

Town of Farmington  
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, April 26, 2017

**Committee Members Present:**

Stephen Henry, Chairman  
Sylvia Arcouette, Vice Chairman  
Neil Johnson, Selectmen's Rep.  
Linda McElhinney, School Board Alt. Rep.  
Elizabeth Johnson  
Jodi Connolly  
Heidi Mitchell  
Sam Cataldo  
Tim Brown  
Michelle Elbert  
Jason Lauze

**Committee Members Absent:**

Angie Cardinal, School Board Rep.

**Others Present:**

Arthur Capello, Town Administrator  
Ruth Ellen Vaughn, SAU Superintendent  
Laurie Verville, Business Administrator

**1). Call to Order:**

Chairman Henry called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

**2). Pledge of Allegiance:**

All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3). Public Comment:** None.

**4). Board Reorganization:**

Chairman Henry asked for nominations for board officers.

**Chairman- Motion:** (N. Johnson, second Connolly) to nominate Sylvia Arcouette for Chairman passed unanimously. Ms. Arcouette accepted the nomination.

**Vice Chairman- Motion:** (N. Johnson, second E. Johnson) to nominate Jodi Connolly for Vice Chairman passed unanimously. Mrs. Connolly accepted the nomination.

**Secretary- Motion:** (Connolly, second Henry) to nominate Elizabeth Johnson for Secretary passed unanimously. Mrs. Johnson accepted the nomination.

Members then introduced themselves to the Committee and the viewers.

Chairman Arcouette welcomed the new members.

Mrs. Johnson congratulated those members who were re-elected to the committee.

**5). Review of Minutes:**

March 22, 2017- No errors or omissions.

Motion: (N. Johnson, second Henry) to approve the minutes as written passed 7-0-4 (Connolly, Elbert, McElhinney, Lauze abstained).

## **6). Review Town Reports:**

Mr. Capello told the Committee that the date for the Grand Opening of the new Public Safety Building is Sunday, June 4 at 2 p.m. rain or shine. The event will begin with a parade of Police and Fire Dept. vehicles from the old stations to the new facility with lights and sirens. The program will include food, music, speakers and raffles he said.

### **Remittance Report**

There were no questions/comments about this report.

### **Actual & Budgeted Expenses & Encumbrances Report-Parks & Recreation**

Page 1, Line 04-4589-11-260, Workers Comp. – Mr. Johnson asked about an expense that seemed to be unanticipated or not budgeted.

Mr. Capello at first suggested the expense was to insure the Bounce House or that the invoice for the Workers' Compensation invoice was just received.

Mr. Johnson noted the \$4,915 expense is included under Workers' Compensation line and suggested it could be an entry error.

Mr. Henry said there was no amount budgeted for this line.

Upon review of the budget, Mr. Capello said this is an entry error that should have come out of the Rec. Revolving Fund as these funds are used to pay the unemployment costs for the summer employees. He said he will request the entry error be corrected.

Mr. Henry asked how much the Town is paying to insure the Bounce House.

Mr. Capello said the cost is about \$1,300 to \$1,400.

Mr. Henry requested to receive the number of rentals of the Bounce House for the year in December.

Mr. Capello agreed to supply the numbers to the Committee including the amount of times it was used during Town functions.

### **Actual & Anticipated Revenues**

Mr. Capello said the anticipated revenues are currently on track.

There were no questions/comments about this report.

### **Actual & Budgeted Expenses & Encumbrances - General Fund**

Mr. Brown asked if there were any "red flags" or shortages in the Town budget once all of the numbers were entered.

Mr. Capello said the road salt supply may come up short but said the salt on hand and stored in the salt shed may be enough to carry the Town through next winter if it is not too severe.

Mr. Henry asked if the salt budget line is now fully expended.

Mr. Capello estimated there is about 10% of the budgeted amount (approx. \$8,000) left in the line.

Page 4, Line 01-4210-10-140, Police Dept. Overtime- Mr. Capello said the Police Dept. Overtime budget (\$37,000 budgeted) is not over spent but they have already spent over half of the amount budgeted (\$20,481 expended) and he expects the line to be over spent by year end. He added the town has had a difficult year with the homicide

investigations.

Page 6, Line 01-4220-80-630, Fire Dept. Maint. Blg.- Mr. Johnson said the period expenditure for this line is \$335 but the line is over spent by \$621 for the old Fire Station.

Mr. Capello said he was aware of a water leak and a furnace issue that occurred before the dept. moved to the new building and said he would get the details on the expenses for the Committee.

Mr. Henry asked if a leak discovered after the Fire Dept. left the old building would still be repaired.

Mr. Capello said the leak would be repaired but the funds would come from the General Government Buildings Maintenance line and not from the Fire Dept. budget.

Page 7, Line 01-4311-10-140, Highway Overtime- Ms. McElhinney said it appears that this line is almost completely spent (\$28,300 budgeted, \$26,180 expended).

Mr. Capello said this is due to the rough winter conditions this past season and he did not expect the need for any more overtime this year unless faced with some sort of catastrophe.

Ms. McElhinney asked if the line included the Main Street Bridge replacement project.

Mr. Capello said the bridge is a state project that does not involve the Town.

## **7). Review School Reports:**

### **YTD Expenditure Report- General Fund**

Ms. Verville said she did not have many details to report but said the budget is tracking well.

Substitute Over Expenditures-She noted that some of the substitute lines are over spent and the “negative variances” have been left in place so that a true picture of where the budget will be at the end of June is shown. She said that the corresponding locations for the substitutes are covering the variances so there is no reason for concern at this point.

Mr. Henry asked if the substitutes are for teachers that are sick or if they are vacant positions.

Ms. Verville they are for a combination of both those reasons.

Mr. Henry asked if there are a lot of vacant staff positions.

Mrs. Vaughn said the district has 1 vacancy and a few long term illnesses to cover. She said the long term substitute route didn’t work out as it is tough to find qualified people willing to accept that type of position so they have had to get “creative” in filling those unanticipated vacancies. She added the substitute line may have been over spent but if the position was vacant they weren’t paying a salary for that position and budget balances out. She said the substitute line has been historically underfunded and they are trying to get a better handle on the actual cost.

Mr. Henry asked why they are having trouble getting long term subs.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is mostly due to the time of year as it is tough to find someone

certified to fill a 4 to 6 week position mid-year.

Mrs. Connolly asked how many vacancies the district currently has.

Mrs. Vaughn said one vacancy is being covered internally by shifting staff members around and it is now being covered by a certified staff member. She added that there is a paraprofessional and a custodial position unfilled.

Mr. Henry asked if the shift of personnel will be in place for the next school year.

Mrs. Vaughn said she was not sure of the status of the position for next year.

Top 10% School District Evaluation Plan- Mr. Johnson said that during the budget season last year Mrs. Vaughn said that part of her performance review would include a goal of bringing the Farmington School District up from its present location to one of the Top 10% of School Districts in the state. He asked what metric will be used to judge her success.

Mrs. Vaughn said she asked the School Board about the plan and that they are still in the process of determining the metrics to be used. She said they have started meeting to discuss what types of standards will be used to measure the success of the plan.

Mr. Johnson said it is not a fair measure of Mrs. Vaughn's performance as a year has gone by without any standards to evaluate if she has met the goals set for her.

Mrs. Vaughn said she could have cobbled together a plan, but felt it should be a community plan. She said the metric will at least include the school district's academic performance and be partly based on the state testing in place at the time. She added that the state measurements are changing with the shift of the direction the district may be going by the Commissioner of Education. She said she hoped to obtain a baseline of community perceptions about where students are now from the survey available to parents, students and residents and to use that as part of the move forward for the district.

Mr. Johnson said he didn't understand how the metrics for the future can be set when you don't know where you stand now.

Mrs. Vaughn said the district is not now in the top 15% of school districts. She said they know where they are now based on current standards but it is unknown as to if the metrics will remain the same for future evaluations.

Mr. Johnson said if the standards are changed we will not be able to compare the current standing with the results of future evaluations.

Mrs. Vaughn said that is why the state testing will remain as part of the evaluation as it is one piece that remains a little more constant than the "political stir" in Concord.

Mr. Johnson said he was concerned that the School Board set a goal for Mrs. Vaughn's performance where there is no basis to measure it against and asked how to measure it against something that doesn't exist.

Mr. Brown said he attended the first meeting of the committee to draft a plan. He said they plan to look at the number of students going through the system, are graduating, are lost as drop outs, have received their GED, entered the military or the workforce and

what are the overall educational scores are on top of that to get a view of how our kids are doing.

Mr. Johnson said that 8 months has been lost with the timetable Mrs. Vaughn was given to reach her goal.

Mr. Henry said that as things exist now it is impossible for Mrs. Vaughn to succeed or fail.

Mr. Johnson said he has been unable to attend School Board meetings and that he wanted to make sure that he wasn't missing something that had already been defined.

Mr. Henry asked if there is target date for when the metrics will be ready.

Mrs. Vaughn said she is hoping that a draft of plan will be in place so it can be used as part of the budget process in the fall.

Mr. Brown asked if part of plan to become a Top 10% School District will be based on community involvement and the data collected through the survey currently being conducted.

Mrs. Vaughn said the final draft of the survey was completed and that she hoped the survey would be available to the public the next day.

Chairman Arcouette asked if the survey will be available to all residents.

Mrs. Vaughn said it will be available in paper form in several community locations and by mail if requested and electronically on the SAU website. She said they would like feedback from all segments of the community and will be personally handing out copies of the survey at community events such as Bingo and at other places around town.

Mrs. Connolly asked how they planned to avoid duplicate results.

Mrs. Vaughn said the system will only accept one return from each address. They are not going to respond to individual comments or questions but will send the aggregated results by e-mail when they are completed.

Ms. Mitchell asked what per cent response they are looking to receive.

Mrs. Vaughn said she would like see responses from a few hundred people for representation of the community. She said she plans to be in several places around town to let people know they have this opportunity to have their voices heard.

Ms. McElhinney said students will also be asked to complete and return the survey.

Mr. Henry asked if all students will be participating or if there is a grade level cut off point.

Mrs. Vaughn said students in grade 7 and up will receive the survey.

Mr. Henry added that some of the student responses may be "interesting" especially if they are anonymous.

Ms. Elbert suggested the library staff be contacted to see if the surveys could put there.

Mrs. Vaughn said she will be bringing the survey copies to various sites this week.

### **All Funds – Revenue Report**

Ms. Verville said the revenues are tracking as expected and nothing "earth shattering" has affected the budget.

Mr. Brown asked how much of the budget is unexpended to date.

Mrs. Vaughn said there are still expenditures that have yet to be posted but a ball park figure would be about \$150,000.

Ms. Verville said some unexpended funds include extracurricular activities and service contracts that are paid in May or June.

Mrs. Vaughn said some of the facilities repair "surprises" are also not yet paid or posted.

Senate Kindergarten Bill- Mr. Brown asked if anyone was following the Senate kindergarten bill and how would it impact the Town if it passes.

Mrs. Vaughn said the funding for full day kindergarten if approved may be funded from different sources and it depends on how the program is funded. She said they have been notified that the most recent numbers may change.

Mr. Brown asked if the legislation is intended to affect only communities without full day kindergarten or all communities statewide.

Mrs. Vaughn said it is her understanding the legislation will affect communities without full day kindergarten first, high need communities second and Farmington would be considered a high need community. She said SB 193 (School Choice) would also greatly affect the town by about \$270,000 but it has been shelved until next session.

Mr. Henry asked which grant is partially paying for full day kindergarten in Farmington.

Mrs. Vaughn said the program is partially paid through the Title I grant.

He said the district qualified for the grant because it is full day kindergarten is supplemental to what the district was previously offering. He asked if the full day kindergarten becomes mandatory if it would still be considered supplemental.

Mrs. Vaughn said if full day was already part of the general operating budget and then they tried to apply for the grant it would not be supplemental. As it has never been part of the general operating budget it remains at status quo (supplemental) she said.

Mr. Brown asked if there would be a short term budget increase without the Title I funds.

Mrs. Vaughn said grant funding covers 2 and one-half teachers and 2 Para's who would have to be absorbed into the operating budget and those other funds could be used for other programming.

Mr. Johnson asked if this could be considered an unfunded mandate from the state.

Mrs. Vaughn said it would be another unfunded state mandate.

Food Service - Mr. Henry asked about the budget status of the food service program.

Ms. Verville said the accounts are down slightly and they are awaiting the results of a survey done in April to determine the reason the number of accounts has been reduced.

Ms. Mitchell asked who conducted the survey and who the respondents were.

Ms. Verville said the vendor Chartwell conducted a survey of the students using the program. She said accounts are down at the high school but up a little at the Henry Wilson School. She said due to an FDA regulation that any families who have not cleared any account balance by June 30 will be removed from the food service fund and then they have to try to collect the money owed from the parents.

Mrs. Vaughn said there is subsidy when the district has to pay the cost up front which then must be repaid.

Mr. Henry asked for the total amount owed to the program.

Ms. Verville said the amount owed is currently about \$3,500.

Ms. Connolly asked about what type of collection efforts are made to collect the money owed.

Mrs. Vaughn said they make phone calls, send letters, use Marshall pay and offer payment plans to the families. She said secretaries and some teachers are in contact with them weekly to check on the status of payments and to offer help if needed such as with filling out forms for financial aid or reduced cost programs.

Mr. Henry asked if free and reduced lunch applications could be retroactive.

Ms. Verville said they are not and if someone runs up a sizable bill and then applies for reduced cost lunch program the sizable bill will still go forward.

Mr. Henry then clarified he was asking about the total food service budget that had to be subsidized in the past. He said the amount to be subsidized went down substantially when the district went to an outside vendor but the district has recently changed vendors.

Mrs. Vaughn said they currently have a Request for Proposals out for vendors for next year.

Ms. Verville said the current contract is a multi-year contract with options to renew and the School Board is looking at its options for next year.

**8). Old Business:** None.

**9). New Business:**

Chairman Arcouette asked the members to provide their name and addresses and contact information.

**10). Any Other Business to come before the Committee:**

*Public Comment-* Chairman Arcouette asked if the committee wished to continue providing 10 minutes for public comment at both the beginning and end of the meetings. She said there are usually no members of the public in attendance at the meetings and when there is past practice has been to allow the public to ask questions as they come up. She asked if the members would like it to be a continuing agenda item.

Mr. Henry said he added it to the agendas to emphasize and encourage public involvement. He said public comment is often at the beginning of meetings and as a member of the public he sometimes would like to ask a question after things have discussed during the meeting. When there is no public comment at the end you have to wait a month until the next meeting and the decision may have been made by then he said.

Consensus of the Committee was to keep both the beginning and ending Public Comment agenda items and to add "maximum "of 10 minutes to the title.

**12). Public Comment:**

Wednesday Library Openings- Mrs. Johnson said she heard at the Board of Selectmen meeting that the Goodwin Library is planning on being open on Wednesdays.

Ms. McElhinney said the library will be open on Wednesdays for 6 months from May 31 to November 29. She said there will be traffic counters up on both doors and asked if there was any particular feedback the committee is looking for.

Ms. Connolly asked for the hours of operation on Wednesdays.

Ms. McElhinney said the library will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Mr. Brown said he would like to see a survey designed to look at the library from A to Z from the user's perspective. He would like it to include opinions about programs offered, hours of operation, if enough or too many hours provided and if it meets users' needs. This would provide community feedback for use during the budget process he said.

Ms. Connolly asked if the library website has a comment section.

Ms. McElhinney said a comment section is a great idea.

Ms. Elbert said back when the library was regularly open on Wednesdays the Director tried to synchronize the sporadic hours so that hours for Monday, Wednesday and Friday were the same and the Tuesday and Thursday hours were the same. They chose to go back to that schedule as it is easier for people to remember she said.

Mr. Brown asked if there has been any headway made in getting revenues from the surrounding towns in support of their residents who benefit from the library services.

Ms. Elbert they have discussed reaching out to Middleton since they don't have a very big library but they have not taken the step to ask them.

Chairman Arcouette asked about the number of non-residents using the library.

Ms. Elbert said the number is not significant, maybe a handful.

Mr. Brown asked if someone walked in to do research at the library how would staff know who he was.

Ms. Elbert said a person can walk in and use library materials on site and would not have to sign in or out unless they were using a computer or checking out materials.

Chairman Arcouette asked if there is cost for non-residents to have a library card.

Ms. Elbert said a non-resident library card is \$40 a year.

Round Table Meeting- Ms. McElhinney said the next round table meeting to discuss economic development will be held on Thursday, April 27 at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room at the library. The agenda will include reorganization of board. She said Town officials and other residents are welcome to attend.

Mr. Henry asked what "board" she was referring to.

She said they plan to form a Steering Committee to lead the ground work for when UNH comes in to discuss their economic development programs. She said any entity that would come to town would only act as a liaison and not perform the actual legwork to come up with a vision or to set the plan in place.

Mr. Brown said the Town will fund the UNH program and suggested the group discuss

their official status/purpose of the committee with the Selectmen. One advantage of being appointed by the Selectmen is the liability coverage that goes with being appointed as a volunteer he said.

Ms. McElhinney said there was discussion about this at the last meeting and that the committee would be a subset of the Selectmen with Ms. Elbert is their representative to the board.

Mr. Johnson said the group is not a subset of the Selectmen unless they are appointed by the board.

Ms. McElhinney said the representative would keep the Selectmen informed prior to making any decisions and is under the purview of the Selectmen.

Mr. Johnson said the committee is group of citizens who get together to discuss matters but has no authority to represent the Town/Selectmen.

Mr. Brown said there is an advantage to forming a round table, set up the volunteers and have some discussion about if the town qualifies for a grant where would the money go. He said at some point the committee will need to go to the Selectmen and decide who that committee will answer to.

Ms. Arcouette asked if the Economic Development Committee is involved with the roundtable group.

Ms. McElhinney said the EDC is aware of the committee and have been invited to attend. She said she is not sure if they plan to become involved.

Ms. Arcouette suggested there may be some people who would like to be a member of that committee but can't because of their involvement in other boards in town.

Ms. Elbert said she has encouraged people to come just to sit and listen and share ideas and not to worry about committing to an official seat on a committee.

USO Review- Ms. Arcouette said the dinner/show will be held on Saturday, May 6 at the Town Hall. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the show starts at 7 p.m. There will be a catered meal and tickets are available at \$25 each she said.

**13). Next Meeting:** Wednesday, May 24 at 7 p.m.

**14). Adjournment:**

Motion: (N. Johnson, second E. Johnson) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:50 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary

---

Sylvia Arcouette, Chairman

