

Chairman Goddard, Selectmen Reil and Schofield, and Town Administrator Newman are present in the Town Hall, Mendon.

Chairman Goddard called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to approve the regular session meeting minutes of March 11 and March 18 as well as the executive session minutes of March 11 not to be released. Selectman Schofield had a couple of problems with the executive session minutes which cannot be discussed in open session. Approval will be postponed until the next meeting.
Selectman Reil made and Selectman Reil seconded a motion to amend the original motion to exclude the executive session minutes of March 11 not to be released. The amended motion carried unanimously.

Ken O'Brien, Board of Assessors Member, voiced his displeasure with the article being removed from the Annual Town meeting warrant which would accept M.G.L. Ch. 59 § 21A for compensation of Assessors who meet standards of Mass Accreditation for Assessors. This is obtained after taking courses and an exam. Compensation would be an additional \$1,000 for a full-time accredited Assessor and an additional \$500 for a part-time Assessor. The Principal Assessor is already covered through her contract. Chairman Goddard wanted to look at it further and hold it until the June Special Town Meeting. If all three Assessors were certified it would be \$1500 per year. Mr. O'Brien said if he had known it was going to be taken off the warrant, he would have liked to have time to file a citizen's petition. Selectman Schofield is not in favor of adopting anything that ties the Selectmen's hands. He and Selectman Reil would prefer to handle it with a policy. Chairman Goddard said he can file a petition to put it on a Special Town Meeting.

Ms. Newman gave Selectmen an update on the basement renovation project. They only received one bid which was above the \$85,000 that was budgeted. After discussions with counsel and consultants, they will change the scope of work to exclude the bathroom. It will be posted on the Central Register April 6 in order to stay on the time line

Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to allow the Friends of the Mendon Elders to hold the progressive yard sale as well as waive the permit fee for said yard sale. The motion carried unanimously.

Selectman Reil made and Selectman Goddard seconded a motion to send a letter to Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Ahern regarding Miscoe Springs. Selectman Schofield explained the letter is to ask if the owner would be interested in adaptive reuse of the stone portion of the old Miscoe Springs building. Mrs. Lowell, Historical Commission, added that CPA funding could be used to determine if the building could be used for affordable housing, condos, mixed use, etc. An architect would have to do a study. It would also have to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals for a zoning variance. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Selectman Reil made Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to sign the Mass. Department of Transportation Winter Recovery Assistance Program Contract. This is the additional \$41,000 from the State to pave roads due to the harsh winter. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Selectman Reil made Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to authorize the Mendon Historical Commission to Apply for the Blackstone Valley Heritage Grant for the Town Hall. Mrs. Schofield and Mrs. Lowell explained that the grant will fund landscaping the front entrance to the Town Hall, a brick-paved walkway, reconfigure the railings and remove the ramp. The goal for the future is to tie in a walkway with the village center enhancement project. Mrs. Schofield thinks that we should know in a month whether we receive the grant. Shirley Smith's comments had been taken into consideration for the project. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Chairman Goddard stated that discussion of the FY 16 Budget will remain on agendas for upcoming meetings through the Annual Town Meeting so information can be relayed to voters. He presented an overview of FY13 through the FY 16 proposed budgets. Mr. Mortimer would like to see population by fiscal year and percentage growth per capita. Mr. Mortimer stated that between 2009 & 2016 the student population dropped by 20%. But number of employees has not dropped commensurately. State aid in 2007 was 54%; proposed is 43.4% for this year and next year is 34 % He sees our school spending driving our aid amount down. He is concerned at the pace that taxes have increased over several years. Mr. Byer explained local minimum contribution. Mr. Watson would not have ended pay Kindergarten nor added positions as it would have helped with deficit. Mr. Byer said if that was done, only those who could afford full-day Kindergarten could get it. Mr. Byer said in FY 11 and FY 12 there were 30 children in a class. They had to implement inclusion models. These things were looked highly upon by the Department of Education. Mr. Scharnagle wants to know why every child needs an iPad. What is the school district doing to contain costs? What is the value of the override? He doesn't feel now is a good time to ask for more money.

Mr. Byer responded that the iPad question should be addressed by School Committee. The only thing effected by a decrease population is staff. There are fixed costs. They were able to drop the class size. He welcomed anyone to visit him to discuss details of how they have been able to control costs.

Chairman Goddard would like to see class size by school and grade level.

Mr. Byer explained that the level-service budget reduced the override by \$300,000. Chairman Goddard said eight people would be added if the override passes.

Chairman Burke asked if the census numbers are going down, why is staff increasing? Chairman Goddard said it's because of support staff like ELL.

Mr. Byer said this year they are saving \$190,000 in out-of-district tuition.

Mr. Byer explained that at the end of year, they decided to spend money E&D on investments like one-time upgrades and repairs for which they did not have the money otherwise. In FY15 they did spend \$700,000 operational expenses.

Mr. Byer explained the district is not issuing the PARCC test. They did a pilot last year. They bought new curriculum because old material was 15-20 years old. They have made investments in material that don't have anything to do with Common Core.

Mr. Byer explained school budget surpluses and how they were spent for FY 11 through F14 before any spending at the end of each year

Mr. Mortimer asked if there is a more transparent way to spend the surplus. Chairman Goddard said that the school committee is autonomous and can spend money differently than a municipality.

Selectman Reil reported that Superintendent Maruszczak stated the DOE Office of School Finance said Mendon's FY16 minimum local contribution is 65.6% which is short of the target by \$544,840 to bridge the gap of Mendon's minimum contribution.

Mr. Byer will not be available next week when the discussion continues.

<Pause to change disk.>

Discussion continued regarding how to get an additional eight percent to bridge the minimum contribution gap. Mr. Byer said he would have to look at other towns that are close to their minimum contribution. Now we are getting \$20 per student from the State. He will ask the State if the Town can move quicker towards the minimum contribution.

Chairman Goddard noted that the formula could change in the future.

Selectman Schofield said that if enough affluent people move out, the minimum contribution will go down. He offered to share his spreadsheet from the Long Range Financial Planning Committee that details factors that will effect shift in minimum contribution with Mr. Scharnagle.

Mr. Byer said if there is no override, in three years Mendon will be funding at just the foundation budget.

Action: Mr. Byer to get correlation between per pupil expenditure and outcome to Ms. Newman.

Chairman Goddard reiterated that the town departments were asked to outline their needs for five years.

Chairman Goddard stated what information needs to be gathered: Impact of declining enrolment on head count. How is support staff being utilized? Per capita growth. Per Student Spending in surrounding districts. Fully loaded cost for employees. Surpluses amounts prior to budget certification? If we accelerate shift, what is the benefit?

Residents were encouraged to ask more questions.

Chairman Goddard mentioned that the Public Safety Article is no longer being requested.

Ms. Willoughby asked if the Highway Department's truck will be a lease or purchase. Ms. Hawkes stated it can be taken out of Capital Expenses Account or Stabilization. We could finance with a Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) from the State which is a low-interest renewable note of which you pay the principal down. Chairman Goddard does not want to take it out of stabilization. He likes the State funding approach so we could pay it down quicker if we have the money. Article 17 has to authorize borrowing.

Selectman Reil made and Selectman Schofield seconded a motion to use borrowing mechanism to purchase a truck for the Highway Department and to give the Treasurer the authority to borrow. The motion carried unanimously.

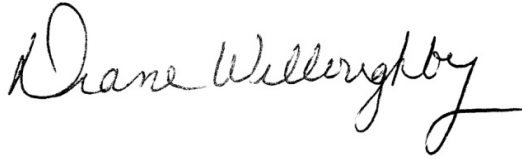
Chairman Burke asked Mr. Morin to come to Finance Committee Meeting with a list of expenses of for the new Taft Library.

The Selectmen agreed to add the library bond to Article 18.

Ms. Newman said the ballot questions need to be finalized by tomorrow.

Selectman Schofield made and Selectman Reil seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Diane Willoughby". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Diane Willoughby
Administrative Assistant

Documents Discussed located in 'Administrative Secretary's' Office:
Blackstone Valley Heritage Grant Application
MASS DOT Standard Contract Form-Winter Recovery Assistance Program
Draft May 1, 2015 Annual Town Meeting Warrant
March 11 & March 18, 2015 Regular Session Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2015 Executive Session Meeting Minutes