

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The charge of the Finance Committee is to advise the Selectboard and other officers in the prudential affairs of the Town.

PLAINFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

School Sprinkler System [Warrant Article II]

The School Board has proposed a \$325,000 bond for the installation of a sprinkler system at the Plainfield Elementary School. This bond would also cover the treatment of the wood interior of the school with a fire retardant and the necessary ancillary work related to these projects.

By the order of the State Fire Marshall and the local Fire Chief, these actions must be undertaken for the school to meet the State fire code.

We believe the School Board and the Facilities Committee have done a sound job at being fiscally prudent in regard to this issue. Research has found that 30% of the bond will be reimbursed by State funds and a five year bond will save \$40,000 in interest as opposed to a ten year bond.

Collective Bargaining Agreement

The Committee commends the School Board for their work on contract negotiations. The three year duration of the agreement allows for cost savings in both benefit and contract negotiation related costs that would be incurred if renegotiation had to occur earlier.

Assistant Principal [Warrant Article VI]

For a second year, there is a proposed addition of a half-time Assistant Principal at \$25,000.

The Committee supports the addition of the Assistant Principal, as this position would allow the Principal to spend more time on the areas directly associated with curriculum development and student learning. We also recommend an examination of the SAU/Principal's Office to determine if future reorganization is a possibility for increased service and potential cost savings.

Building Maintenance Reserve Fund [Article VII]

The Committee supports the request to add \$20,000 to the Building Maintenance Fund and recommends the continual build-up of a reserve fund that will be adequate for major expenditures. The Town has effectively used reserve funds to prepare for inevitable expenses; the school infrastructure is clearly something that will continue to incur maintenance and update expenses. The Finance Committee commends the work undertaken by the School Facilities Committee and we should explore how to prepare adequately for predictable and unpredictable future expenses.

Article VIII

A petitioned warrant article to limit the total combined state and local school tax assessment increases to no more than the annual percentage increases as established by the Cost of Living Adjustment for Social Security.

The Committee encourages ideas to lessen financial burden on taxpayers, but feels that this article does not offer a workable solution. We do feel that many tax payers are unfairly burdened by the lack of state support and we should insist on increased educational funding and a more equitable tax system at the state level.

TOWN BUDGET

General:

Of the \$44,288 increase, \$42,000 can be directly tied to salaries and benefits for existing employees.

Regional Associations – Septage Agreement

A septage capacity contract with Claremont has been added to the “Regional Associations” line of the budget at \$3,361.50. This was added to ensure the City of Claremont will guarantee septage dumping privileges at its Wastewater Treatment Plant for septage originating in the Town of Plainfield at a rate of \$0.07 per gallon.

The Committee supports this expenditure as it is driven by a N.H. State RSA.

Solid Waste Disposal

We applaud the efforts of the Selectboard for negotiating a successful Solid Waste Disposal Contract with the City of Lebanon. This will have an immediate short-term impact in savings during this budget cycle, as well as, long-term savings for the Town.

Library

The increase over the previous budget is primarily attributed to pay increases and an additional two hours of operation. As the overall circulation numbers and patrons increase, the Committee supports this expenditure.

Planning/Zoning Board

Potential subdivision regulations need attention and the Planning and Zoning Board feels that we should have the assistance of a professional planner. The Committee supports the request for professional services as this will enable us to better manage Town growth.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Beaupre, Ann Grobe, Rob Hewett, Thomas Lappin, Claire McNamara