add additional lighting, will expose that contaminated soil. Without taking proper care and planning, here, the potential for an environmental accident could be high. (***I have attached a photo of the full perimeter of the landfill that shows the actual boundaries of the contaminated landfill extend beyond the dirt field and do exist under that roadway asphalt.*) The cap that was constructed last Summer ended at the base of the dirt field, before the asphalt roadway. With that said, much more careful planning of any roadway work on the Walden Street side of the loop road, is needed. Possibly, a simple asphalt "overlay" road repair with no digging at all, might be safest and least expensive, for now. And regarding new loop road lighting, there is definitely already more than enough bright new lighting in the Beede Center parking lot, very close to loop road. Adding even more lights on that Walden Street side on the roadway, are not necessary. The existing Beede lights stay on at night and are already disturbing to the the area neighbors and Fairyland wildlife. The Fairyland turtles are attracted to the glow of those lights and wander across the road, often.

The recently renovated skate park concrete floor base and it's new retaining walls and runoff pipe, also serve as the environmental cap/solution for approximately 8,300sqft of the existing contaminated landfill soil. It should never be disturbed; only maintained. The School Committee's "rectangular drawing" for the proposed lighted parking lot appears to be near the road, above the skate park. That proposed area also sits on capped landfill. In that location, there is a landfill "monitoring well". There is another a monitoring well near the skate park wall. These "wells" needs to remain in place. The periodic readings from those two uphill monitoring wells and the other two wells downhill near the Walden Street school entrance, will tell both us and the DEP if the cap is working for the long term. Those wells are required by the DEP. Additionally, the proposal of breaking through the new million dollar cap for parking lot lighting and adding another large (non-permeable surface) parking lot in that area, will just add more run off into that catch basin above the skate park. The run-off from above the skate park already empties out downhill near the school entrance corner at Walden street. That additional run-off will now contain car oils and snow salts. Salt run-off causes mineralization of trees. We already have a problem with dying trees along Walden Street from salt mineralization. That Walden Street high school entrance is always flooded. Adding more run-off would be worse. This runoff is absorbed into the ground and then goes farther below ground into our natural Aquifers and runs towards our Hugh Cargill public drinking

water well and Fairyland. Please remember we, do not have sewers on the East side of the campus or on Walden Street.

Some thoughts:
Why isn't the Article's request for money for an additional campus parking lot and money for the repair of the campus loop roadway, separated into two separate Warrant Articles?
Why aren't those who feel so strongly about asking for tax dollars for their kids to have both a parking space and a bus seat, considering private funding for this type of project?
Why aren't we looking into a way to ask those juniors and seniors that drive, to "waive" their bus seats, so we don't drive around half empty buses everyday, after fighting for so long to keep school buses in Town, after borrowing $4M to do it? Maybe some of those freed-up school buses might be put to service for help with other community transportation needs.

What happened to a "Green Campus" concept and visions for a future "Greener Concord", overall?

And additionally, but even more importantly is that if the high school has a certain number of total parking spaces (even if it is less than the desirable #), why are more student spaces than actually available, being allotted and "assigned/sold"? There should never be parking overflow or shortage, if you aren't "over-assigning" the number of student spaces. No students should be parking on the school campus without an assigned space, anyway. ***I really think that there should be much better parking lot management guidelines set up for prioritization of how, how many, and to who, the presently available number of parking spaces are actually assigned.***

As Article 16 is currently being presented, and before I would even think of supporting either of these requested campus additions in the future, I feel much more planning and a public presentation with professional conceptual designs of the overall greater projected future plans/visions for the whole Eastern CCHS campus and landfill area space, addressing those other questions about the potential problems associated with construction, drainage and those possible environment impact issues of any future construction on or near that landfill. Any presentation should always include estimation of the cost, also.

Finally, as I have always been very supportive with respect to all the necessary items for the CCRSD, this year, it seems that there some other much higher priority school district related warrant articles asking for more of my tax dollars, that will take precedence. Article 16 items need more investigation.

Sincerely,
Julie-Ann Cancio
36 Bristers Hill Road
Concord, MA
(305) 773-6795