

Minutes Holden Fiance Committee, September 6, 2023, Senior Center
Reorganization Meeting and Presentation by WRSD Superintendent

Members Present: Paul Challenger, Dave White, Chris Lucchesi, Al Berg, Stephanie Adams, Donna Wallace, Sarah Concannon, Marilynn Foley

Member Absent: Jane Titcomb

Also Present: Jim Reilly, Superintendent WRSD, Michelle Grise, Business and Finance Director, WRSD, Mark Wilde, Facilities Manager, WRSD, Joy Wilde, Principal Dawson School, Maleah Gustafson, WRDSC, Gerri Herlihy and Tom Curran, Holden BOS, other interested citizens, Peter Lukes, Town Manager @ 8:15.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

Paul introduced and welcomed new member Sarah Concannon. Sarah gave a short review of her background.

In the absence of the Moderator, Paul called for the election of officers for the ensuing year.

A motion by Al 2nd by Stephanie to elect Paul as Chaiman was voted unanimously.

A motion by Al 2nd by Stephanie to elect Chris as Vice Chairman was voted unanimously.

A motion by Stephanie 2nd by Al to elect Marilynn as Clerk was voted unanimously.

Jim Reilly, WRSD Superintendent had requested a meeting with the Finance Committee to request funding from the Committee to lease a modular classroom to alleviate overcrowding at Dawson School.

Before the presentation Paul explained to the audience present what the role of the Finance Committee is, what are options are for funding projects outside the budget cycle and the legal uses of the Reserve Fund. Regardless of any decision tonight, the Committee assured the audience they supported education.

The Superintendent presented information regarding the leasing of modular classrooms. He had added 2 new staff for Dawson in the WRSD Budget for F/Y 24. When the budget passed at the annual town meetings, he had to plan how to arrange for classroom areas for the students. The district looked into purchasing modulars, but the cost of new ones was prohibitive. Mark Wilde discovered a modular for lease in good condition. A 4-year lease cost would be \$168,000.00 per year with option to buy. The District was asking the Committee to fund \$42,000.00 for the first year. The Committee discussed the options, asking questions of the Superintendent. It was suggested that the District could meet with BOS and Town Manager to ask for a special town meeting. The request as presented did not meet the guideline of the use of the Reserve Fund, since it was not an unexpected emergency. The WRSD knew that they did not have space for the new teachers when they proposed the budget, so its not an emergency. The District did not feel they could ask for money for classrooms without knowing if they would have teachers to use the space. One outcome is that there needs to be better communication between the WRSD and the member towns as to procedures. A motion by Al 2nd by Donna to have Paul and one other member meet with the WRSD, BOS and the TM to come up with a proposal was voted

unanimously. Paul thanked the Superintendent and the audience members for coming to the meeting.

Peter updated the Committee on the Town audit, the law suit with Worcester, the library windows, IT upgrades to Munis budgeting capabilities, Eagle Lake and memo from Town Council.

Donna volunteered to attend WRSDC meetings.

The Committee discussed the budget plans for F/Y 25, and what can the town afford. Al will do a forecast of the budget changes and the levy limit. The budget is mostly predictable at a macro level.

A motion by Chris 2nd by Stephanie to approve the minutes of June 7, 2023 was voted unanimously (abstained Sarah).

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marilynn Foley, Clerk