

## Lenox Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: June 3, 2021

Members Present: Joan Bruno (JB), Dave Carpenter (DC), Kristine Cass (KC), Michael Feder (MF), Mindi Morin (MM), David Neubert (DN), Andrea Pignatelli (AP)

Guests: Clarence Fanto (CF)

Absent:

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Meeting called to order at 7:03 PM.

The committee discussed and voted on all the financial articles on the warrant.

**Article 2:** all in favor.

**Article 3: 4 votes in favor (KC, AP, MM, DN). 3 votes opposed (MF, DC, JB).**

MF voiced his disapproval of the structure of the school budget. The school plans to use about 85% of funding to staff. At 85% of the cost, any increase on teacher compensation has an immediate impact on town finances and there is very little flexibility in the budget for non-staff school expenses. JB sees a concerning pattern of increases in the school budget. DN noted that it would be fruitful to bring the discussion of the school budget to town meeting. The group discussed how our purview is to offer an opinion regarding the fiscal structure of the school budget. The letter will reflect the split vote.

**Article 4:** all in favor.

**Article 5:** all in favor.

**Article 7:** all in favor.

**Article 14:** all in favor.

**Article 15:** all in favor.

**Article 16:** all in favor.

**Article 17:** all in favor.

**Article 18:** all in favor.

**Article 19:** all in favor.

**Article 20:** all in favor.

**Article 26:** all in favor.

The committee discussed selecting a new chair. KC proposed voting on a chair annually. MF made a motion select a chair to serve through the end of the FY2023 budget cycle. The motion passed unanimously.

DN made a motion to appoint KC as chair for the FY2023 budget cycle. The motion passed unanimously, with JB and KC abstaining. The committee decided to postpone a vote on secretary until we have new members join the committee. DC noted that the minutes are an important vehicle of communication for the committee, and we should make sure the role is taken seriously. MM volunteered to take minutes at the next meeting. DN suggested that we could rotate the role of secretary.

The committee discussed the letter to taxpayers. MF proposed a one-page letter addresses the current state of the town's fiscal affairs, and highlights our concerns about the upcoming financial decisions. Rooms/meals taxes continue to be constrained due to COVID. DN notes that the assessment base will increase due to new constructions. MF noted that there is significant uncertainty regarding both final costs and external funding for major capital projects. We are

optimistic that we will receive some federal funding. MF believes the letter should express concern about the structure of the school budget. KC will circulate a draft of the letter to the group. The letter will be finalized at the next meeting – Wednesday June 9 at 7pm in Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 8:01pm.

Respectively Submitted,  
Kristine Cass, Chair