**Lenox Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

Date: April 21, 2022

Members Present: Dave Carpenter (DC), Kristine Cass (KC), Michael Feder (MF), Dave Neubert (DN)

Members on Phone: Mindi Morin (MM), Blaise Gregory (BG)

Guests Present: Clarence Fanto (CF)

Absent:

Meeting called to order at 6:05pm. DC, KC, MF, and DN present.

Finance Committee members present voted on all warrant articles excluding Article 3 (school budget).

Article 2 approved, 4-0 vote.

Article 4 approved, 4-0 vote.

Article 5 approved, 4-0 vote.

Article 7 approved, 4-0 vote.

Article 11 approved, 4-0 vote.

Article 12 approved, 4-0 vote.

Article 13 approved, 4-0 vote.

MF made a motion to call MM and BG. MM joined via phone at 6:16pm. BG joined the call at 6:20pm. MF expressed concern that the school budget is too high, and reiterated the concerns voiced in the Finance Committee letter finalized at the prior meeting. DC moved to vote, motion seconded and approved.

Article 3 not approved, 1-5 vote.

MF moved that we attach the Select Board’s letter to Finance Committee to our letter. Passed 6-0. KC will investigate and assuming no concerns from other parties, Select Board’s letter will be attached to Finance Committee letter as distributed at Town Meeting.

DC suggested that someone from Finance Committee speak at Town Meeting. DN explained that it is important for taxpayers to understand what happens if school budget is not approved at Town Meeting. If budget is not approved, schools do not shut down, but school budget reverts to prior year’s budget until an amended budget is approved at a future town meeting.

MF suggested asking the Select Board to share their concern about the school budget at Town Meeting, or explain the procedure if budget is not approved. KC will follow up with Select Board to recommend that someone explain the procedure at Town Meeting, either someone from Select Board, Town Manager, or Town Moderator.

KC agreed to speak at Town Meeting about the history of the Finance Committee vote on the school budget for both FY2022 and FY2023, and reiterate that the concern from Finance Committee is that schools have not done a strategic review of staffing. DC noted that Select Board also expressed concern about the school’s budgeting process. MF reiterated his concern that if the school budget continues to accelerate at its current pace that the residents are in significantly higher taxes.

DN thanked MF for his service, as this is his last meeting. KC supported DN’s thanks and MF noted progress in the work done by the Finance Committee during his tenure as a member of the Finance Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 6:38pm.

Respectively Submitted,

Kristine Cass, Chair