

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
2/10/10

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Meeting Date: February 10, 2010

Called to Order: 6:01 PM

Finance Committee Members Present: John Hanold, Andrew Killeen, Michael Naughton, Marge Levenson and Lynn Reynolds

Montague Selectmen Present: Pat Allen, Patricia Pruitt and Mark Fairbrother

Others Present: Carolyn Olsen (Town Accountant), Patricia Dion (Treasurer/Tax Collector), Tom Bergeron (DPW Superintendent), Sue SanSoucie (Director of Libraries), Cindy Tarail, Alice Armen, and Karen Latka (Library Trustees)

Minutes

FC Moved: To approve the minutes of February 3, 2010.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

BOS Moved: To approve the minutes of February 3, 2010.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Reserve Fund Transfer for Treasurer. Town Treasurer/Tax Collector Patricia Dion presented her request for a reserve fund transfers of \$5000.00 for Tax Title Foreclosure expenses. This transfer is needed because of three parcels currently in the land court process.

FC Moved: To transfer \$5000.00 from the Reserve Fund (001-5-132-5780) to Treasurer Tax Title Foreclosures (001-5-145-5781).

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

MMA Legislative Breakfast is being held at the Public Safety Facility at 8:30 AM on March 5, 2010.

Budget Hearing DPW

The following questions were submitted to Mr. Bergeron and answered via e-mail prior to the meeting.

1. You provided a sheet on the net expense of Trash/Recycling, which is appreciated. Further concerning the Trash summary: it appears sticker fees cover over 85% of the waste pickup/tipping cost. If less trash were put out, resulting from better recycling or waste reduction, would the reduction in sticker sales be greater than the reduction in pickup/tipping cost? Any wild guess?? There will be no reduction in cost for pickup because we are under a contract with Allied Waste for pickup trash and recycling. The tipping fees are paid to Covanta could go down if less trash gets delivered to Bondies Island, tipping fees are charged by the ton. Bottom line to this is if people recycle more the less trash, the less trash the less weight then the tipping fees go down. Tipping fees are \$80.38 per ton and we send down about 40 to 45 tons every two weeks.

2. On the Trash subject: are Allied Waste services contracted yet? Or is the figure here a forecast to be replaced later by a firmer number? We just started a new five year contract as of July 1, 2009. This contract has a three percent increase for FY 2011.
3. A major contributor to the 3% cut scenario is Full-Time Overtime. How would services change if this O/T were reduced by half in this way? What would you do under this scenario that you would not do as part of your full request? (Include the Snow & Ice budget in this topic.) Full time overtime is mainly for emergencies after hours such as trees down, plugged sewers, flooded streets, police or fire dept request. Some over time is used for spring clean up, for example sweeping streets and side walks, and painting of cross walks. Items listed above, except for emergencies items, would not get done or will have to be done during regular work hours which will prove difficult to do because of traffic.
Snow and Ice - we can not reduce this due to the cost of sand and salt always going up in price so we took the hit in over time. We still can not predict when or what kind of storm we will get or even what day of the week, and regardless of when a storm hits we are still bound to remove the snow and make our roads safe.
4. Non-Personal Services categories are budgeted for FY11 essentially the same, line by line, as in FY10 – yet the mid-year spending in FY10 is near-to-beyond the budget, in certain line-items. How was spending in the current year considered in planning for the next year? The lines items that took the big hits were early in the year and may or may not be used for the rest of the year.
5. A follow-up to the previous question: Building Repair & Maintenance in the Public Buildings category, and Public Works Supplies and Other Professional & Technical in the Construction/Maintenance category, are very heavily spent at the half-year mark. What happened this year that you don't expect to encounter next year? Usually there is only \$6,000.00 in Public Buildings Building R & M. This year there was a reserve fund transfer into this account for \$11,760.00 for the repair of the Montague Ctr. Library, so this line item is at about 50%.
Public Works Supplies is low because we had to pave E. Chestnut Hill Road in Millers Falls, and the DPW had to pay for it ourselves.
Professional & Technical is low because we had to pay for line painting of our streets in the fall.
6. Landfill Monitoring has cost nothing to date, but is budgeted flat for next year. Is this a one-time effort that simply hasn't happened yet? The landfill is monitored every year and just has not been done yet this year.
7. Please comment on the condition of your equipment, and any replacement/repair issues you foresee in the next couple of years. I expect you will cover this ground in more detail with the Capital Improvements Committee but we would like a quick overview. With the purchase of the last two trucks we are sitting pretty good as far as the dump trucks go. We will have to look at replacement of more very soon after the

lease is paid off. We still have two front end loaders that need to be replaced, although we do have one new one in the garage. Pickups are quickly getting old. The five pickups and two one tons are used every day and are relied on heavily for plowing, so if anything needs replacing first it will be pickups and one ton trucks.

Other items noted or discussed were:

- The DPW is also in charge of maintaining sewer lines. This is shown in the WPCF budget under DPW Subsidiary.
- The DPW Budget has been cut in each of the last 6 years. The DPW tries to control costs but public demands must be met. Things like street cleaning at night will be eliminated if the DPW overtime budget is significantly cut.
- Ms. Levenson suggested that the Board of Selectmen seasonally notify the public of public ordinances and town by-laws that they should be aware of.
- This is the second year in a row that the DPW Budget has not had enough money for part-time summer help.
- Mr. Naughton noted that in the 3% reduction request some items are cut significantly and others less so. Does the 3% reduction request represent how he would hit the target number, or is it a realistic number? It is not a realistic number.
- Mr. Naughton asked if we're doing an adequate job of maintenance on our public buildings. Mr. Bergeron replied that they all get cleaned every day, but as far as proactive work, if it's not broken, it's not fixed.
- Ms. Pruitt put in a pitch to suggest we not further reduce the amount of the annual special article for DPW Equipment and that we work to increase it in the future.
- There was a lengthy discussion about mattress disposal and whether the charges could be made to exceed the costs of disposal, thereby creating a revenue stream for the Town. Mr. Bergeron will look into this.

Budget Hearing Libraries

The following questions were submitted to Ms. SanSoucie and answered via e-mail prior to the meeting.

1. I understand that retention of state certification, and its privileges, depends on two state-mandated "tests," the first of which is a total budget 2.5% above the average of the last three years' appropriations (not actual spending). From my information this test is calculated as follows:

	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Average</u>
FY08	287,945	
FY09	285,073	
FY10	<u>293,439</u>	
Total	866,457	288,819

A 2.5% increase brings you to 296,039 and you are requesting 296,040. This looks good.

2. The second test is to spend 19% of the total on Books, Media and Subscriptions, accounts 5581 and 5587. That figure is 56,247 and you have budgeted a total of 57,000. Looks good.

3. Last year there was concern over the utility costs, which I recall required diversion of state aid money away from normal Library functions. At the half-year mark in FY10 you are well below the comparable figure for FY09; does January consumption seem to continue this good trend? You are requesting a lower budget than last year and I hope this is realistic. I think we will be ok with utilities, but if not we have always taken cost overruns out of State Aid funding.
4. Office Supplies and Computer R & M were spent well over the FY10 budget by mid-year; does this reflect one-time or unusual experience that is not likely to recur? Your FY11 request shows a modest increase over FY10 and I wonder if your internal allocation of the budget total is realistic. The Computer Equipments number - the larger one - is really our CWMARS assessment. Due to some changes they made in telecommunications and how the system works, our assessment for FY11 is actually somewhat smaller. Again, we have always taken additional costs from State Aid funding.
5. I assume periodic replacement of computers would be necessary, and would have an effect on R & M costs. What is the condition of your computer equipment? As for new computers, I have just purchased two for Millers Falls, as the main staff computer there, the one that the circulation system works on, cannot be shut off as it will not start up again. I also purchased one new public access computer to replace a very old Dell machine. Again, funding for these comes out of State Aid funding. Last year I purchased a new computer for Linda and one for me, as ours were old and did not run our e-mail and Internet fast enough for our liking - one could snooze while waiting!!! In fact, Linda was using one of our old - very old - Gates grant computers. Now a real dinosaur! We will be needing two new computers in Montague Center in the next fiscal year just to keep up.

As for the library business in general, we are busier than ever. This failing economy has resulted in higher library usage. In 2009 we did have circulation totals over 100,000 - 105,254 - with 71% of the action in Turners Falls, 17% in Montague Center, and 12% in Millers Falls. We are also receiving 3 -5 large bins of books five days per week through delivery, and sending out 4 - 5 daily. Our public access computers are used 100% on any given day and we could use more. If we could fit additional computers we could probably use at least four more. We have many folks coming in to use the wireless service also. It may be time to think of purchasing laptops that we could secure somehow to desks for people to use. The Mass. Broadband initiative was hoping to get funded this year. That failed. What that would have brought us is approximately 10 laptops and faster wireless service through a grant via the Regional Library System.

Other items noted or discussed were:

- Ms. Levenson publicly thanked all the volunteers at our libraries and noted what a wonderful job they do.
- Ms. Allen asked if the library could ask for a waiver and not use it if it's not needed. Ms. SanSoucie noted that to get a waiver you have to prove that the cuts

were across the board and not just for the library. If a waiver is granted it stays on record as having been granted.

- Mr. Hanold mentioned areas where state aid has been used in the past, one of which is utilities. In FY09 the library spent over \$10,000 for fuel from the state aid account. State aid is generally used to replace computers, fill in budget shortfalls, and fund other miscellaneous needs that are not in the budget.
- Ms. SanSoucie explained how she creates the budget. She starts with wages, then the 19% needed for materials. Then there's the CWMARS assessment. The rest she just divides out from what is left. If anything ends up under-budgeted it is paid for from State Aid.
- Ms. Latka noted that while trustees are advocates for the libraries, they also try to be fiscally conservative.
- Mr. Naughton asked how much state aid we receive. Last year we received \$18,000 while this year we're expecting about \$12,000.
- Mr. Naughton asked about plans for a new library facility. Ms. SanSoucie said she expects to have between 2 and 5 years before retirement, and she suggests that the Finance Committee and Capital Improvements Committee ask the next Library Director to pursue that project.

Update from Gill-Montague Working Group.

Mr. Naughton - The technical committee, which is myself, Tupper Brown (Gill Finance Committee Chair), Jeff Singleton and Carl Ladd have been doing some working along. We've been exchanging e-mails and we actually had a meeting Monday night. We are starting to work on different scenarios. We were slowed down by the fact that basically all three of them were concerned for one reason or another about the fact that it appears that Montague intends to provide less money to the district than for FY2010 using its new method of assessment calculation than the district would have gotten using the old method of assessment calculation.

Ms. Allen – The 48/52?

Mr. Naughton - The 48/52 or the 50/50. Well, actually the 50/50 might provide them with more. But let's just say there's a concern okay and what I have said, which I believe is true, but I'm telling you guys in case I'm off base here, is that that was not the town's intent. That there are kind of two issues, one of which is how we decide we want to calculate what an affordable assessment is, and the second is what number we end up with. And it was never my intent in suggesting a new way of calculating to do that in order to come up with a different number from what we would have ended up with in the old method.

Ms. Pruitt – How could you not have come up with it?

Ms. Olsen – The main reason that the number is different is because they're using a different percent allocation. If you use the 50/50 that they used before, the numbers are not that far different.

Ms. Pruitt –But he did propose a different way of divvying it up.

Mr. Naughton –You could explain it by either saying we looked at the increase in revenues and then we applied a certain split to it or you could explain it by saying we looked at all available money and we applied a certain split to it. You could explain

arriving at a particular number using both of those methods. The thing is you'd have to understand if you want to hit the number you get to with one, you'd have to use the appropriate number on the other side to get there. And what I said is that the 50/50, 52/48 in terms of exactly what the percentage is, I believe is not cast in stone. That it is still up for discussion and that if this is an issue going forward it's one that I've said I'm certainly personally willing to discuss it and I believe that the rest of the committees are also willing to discuss it.

Ms. Pruitt –I'm curious as to why you wouldn't think that you would be lowering the amount you're giving to the schools. I mean, you're not just making these numbers or making this process in a vacuum, it's attached to a set of consequences of those numbers.

Mr. Naughton –I was trying to base the numbers on (tape stopped)

Mr. Hanold – report, so I'm going to leave you in charge of determining at what point you want to stop and entertain questions. To make sure you get through what it is you want to get through.

Mr. Naughton. That's basically the report. My intent in proposing a new method was to pick a percent that would end up in the same place as last year. In the course of the discussion, a majority decided that picking a whole number for the percent was important. That made it impossible to end up in the same place as we did last year. because last year it was not a whole percent of split. So if we want to end up in the same place we ended up last year, we will have to reconsider the decision to only pick whole numbers for percentages. But we can certainly end up exactly where we did last year if we decide to not use whole percents.

Ms. Levenson – I just want to say that, knowing the members of the committee, I'm going to assume that your committee will get it together and reach an agreement. Because this process has been started with the state, we're asking DESE and the state to quote "get their act together" and working with us it seems to me there's a lot of pressure on this group to get it together and compromise and reach a solution within that group so that as quickly as you move forward, that there is not division but the house is in order so that when you say the town meets again with DESE and or Rosenberg or Kulik, people are moving forward in stride together. I think I would urge your group to reach compromise as quickly as possible and realize that the stakes here are high, we've asked the state to step in claiming our own house is in order, let's put it in order.

Mr. Naughton – Let me say that we're trying to do that. I'm one guy. I can't speak for the Finance Committee unless the Finance Committee tells me that I can, I can't speak for the Board of Selectmen unless they tell me I can. Yes, we certainly agree with all of that. We do want to work something out. I believe we will work something out. I think we're making a lot of progress. But I'm coming back here to tell you guys that one of the things that's on the table, that I've said is open for discussion, and I don't think anybody wants to do this bad thing that you don't notice that we may be doing, because I'm only one person. I can't promise that the Finance Committee is going to reconsider its decision or that the Board of Selectmen is going to reconsider their decision. So without at least you guys saying "yeah, that's ok Mike, you can go do that"

Ms. Pruitt – What were the other points of view in the meeting? I mean, you were talking about the 52/48, they were asking about that, but what was Carl Ladd's response to it?

Mr. Naughton – My understanding is that Carl Ladd is working very hard to produce a level funded district budget. And one of the points of view at the meeting that this is a huge and welcome undertaking on his part. And that he should be congratulated and encouraged in doing that. He and others have expressed that they were counting on having the same amount of assessment from Montague. Even though on the one hand a level funded district budget really says nothing about what the assessments are going to be, and I think we can assume that everything else being equal the assessments are going to be higher because we're expecting state aid to be lower, apparently there was an expectation that Montague would continue using the method it was using last year and that that would produce a certain number and then when Montague said, well gee we actually would like to use a different method and that seems to produce a different number that was smaller, they felt that this was somehow taking money away from the district.

Several voices – well it is.

Mr. Naughton – Well it is based on the expectation that what we did last year was what we should do this year.

Ms. Pruitt – Well we're engaging in conversation about making a longer term budget plan, so one of the advantages of longer term is that there's some continuity and predictability.

Mr. Killeen – When you said that, my impression was that the 52/48 did push in the direction of preserving more money on the town side. Now, you can say that another way, which is it prevents money from flowing as freely to the school side. And I think that that was the spirit that I got when we voted on that. So I guess I'm a little surprised by what you're saying there was that you were surprised that they felt that way.

Mr. Naughton – Maybe I'm not explaining it right. The decision last year was to split increased revenue's 50/50. That did not result in a 50/50 split of all the money available. It actually ended up in a split that was a little bit more for the town side and a little bit less for the district. Even though we split increased revenues 50/50 the whole thing wasn't split 50/50. This year in December we decided instead of just looking at increased revenues, we decided to look at all money and our first pass was to say let's take 50/50 because that's pretty close. Well, it actually isn't as close as 52/48 if what you want to do is end up at the same place as last year's method would produce. It is in fact shifting a larger amount of money to the district than the 52/48 shifts to the town. And again, my intent in suggesting the new method was not to shift money towards the district and it was not to shift money towards the town, and I wasn't sure going into the December meeting that anybody else was even interested in changing the method, but in fact we had a discussion and people seemed to like the idea and at that point we had to pick a percent and I don't believe we ever thought that was cast in stone and my take is well, we picked 50/50 because that gave us something to start from. We then looked at it and said gee, that doesn't seem to really do what we wanted it to do, which is to end up for FY11 preserving continuity by not

being very different, if at all, from what the other method would have produced, so we reconsidered, and then there was the discussion of both trying to make it more like what the historical trend had actually been for a split, but also trying to keep it at a whole percentage. And I think it's the keeping it at a whole percentage is the problem. Because a whole percentage of \$14 million is \$140,000, and even a half of a percent either way is \$70,000, which is about what it is, and probably this percentage should be closer to 51.5/48.5 would get us within a few thousand, and if you want it to get closer, it would be easy enough to fine tune the percent to whatever. The other thing was that some people felt that if we start getting into fractions of percentages it's going to get too complicated. I personally, don't

Ms. Levenson – I maintain that the by the next meeting you guys, including yourself, Singleton, and Tupper and maybe Lynn, you're probably it, on that committee, reaches a compromise number, I'm willing to put money on it. And if

Mr. Naughton – You're willing to let me speak for the Finance Committee?

Ms. Levenson – What I'm asking is that if there is a compromise number, that you then bring that compromise number back to Finance Board and say, "a compromise number was reached, perhaps Finance Board should reconsider what we did" and look at this number which came forward since this is the first time we've had actively school superintendent, school board, finance and Selectboard in a small room working to mend a situation.

Mr. Naughton – If that's what people want, that can be done very easily.

Mr. Hanold – My feeling is this is a group that was assembled, in a sense, in real time in the middle of a broad meeting with two towns, two boards, DESE and the School Committee and I think it was stated then you people are an ad hoc committee, who happens to be drawn from a series of places but that has no directive ability. So I'm glad that you're coming back and telling us what's going on. I would say anything that gets brought back to us comes back to our respective boards for consideration but is not a directive to us.

Ms. Levenson – As result of his meetings we may very well want to revisit it.

Mr. Naughton – If you're up to considering it, I'll be happy to have something, maybe by the next meeting. I think I know what will make our group happy, but on the other hand I don't want to mess up. I certainly want to run it by them and make sure I'm right, and I'll be happy to bring something back if that's what people want me to do.

Ms. Pruitt – I guess I would like to see the working out of the three possible...

Ms. Allen – (to Mr. Fairbrother) You know, if you want to make a motion to adjourn, make it yourself.

Mr. Fairbrother – Motion to adjourn the Selectmen's meeting.

Mr. Hanold – well

Ms. Allen – I'm not going to second it at this point.

Ms. Pruitt – Excuse me, I'm talking. I can't second that. So I would like to see the three different possible percentages laid out so that we see how it results in the different distribution of monies in each case. That would really make something clearer to me. And maybe get us out of the "someone's trying to be a bad guy to the schools here" thing, and back on what we should be thinking about.

Ms. Reynolds – Is there any sense of a desire to reconsider the method, not just the percentage?

Mr. Naughton – I believe not at this point. There was.

Ms. Reynolds – So that route seems to be, if so long as we can work things through, they seem to be happy with the new method?

Mr. Naughton – We met for an hour and a half on Monday, with the goal of sort of having a conversation about the different methods, and their strengths and weaknesses but I had to leave after an hour. The rest of them stayed. I heard afterwards that Jeff, who was the chief critic of the new method, had decided that it could work fine. And Tupper and Carl, I don't think really cared. I think they're more concerned about whether it might end up producing a number that's very different from the old method and especially if that number is less for the district how that wouldn't be a good thing. But I think as long as we arrive at a number that's basically the same as the number that would have been arrived at by the old method, I don't think either one of them particularly cares. And Tupper, in fact, told me afterwards that he thought I'd been very clear in describing the advantages of what I proposed, that he thought it made a lot of sense, but I don't think they really care. Now Jeff really did care for awhile, but I'm told by others that he cares less. He misunderstood what my method was, in fact, in a rather significant way, and that misunderstanding led him to believe there was a very serious problem, which if he had understood correctly would have been a very serious problem, but in describing the serious problem he wasn't actually talking about the method that I proposed.

Ms. Reynolds – Well certainly from my point of view, if there are things that should be looked at again, I would certainly encourage you to do that. I don't know how the rest of us feel.

Ms. Levenson – I think I've already expressed that view. I know that you guys are working hard to compromise and I'm not going to interfere in your committee works. I have complete faith that by the next meeting you will have a number that satisfies all of you. And satisfies the town and the schools and we can move forward together as a group because that's what was intended and I have complete faith in you guys.

Mr. Naughton – I would hope you're right.

Ms. Reynolds – Since we've given mandates, you need to come back and say there are concerns over this and the committee is requesting that we relook at this, and that, and the other thing.

Mr. Naughton – That's what I'm doing, I'm just trying to get a sense of where you guys want me to go.

Several voices talking at once.

Ms. Pruitt – ... come into play here and make the arbitration in the final analysis as to which way we're going and how we're going.

Ms. Levenson – I think we should thank Mike for doing so much work for the town.

Mr. Hanold – Just like last year we can come into town meeting with similar but not identical points of view and town meeting can decide. We did not agree between the two boards at the last town meeting, we were very close but not exact. For myself I'm interested not only with what the final number is, but with the underpinnings of it.

Ms. Levenson – I'm interested in moving forward here. And I think that if we've had a fifteen or twenty long and I've been here thirty years and I certainly would like to end the civil war with the schools and the town ASAP. I'm tired of the fighting, I bet Mike's tired of the fighting, anybody in this room is tired of the fighting. If there's a way that this committee can help end that civil war and move us forward with the state and DESE and the state reps in creating a state-wide system which doesn't bankrupt towns and provide a third rate education for our grandkids then that's what you guys are doing. You're creating a poster child for the state. And that's what you guys are doing.

Mr. Hanold – I'd be happy if you solved us.

Ms. Levenson – Our problem is a state problem and they know that and what they're doing is providing a basis for the state to do it.

Mr. Naughton – And that is the dream that we do that. Although if we can manage to get the 2011 budget more harmonious than the 2010 budget was then that will already be a huge success.

Ms. Allen - I think the sense is – go do what you need to do. But one thing I would ask is could you do a quick little sheet on what the new method is.

Ms. Pruitt – Thank you very much. I was just about to say that.

Ms. Olsen – I thought I did that and sent it out a meeting or two ago.

Mr. Naughton – Carolyn certainly has done one. I will be happy to send around calculations, some of which have already been done by Carolyn, which will make my job a lot easier. One question I have though is, there was a suggestion made at the our last meeting, that perhaps this split, the method we've adopted, says we're going to split the money, and we're going to give one side of the split to the GMRSD and one the rest of it will go to everything else, defined as these things, one of which is the Franklin County Technical School.

Ms. Allen – Now that brings me to my other point. I personally think all education should be lumped into whatever that percentage is.

Mr. Naughton – Would you like me to explore the ramifications of adopting that as a method as part of what I bring back to this group? Really all that means is taking the Tech School budget, putting it on the other side of the equation and looking at the percentage.

Ms. Allen – And a line item for the Smith Vocational students.

Mr. Naughton – So the years we pay the Smith Vocational school, count that as a factor on the education side also.

Ms. Allen – Yes.

Mr. Naughton – That actually makes a lot of sense to me. I'll be happy to work with Carolyn by letting her get me all the answers.

Ms. Allen – But if that's going to muddy your discussion now, it doesn't have to come up.

Mr. Naughton – Let me say that I think, leaving Jeff aside, who as we all know has very strong opinions, which we sometimes agree with and sometimes don't, I believe that nobody else really cares. What they want is some predictability and they want continuity from last year to this year. Tupper's feeling is that if Carl can really produce a level funded budget, that's going to be a huge thing and it would be a bad

PR thing if nothing else for Montague to appear to be saying “Well, and we’re slipping away another X grand.” As long as we don’t do that, as long as we say “Here’s the same X grand as you would have gotten under the old method”, I don’t think he really cares how we do it. Part of what we’re doing is trying to come up with a process to move forward, which will involve more discussions about how we decide what affordability is, and whether we should be moving in one direction or another because historically, if you look at the percentages, we actually are moving towards 50 percent from significantly more on the town side and significantly less on the education side. Is that a trend we think we ought to continue, or stop, or be reversed? That’s a real question. But to me, we go into fiscal 11 saying we stop it, we look at it, and we talk about it. As long as we can go into fiscal 11 doing that, then it doesn’t really matter to me what the percentage ends up being. Because maybe that will be the same in the future or maybe it won’t to be discussed.

Ms. Pruitt – If we put the tech school in this education funding pool that we will have, are we going to increase that pool by the roughly \$700,000? Or are we going to now decrease further?

Mr. Naughton – Making that decision will certainly change the percentage. It would no longer be 52/48. It might actually be 52/48 the other way. Again, that’s just a question of what you decide is on each side. The bigger ramification is that going into a new fiscal year, when you take whatever percentage you’ve agreed upon, you say here’s the pool of money for education, and then it will become much more significant in terms of the GMRSD assessment, whether we had a Smith Vocational student. Or what happened with the Tech School assessment. It does kind of make sense that if more kids go to the Tech School, and our assessment there goes up as a result, then the GMRSD maybe should also go down.

Ms. Pruitt – So then you’re treating those students going to the Tech School as choicing out students. In other words the GMRSD pays a penalty, including state aid.

Mr. Naughton – Essentially they are. I guess the question is why treat them differently?

Mr. Fairbrother – Because if their students go down, they don’t get as much state aid, and if we cut their assessment because students went to the Tech, they get hit twice.

Mr. Killeen – Isn’t the assessment a preliminary number that is used to then drive toward reality.

Mr. Naughton – The assessment winds up being the number that we actually pay the district.

Next Meeting: February 17, 2010 at 6:00 PM
6:05 - WPCF
6:30 - Legal, Shared Cost, Utilities, Other Governmental, General Insurance, and Workers Compensation
7:00 - Parks & Recreation.

Adjourned at 8:10 PM
Respectfully Submitted,
Carolyn Olsen