

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

School Budget

General Position: In making their decisions, the school board took into account the current economic situation and the decrease in student population. They did an excellent job with difficult circumstances. In considering the finances, the school board was able to not only keep the budget level funded, but to decrease the upcoming budget. Although some programs had to make cutbacks, no school programs were eliminated. The school board, administration, teachers, staff, and community members should be commended for coming together to work toward to common good of the school and community

Warrant Articles: The finance committee was impressed with the school board and administration's willingness to keep the budget process transparent by using multiple warrant articles instead of rolling items into the general budget and thus, allowing voters to have more say in the final numbers.

Article III: (Handicapped Van Purchase) The committee recommends the purchase of a van equipped to transport handicapped students at the Plainfield School. The item will bring a \$10,800 increase to the 09-10 transportation budget, but will save tens of thousands of dollars over the next three years and into the future.

Article IV: (Classroom Renovation) The finance committee supports the appropriation of \$25,000 to modify a classroom for HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) and upgrade classroom insulation, windows and doors. This investment should save money through greater efficiency and will address engineer deficiencies that currently exist. The success of this pilot program could be replicated throughout the building in the future.

Article V: (Building Maintenance Reserve Fund) The committee agrees with the board, administration, and building and grounds committee that reserve funds (\$30,000) are necessary to keep on hand for ongoing maintenance of the school building. It is fiscally prudent to maintain our existing investment.

Article VI: (Special Education and Tuition Reserve Fund) The appropriation of \$30,000 into the special education and tuition reserve fund provides a reasonable cushion into the existing funds. This reserve will allow a more accurate budgeting for student tuition to Lebanon High School without repercussions of unexpected tuition increases or midyear student population rises.

Article VII: (Benefits Payable Expendable Trust Fund) The committee approves of this article for \$15,000. The fund will be used to pay for upcoming shortfalls in the state's retirement fund.

Town Budget

General Position: As we have come to expect from our town administration, department heads, and select board, the prepared budget is thoughtful, fair and fiscally prudent. Departments were asked to provide level funded budgets. As a result of their careful responses, the budget requests came in \$100K+ under last year's numbers.

Highway Department and Reserve Fund: The committee agrees with the addition of \$50,000 to the equipment reserve fund. This fund is has been an important financial tool used to make funds available when necessary and to lessen the impact on the taxpayer by spreading the costs over a period of time.

It would be desirable for the highway department to cut back spending in the future, but we understand the unpredictable New Hampshire weather and its timing can drive up costs. The rising expectations of town residents during weather events also contribute to the rising budget amounts.

In conclusion, this year provides our community with a number of financial challenges. The finance committee has done our best to summarize recommendations to the town based upon hours of meetings and discussions with various boards and committees. We are an advisory group, but ultimately the decisions rest with the voters. We urge all Plainfield residents to take extra time to examine the issues, ask questions, and make sure our tax dollars are well spent.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas Lappin, Stephen Beaupre, Sarah Brooks Governo, Scott MacLeay, David Chellis, Ann Grobe