



# Warner Budget Committee

## Meeting Minutes Thursday, October 25, 2018 **UNAPPROVED**

Martha Mical opened the meeting at 7:02 pm.

Committee members in attendance: Martha Mical, David Minton, Alfred Hanson, John Leavitt and John Dabuliewicz - Selectman's Rep.

Absent: Mike Cutting, Martha Bodnarik, Peter Newman -Water District Rep.

Others present: School Superintendent - Winfried Feneburg, Business Manager - Larry LeBoeuf, School Board members Ken Bartholomew and Faith Minton, Municipal Budget Committee member Peter Anderson and Ed Mical

### **1. Meeting Minutes**

Alfred made a motion to delay approval of the September 20 meeting minutes until there is a full Committee. No objections. All were in favor of delaying approval. Some said they did not receive the minutes by email, Martha M. will check on the minutes.

### **2. Kearsarge Regional School District**

**A.** School Superintendent Winfried Feneburg met with the Committee and explained last year was a good year and is planning to look at a long-term strategy for the upcoming year up to 3-years out. There have been administrative changes this year and has hired staff to continue his strategic planning. The strategic plan lasts from 2016 to 2022, Winfried is pleased with how the plan is going. Graduation rates continue to be exceptional. Winfried's objective is to build on and to continue with things that work, trying to avoid spikes in the budget.

**B.** In terms of curriculum they have done a lot of work to provide programs that the elementary students benefit from. They have beefed up reading and writing instruction, 3-years ago they did so with math and now working on science. For technology there is a one on one program at the Middle School.

**C.** There is longevity with most of the teachers and has been able to recruit and fill vacancies before the beginning of the new year. The school is having a hard time recruiting para-professionals because the wage is not competitive. The newest staffing expense is for one special education teacher.

**D.** The kitchen in the old Middle School, the portion that was not raised, will be converted into a usable function facility for teacher training's and will be made available to the community. At the High School the Robotics Team won the Governor's cup and the culinary program is back as well. The district is working towards bringing some vocational programs back to the High School on a limited scale such as the culinary, robotics and photography but doesn't have the facilities. The wing in the High School that holds wood shop, music, metal shop, art room etc. will be looked at to create and renovate the space. Alfred said those spaces were there when he attended, he asked what happened to them. Winfried said the State thought several decades ago it would be more cost effective to have 20 regional centers for vocational technical education. Winfried said it's good to think about options for the Kearsarge students, but, State support will not be provided. Winfried said about 75% of the students attend college, 25% choose the military, vocational or go into family businesses.

**E.** John Leavitt asked if the school is still emphasizing college rather than taking the student and exposing them to all options equally. Winfried said his focus is to give all students all opportunities that they could later realize. Alfred said if we don't educate our children to stay in the community there is no pay back to the school district, in the last 20 years it has not happened. Winfried said towns have to start thinking about affordable housing and how they can attract families. Ken talked about the students that have come back and are now working for the school district, he said Kearsarge has built a decent reputation, wages are competitive on the high end but need to be adjusted on the low end.

**F.** The increase to the school budget is less than 2% from last year. The district has not received the cost for health insurance which could bring the percentage down. There will also be a separate warrant article for the teachers contract.

**G.** John Leavitt said it is not the school's job to educate the students to stay in town, it's to educate the students to have the ability to go where they want to go. It's up to the community to attract the graduated students to stay in town.

**H.** Ken Bartholomew explained the school returned to the towns \$1.8 million from last years budget. Savings was seen in transportation, vocational education, substitute teachers (because the positions were not filled) to name a few. For capital expenses the tennis courts and track were repaired and replaced for about \$500,000. A grant was obtained for improving school security. The State will pay 80%, but it has to be finished by next April, so money was used to accomplish the security improvements.

**I.** Ken explained the school district received some benefits from the State, Building Aide was provided, an increase in kindergarten funding and the retirement hit wasn't as bad as past years. David asked how much do the employees contribute to health care. Ken said the district has an expensive plan and pays 80%, staff 20%. The district in the current contract is now paying 95% percent of the health care plan that has higher deductibles but lower rates. The overall benefit cost to the school district is lower by about \$300,000.

### **3. Fire Station**

Budget Committee members are invited, as well as others, to tour the new fire station on Saturday, October 27 at noon.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm

Recorder of the minutes: Mary Whalen