

**TOWN OF ROWLEY
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of Meeting March 5, 2019
Rowley Town Hall**

Finance Committee Attendance: Present were Lawrence White, Chairman, Sharon Emery, Vice Chair; Peter Censullo, Tom Corben, and Paul Jalbert. Absent were Dennis Roy and David Zizza

Other Attendance: Deborah Eagan, Town Administrator; David Petersen, Board of Selectmen; Paul Lees, School Committee; Nerissa Wallen, School Committee; Brian Forget, Triton Schools Superintendent; Bernard Cullen, Board of Water Commissioners.

1. Call to Order - Larry White, Chairman, called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order at 7:20 pm with a quorum present.

2. FY 20 Budgets:

- Town Moderator – *Emery moved to accept the Town Moderator FY 20 budget. Corben seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
- Town Counsel – A brief discussion was held on the FY20 budget amount. Debbie Eagan, Town Administrator, explained that the budget has been level funded for ten years and is a professional service that is available to all town departments. *Jalbert moved to accept the Town Counsel FY 20 budget. Emery seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
- Town Hall – *Jalbert moved to accept the Town Hall FY 20 budget. Censullo seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
- Town Hall Annex – *Emery moved to accept the Town Hall Annex FY 20 budget. Corben seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
- Cemetery Department – David Petersen, Selectman, was present and provided an overview of the proposed FY 20 budget which includes a step increase and additional hours for part-time summer help. *Jalbert moved to accept the Cemetery Department FY 20 budget. Emery seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
- Bradstreet & Dodge Properties – *Emery moved to accept the Bradstreet & Dodge Properties FY 20 budget. Jalbert seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
- Memorial Day / Veterans' Day – *Emery moved to accept the Memorial Day / Veterans' Day FY 20 budget. Corben seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*

3. Appointment: Triton Superintendent Brian Forget and Triton School Committee Nerissa Wallen - White stated for the record that Brian Forget [as Superintendent of Triton Schools]

works for the School Committee. Forget concurred, stating that the School Committee's role is hiring and firing the Superintendent and setting the budget. White stated that Nerissa Wallen's role [as School Committee Chair] is to represent the three towns [Rowley, Newbury and Salisbury].

White stated that over the past five years, the Triton School budget has consumed more than the 2 ½ percent tax increase, to the detriment of the town, and questioned what has been accomplished. Forget replied that Triton is a school system that is running a lean system. While they would like to do more, they make cuts every year. He stated that Triton is maintaining a quality system for all students, including Rowley.

White asked for a description of the development of the budget. He stated that when the budgets are developed there is no input from the towns, the School Committee does not ask the towns what they can afford. Forget reviewed the budget development process. Each school presents a School Improvement Plan that sets priorities. This plan is developed by the school's administration, the school council, and staff and faculty. From there facilities, health costs, etc., are presented and priorities are set -- absolutely must do, would like to do, and "pipe dream." Forget stated that the only addition in this year's budget is restoring late buses two days a week. The major budget drivers are salary, special education and out of district placements.

Paul Lees, School Committee member, discussed School Choice, noting that when he joined the School Committee in 2010, more students were "choicing" out of Triton rather than in. Over the past five years that trend has changed and students are now "choicing" in to Triton. Discussion continued on the costs associated with the School Choice program and on-line options now available to students. Discussion was held on the graduation rate and college acceptances for Triton students with agreement that the affordability of private colleges is more an issue for college selection rather than acceptance rates. Forget described the school system's goal to create a path for the students' talents and building resilient, lifelong learners.

A lengthy discussion continued on Special Education. Forget provided an overview of the categories of Special Education professionals, their roles and the ratios of specialists to students. He also described the different classroom settings that are provided for students, explaining that Massachusetts law mandates that schools must provide the "least restrictive environment" for these students. Forget explained the process to designate students as special needs, a determination that is made by a team consisting of teachers, specialists and parents. Forget stated that Special Education is an area where there is no way to predict or control the cost.

Nerissa Wallen, School Committee Chair, discussed recent legislative efforts to put pressure on the state to increase funding to towns. Wallen stressed the importance of this being a collective action of towns working with the school committee in this effort.

4. Review February 26, 2019 Minutes – *Jalbert moved to accept the minutes of the meeting held on February 26, 2019 as written. Emery seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor.*
5. Review Accounting Report for January 2019 – No action taken.
6. Set Dates for Future Meetings – Meetings will be held on March 12, 19 and 26, 2019.
7. Other Business - Bernard Cullen, Board of Water Commissioners, asked what the process was for scheduling a review of the Water Department budget. White advised Cullen to check with the Town Administrator.
8. Adjournment – *Emery moved to adjourn. Censullo seconded and the vote was unanimous in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa Coffey
Finance Committee Secretary

Documents used at or for the meeting:

Agenda of March 5, 2019

Draft Minutes of Meetings held February 26, 2019

Triton Regional School District Operating Expenditures & Revenue Sources – Fiscal 2002 through Fiscal 2019

FY 20 Budgets:

Town Moderator
Town Counsel
Town Hall
Town Hall Annex
Cemetery Department
Memorial Day/Veterans' Day
Bradstreet / Dodge Properties Expense