

Joint Town Council and School Finance Committee Meeting Notes
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
Falmouth Town Hall
MARCH 26th, 2018 – 4:30PM

Members Attendance: Aaron Svedlow (Town Council)

Others in Attendance: Claudia King (Town Council); Caleb Hemphill (Town Council Chair); Karen Farber (Town Council);
Danielle Tracy (School Board Chair); Cindy Han (School Board); Jen Libby (School Board);

Nathan Poore (Town Manager); Peter McHugh (Finance Director); Susan Gibney (Accountant); Amy Lamontagne (Assistant Town Manager); Dan O'Shea (School Director of Finance and Operations); Geoff Bruno (School Superintendent)

The meeting was called to order @ 4:50PM. There was not a quorum of Finance Committee members present so it was decided to move forward with the Budget Presentations.

1. Presentation of proposed FY 2019 Town Budget.

- a. Nathan Poore and Peter McHugh presented a Power Point summary of the FY 2019 Budget proposal highlighting the budget challenges and solutions and proposing a Mil rate increase of .12 or 3.95% to the Town portion of the tax rate. Significant highlights include:
 - i. The addition of a School Resource officer to the Police Department in January 2019 and a Part Time Fire Department EMA/Firefighter in July 2018. These positions will allow the Town to enhance School safety and continue to provide a high level of Fire/EMT services.
 - ii. The proposal included a refund of Business Equipment Tax Exemption reimbursements from the State which were overpaid by \$171K over the last three years. This refund will be paid from General Fund Uncommitted Fund Balance so it will not impact the tax rate.
 - iii. The proposal also included \$75,000 for Senior Tax Relief.
 - iv. There was a change from the Budget presented to the Finance Committee on March 8th to add \$28K to the Police Vehicle CIP funding to cover an end-of-life replacement of all Police Cruiser computer equipment.
 - v. The Wastewater Department Budget calls for a 3% increase to user fees increasing the monthly rate to \$42.90 per month.

2. Presentation of the proposed FY2019 School Budget.

- a. School Superintendent Geoff Bruno and School Director of Finance and Operations Dan O'Shea presented a Power Point summary of the proposed FY2019 Falmouth School Budget.

- i. School expenditures are projected to increase 3.33% and represent a roll forward budget increase of 2.16% and new requests representing an increase of 1.17%.
 - ii. The expense increase impact on the mil rate is projected to be \$.43 on the school portion of the tax rate.
 - iii. Changes in the calculation of General Purpose Aid to Education from the State and interest savings from the Elementary School Bond refinancing reduced Falmouth's funding by \$732K representing a \$.32 mil increase to the school portion of the tax rate bringing the total proposed school mil rate increase to \$.75.
- b. There was much discussion following the presentation regarding the budget proposal. Highlights of the discussion include:
 - i. Councilor Svedlow asked about the status of the New Requests
 - 1. The School Board is continuing to look at those requests and will vote on the Budget on April 2.
 - ii. Councilor Farber asked for clarification on the requests for Special Ed and the new stipends for a Testing Coordinator and Theater Coordinator.
 - 1. Moving the School Psychologist to the General Fund allowed the school to avoid paying 20% of salary to Maine State Retirement.
 - 2. The Testing Coordinator has historically been covered by Guidance Councilors during a very busy time for them, the stipend will attract others to coordinate tests and free Councilors to be able to meet with students at a critical time.
 - 3. Currently there is no go-to person to coordinate use of the Theater space. This stipend will allow the school to designate someone for this role.
 - iii. Nathan Poore asked who reviews the assessment numbers used by the State in the funding formula.
 - 1. Staff will follow up with a review of the numbers with our Assessor.
 - iv. Nathan reminded the group that the Budget Public Hearing is set for next Wednesday April 4th in Council Chambers.
 - 1. There was a request to post a notice in the school cafeteria that the meeting is at Town Hall this year.
- c. The meeting was adjourned at 6:15PM

Respectfully submitted by Peter McHugh