

Town of Farmington  
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, June 26, 2019

**Committee Members Present:**

Jodi Connolly, Chairman  
Stephen Henry, Vice Chairman  
Neil Johnson, Selectmen's Rep.  
Angie Cardinal, School Board Rep.  
Joshua Whitehouse  
Heidi Mitchell  
Elizabeth Johnson

**Others Present:**

Arthur Capello, Town Administrator  
Blanche Tanner

**Committee Members Absent:**

Sylvia Arcouette, Secretary, excused  
Jason Lauze, excused  
Samantha Place, excused  
Jeremy Squires, excused

**1). Call to Order:**

Chairman Connolly called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Public Comment:**

Blanche Tanner said that in April she asked for a copy of the lawyer's letter with her opinion regarding the "big hot topic issue" at the time which was going to be sent to the Selectmen's Secretary but when she checked with her a few days after the meeting she had not received anything. She said the issue was ended or dropped and she was curious as to what that information was and if it was available.

She said she is assuming that it is not available because she has not received any notification about it and that she found it "interesting" that this was such a hot issue and no one still has the ending information about it.

Mrs. Cardinal said she brought a hard copy of the attorney's letter to the May meeting but that she only had an electronic copy with her at this meeting. She added that she read the letter into the record at the Jan. 7, 2019 School Board meeting.

Town Administrator Arthur Capello asked Mrs. Cardinal to e-mail a copy of the letter to him and he would print it out and give it to Ms. Tanner.

**4). Review of Minutes:**

May 22, 2019 – No errors or omissions

**Motion:** (N. Johnson, second Henry) to accept the minutes as written passed unanimously.

## **5).Review of Town Reports:**

**Actual & Anticipated Revenues: General Fund** – Mr. Capello said that at this point everything is on track and that it is tough to say more until they get closer to the end of the year and the state sets their budget which will help to determine the Rooms & Meals taxes, etc. There were no questions or comments on this report.

**Remittance Report** – There were no comments or questions about this report.

**Actual & Budgeted Expenses & Encumbrance; Actual & Anticipated Revenues- Parks & Recreation** – Mr. Henry asked for the total number of kids that can participate in the Rec. Dept. After School Program if the program is properly staffed.

Mr. Capello said it has to do with maximum occupancy of building not the staffing and that he believed the maximum number allowed is 50 children.

Mr. Henry said there are 45 children enrolled now according to Recreation Director Rick Conway's May monthly report.

Mr. Capello noted that the Summer Camp Program is full.

Mrs. Connolly said Mr. Conway does a good job of explaining things in his monthly reports.

**Actual & Budgeted Expenses & Encumbrance: General Fund** – Mr. Capello said they are pretty much on track but that the DPW line for street signs (Page 8, Line 01-4312-20-741 Traffic signs, \$1,000 budgeted, \$2,029.18 expended) will be over expended. He said the Selectmen are doing a lot of signage that has been needed for years such as Class VI roads, weight limit signs and additional STOP signs.

Mrs. Connolly said she noticed a no trucks over 8 tons sign on her street and asked if that was only a seasonal restriction.

Mr. Capello said that is permanent now and it was done on several of the in-town roads to try to save the roads.

Mrs. Connolly said it is causing a problem with the companies picking up the trash.

Mr. Capello said they can use the roads with a smaller truck and that those roads were not designed for the bigger trucks.

Mrs. Connolly asked if oil trucks will still be permitted to come down those roads.

Mr. Capello said trucks that deliver oil and propane are exempt from the postings as they are considered necessary or emergency vehicles. He said there will be more expenses hitting this line as the board just signed some purchase orders for more signs.

Mr. Johnson estimated this line would probably total at about \$3,500 once all of the signs are purchased.

Mr. Capello said he had just signed the invoice for the Class VI road signs that day.

Mr. Henry asked if this line is usually around \$1,000.

Mr. Capello said that is correct and it is usually only used for replacement of missing signs but that this year they are purchasing a lot of signs.

Mrs. Connolly asked about the Fire Dept. telephone line (Page 5, Line 01-4220-10-341, \$3,900

budgeted, \$4,320.93 spent).

Mr. Capello said this has been an on-going battle for the Town. He said they switched from FairPoint to Consolidated Communications this year for the Town, Fire and Police Depts. He said there was a lengthy meeting the previous day with a rep. from Consolidated, himself, the Finance Administrator, the Police and Fire Chiefs and the Police Lt. to go through each line of the contract and try to get this all figured out. They should be receiving a rebate from First Light as they have been billing the depts. for things they should not have billed them for and we should see some of this budget come back in line he said.

Mr. Henry said Consolidated bought and took over FairPoint.

Mr. Capello corrected that they switched from First Light to Consolidated Communications.

Mrs. Connolly asked if the switch was made because it was cheaper to go with Consolidated.

Mr. Capello said that is correct.

Mr. Henry asked if there is a contract with Consolidated now.

Mr. Capello said they now have a contract with Consolidated.

Mr. Whitehouse asked about the over expenditure of the advertising line (Page 1, Line 01-4130-10-565, \$2,000 budgeted, \$2,022.23 spent).

Mr. Capello said most of the expense was for the Town Planner and the part time Landfill Attendant positions. He said they will continue to look for a Planner but the Selectmen have signed a contract with the Stafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC).

He said that the Land Use Assistant line will be over spent and the Planner line will be under spent because they increased the assistant's hours to 36 hours a week through the rest of this year and contracted with SRPC for 16 hours of Planner services a week so they will balance each other out.

Mr. Henry asked if the Land Use Assistant is a new position.

Mr. Capello said it is not a new position and is a new title for the Planning Dept. Secretary position.

Ms. Mitchell asked if the assistant's position was increased to 36 hours because that is considered part time.

Mr. Capello said they increased it to 36 hours so there would be daily coverage in that office.

Ms. Mitchell asked if that was considered full time.

Mr. Capello said 35 hours is considered full time with the Town.

Mrs. Connolly asked about the Planner's duties.

Mr. Capello said the Planner assists the Planning Board with site plans, applications, assists residents with the processes, review/attend Technical Review Committee meetings, makes recommendations for zoning ordinance changes for Town Meeting and gives recommendations on Variances and Special Exceptions to the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Mrs. Connolly asked if 16 hours a week will be enough time.

Mr. Capello said he believed it will be enough time at this point but they will still continue to

look for a new Planner.

Mr. Henry said he also sits on the Planning Board and that they are receiving memos from the Planner with the applications with background information from a different point of view than the applicant may have and lays out some options for the board which helps the board to make decisions. Previously when the Town employed a Planner he was at most of the meetings and we didn't have the memos he said.

Mrs. Cardinal asked Mr. Capello if he had made any headway on bringing back an answer to the committee about Taxes Paid to School Districts (Page 14, Line 01-4933-10-911, \$0 budgeted, \$0 spent). She said the report shows zeros in all of the columns and doesn't reflect payments made later in the year.

Mr. Capello said he would get the answer and e-mail it to Chairman Connolly for distribution to the members.

#### **6). School Reports:**

**All Funds – Revenue Report –** Chairman Connolly asked if the district is still waiting for revenues to come in.

Mrs. Cardinal said they are always waiting for some revenue to come in as each revenue program has its own calendar. She said there was 6.42% remaining as of the end of May and it is very rare that they see everything transacted within the fiscal year and the school district has to draw the line to close the fiscal reports.

She said there will be no change to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant funds for next year but all of the funds should have been received by now for the current year because the FAMEE program has ended. She then asked if there were any questions on this report.

There were no questions or comments on this report.

**YTD Expenditure Report: Grants Special Revenue Funds –** Mrs. Cardinal apologized for bringing up the 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant during the review of the wrong report and said that the information regarding that grant is found in this report.

Mr. Henry said that when they were preparing the last budget some of the grants were "iffy" and asked if any of the grants came in higher or lower than expected for the school year that just ended.

Mrs. Cardinal said there was nothing great enough to alert the School Board about but that early in the year they received information that the Title 2a grant for professional development would be higher than originally projected. She said she did not recall the reason the district would be receiving more funding from this grant.

She said that a lot of the expenditures that are tied to these particular special revenue funds that come in are in the form of reimbursements to ensure that there is an opportunity for the agencies to audit and validate them prior to releasing federal funds. That is why with some these items you see 100% still remaining such as with the Priority & Focus Grants for FY 2018 on Pages 12 & 13 which is grouped by school building. She said there are expenditures shown

for part of the year for the Henry Wilson School but the later Henry Wilson lines you see zero dollars expended to date. That is not because the money isn't being used but because they are reimbursement style transactions she said.

Chairman Connolly asked if the amount remaining is the amount that has not yet been reimbursed to the district.

Mrs. Cardinal said that is correct.

Mrs. Connolly asked if 100% remaining means they have not received any reimbursement.

Mrs. Cardinal said that is correct against those particular lines for those reasons.

Mr. Henry asked if they get paid in August for something that was billed in May if that reflects in the May books or in the August books.

Mrs. Cardinal said it reflects in the new fiscal year for the school district's books but would reflect in the previous year's books for the federal account. She said this report is 19 pages long because for each substantial grant, especially with federal funds grants there is a separate set of lines for each fiscal year.

Mr. Henry asked if the Priority & Focus schools were previously designated as Schools in Need of Improvement.

Mrs. Cardinal said that is correct.

**General Fund 10 YTD Expenditure Report (thru 5/31/19)** – Chairman Connolly asked if everything would be finalized in time for the July Bud Com meeting.

Mrs. Cardinal said if that means that all accounts payable would be cleared and posted then everything would not be finalized by then.

Mrs. Connolly said she was talking about this report.

Mr. Henry said at the July meeting they would have the reports that were prepared in June.

Mrs. Cardinal said they would have what was transacted as of June 30 which is a Sunday this year. The report at the July meeting will show the current period as June 1- June 30 that does not equate to closed books. We are still receiving invoices for payables in July for fiscal year 2019 she said.

Mr. Henry asked when they usually have a good number for the end of the year.

Mrs. Cardinal said that when there is a seasoned Business Administrator that has been in district for multiple years some of them can come close to an estimate in May. We have several contracted employees ending their contracts and there are a lot of payables that happen with that such as unused vacation, etc. that have to be confirmed individually by contract before any payments can go out which takes time she said.

Mr. Henry asked if contracted employees means district employees with contracts not contracted services.

Mrs. Cardinal said that is correct.

She said the Business Administrator started work on Feb. 22 and there is a significant amount of research involved where if it was the same person all school year they would be able to say

some things were already checked and are all set. The goal is to get the MS-25 in by Sept. 1 she said.

Mrs. Connolly said in looking through the report she saw a lot of lines where the adopted budget was zero but there is money shown under the reported period. She gave an example found on Page 4, Line 90, Equipment, New – Gen. Ed. HW (\$0 adopted budget, \$3,793 reported period). She said she thought there had to be at least \$1 in a line to spend from that line. She said there are other instances of this found on Page 5, Line 128, Health (\$0 adopted, \$21,203.97 reported period) and on Line 141, Retirement Spec Ed/Coord. D (\$0 adopted, \$9,903.19 reported period).

Mr. Henry asked about the possibility that the entries were made to the wrong lines.

Mrs. Cardinal said he may be right as an old account number was also used and that she would have to get back to the committee about this. She said she would find out if this is in error and if so to see that it is corrected and thanked Mrs. Connolly for bringing it to her attention.

**7). Old Business:** None

**8). New Business:**

Mr. Johnson asked if any of the committee members got an unannounced visit from Peter Miller.

No other members reported meeting with Mr. Miller.

Mr. Johnson said he knew that Mr. Miller was a union organizer for the Teachers' Union but he didn't understand why he came to visit him.

Mrs. Connolly asked if he said anything while he was there.

Mr. Johnson said he asked him multiple times who he was and that Mr. Miller just kept repeating his name. He said Mr. Miller knew his first name and that he was on the Bud Com and that he wanted to talk to him about the state budget.

Mr. Whitehouse joked that he was disappointed that Mr. Miller didn't show up at his house.

Mr. Johnson said he didn't know why he was singled out for a visit if he didn't visit anybody else on the Bud Com or why a union rep would want to see him in any case.

Mrs. Cardinal said that Attorney Miller represents the National Education Association (NEA-NH) and that she had met him a few times in that context. She said she was not sure if he was visiting specifically in that role and that he probably should have said so one way or the other. She said he did e-mail the whole School Board on June 10 and read the e-mail aloud which was as follows:

Dear Farmington School Board Members,

I am writing because I believe the Farmington School Board and the NEA-NH share a goal-winning approval of the House budget when the legislators finalize the state budget over the next 2 weeks. Please use some of the information I have put together below as you see fit and please let me know if you can do anything to help win support from Representatives Pitre and

Horgan and from Senator Gray.

Respectively, Peter.

Mrs. Cardinal said the e-mail also contained an analysis of what the 2 year state budget proposal meant for Farmington.

Mr. Johnson said none of this has anything to do with him either as a Selectman or a Budget Committee member.

**9). Next Meeting:** Wednesday, July 24, 2019 at 7 p.m.

**10). Adjournment:**

**Motion:** (N. Johnson, second Mitchell) to adjourn the meeting passed 6-1 (E. Johnson opposed) at 7:40 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

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Jodi Connolly, Chairman