

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN, FINANCE COMMITTEE, SCHOOL COMMITTEE
BUDGET SUMMIT I MEETING MINUTES**

**September 19, 2007
High School Library**

CALL TO ORDER: Chm. Woods called the Board of Selectmen's meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The following persons were present: Chairman Julie Woods, Vice Chair Kevin Kuros, Clerk Michael Potaski, Sel. Stack, Town Manager Jill R. Myers and BOS Assistant Tracy Leavitt. Absent: Sel. James Dwyer.

Chm. Maharay called the Finance Committee's meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The following persons were present: Chm. Ed Maharay, Mark Andrews, Howard Fortner, Christine Horwarth, May Pat Wickstrom, Richard Young and Finance Director David Genereux. Absent: FinComm member Peter Demers.

Chm. Esposito called the School Committee's meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The following persons were present: Chm. Ernest ("Ernie") Esposito, Jim Haynes, John Higgins, Jane Keegan, Michelle Taparausky, Superintendent Dan Stefanilo, and School Business Manager Don Sawyer. Absent: School Committee members Peter Baghdasarian and Mason Seagrave.

Introductions were made around the table.

BUDGET SUMMIT I

Opening Statement: Chm. Maharay began the meeting by reading his Opening Statement. (A copy is attached to these minutes). The objective of the summit is:

1. To craft a balanced budget for FY09 that defines the priorities of the voters for town government.
2. Create a 3-5 year financial plan which outlines the financial priorities for the town.

Formalize process and action plan: Town Manager Myers acknowledged that all of the parties present have spent a lot of time examining the Town's financial conditions. She noted that she is hoping for consensus on the Town's financial position and working to create awareness by communicating to a broad group the priorities established at the Summits. She noted that the discussion should get back to basics for the services residents have grown accustomed to and expect to receive, and present a balanced budget for FY2009. She then noted required services by MGL (Chapter 41) that a town must provide.

Review FY2009 Budget: Finance Director Genereux reviewed his memo dated 8/14/07 (A copy of the memo is attached to these minutes). Mr. Genereux noted that fixed costs are forecast to increase by \$ 673,679.00. Mr. Genereux noted that he is comfortable with the projected revenue figure of \$34,180,903.00, which is a decrease in revenue of \$534,355 from the FY 2008 revenue forecast. The lower revenue figure is due to the elimination of the \$1,193,000 transfer from the Stabilization account used to balance the FY 2008 Budget. He added that he does not plan to make any changes in the revenue sheet until January 2008, when the initial FY2009 state cherry sheet is made available.

Mr. Genereux reviewed his memo dated 8/31/07 (A copy of the memo is attached to these minutes). He stated that if the revenues stay the same, the municipal and school sides will have to raise \$1,208,034 in revenue increases or spending cuts in order to balance the FY 2009 budget. Mr. Genereux cautioned that the 1.2 million dollar deficit figure does not include any Town or School departmental funding increases, as the FY 2009 budget worksheets have not been released to Town

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and School Departments, and any increase will increase the potential budget deficit. Mr. Genereux then elaborated on the possible cuts that would have to take place within departments not considered core services (core as defined as administration, public safety and education). He went on to state that the budget anticipates potential salary increases for remaining town employees, where in most cases will have to be taken out of the individual departments existing operating budgets. Mr. Genereux then noted that the municipal department budgets would decrease by \$798,569, or 14.50%; he went on to list the effects, which included potential closure of the senior center and the library, the near elimination of the Parks Department, and the potential lay off of 16 full time town employees and 7 part time employees. Finally he ended by stating that the school side would decrease by \$409,465.00 or 2.3% and deferred to the Superintendent of Schools for what the effect of that would be. Superintendent Stefanilo said it would mean the loss of approximately 16 teachers.

Review budget options noted by individuals: Chm. Maharay opened the discussion and asked Ms. Myers to comment on the options and status. Ms. Myers noted that in FY08 the Animal Control Officer was regionalized, and prior to that Veteran's Services. Ms. Myers feels regionalization is a good option however, is unsure that there is another service we could regionalize for FY2009, although review will continue. Ms. Myers noted that the Town is required to provide health insurance benefits to eligible employees as the Town accepted MGL Chapter 32b many years ago. On August 27th the BOS authorized her to enter into negotiations regarding healthcare, namely participation in the Group Insurance Commission ("GIC"). Such notification needs to be made by October 1, 2007. She noted that the GIC based on coalition bargaining, and that even though retirees make up 10% of the vote, it weighs heavily with the Uxbridge Teachers Union units. She had held a meeting on 9/11/07 and is waiting for the Unions and Retirees to establish a Public Employee Committee ("PEC"). Mr. Genereux noted that in regards to retirement, Worcester Regional Retirement controls the cost assessment, not the Town of Uxbridge. He stated he does not expect to see a lot of change.

Superintendent Stefanilo spoke in regards to education. He informed the public that number of Uxbridge students opting to school choice out has "flat lined". He noted that as a School Committee they have found no simple solution except to build a new school. Mr. Stefanilo noted next week they will have another accreditation check; that the major problem is space. He stated that Special Education programs will return to the portion of the Bernat Mill that as not affected by the fire within the next 5 months.

Chm. Maharay briefly reviewed the benchmarks. Sel. Kuros asked that we add tax levy capacity to the benchmarks and compare capacity to like towns to see where we stand.

Assignments: Chm. Maharay noted that he would like everyone to individually reflect on what they have heard this evening from staff, including the memos from the Finance Director. Then debate as individual committees and provide a recommendation at the next Budget Summit scheduled for October 10th. Chm. Maharay stated that he is not looking for ways to balance the budget; he is more interested in priorities. Chm. Maharay then asked the individual Boards/Committee to discuss what Capital Projects they feel are worth pursuing over the next 2-5 years. Chm. Maharay asked the individual Boards/Committee to review Core Services among themselves and return on October 10th with a decision on what they feel is mandatory. Chm. Maharay briefly reviewed the agenda for the October 10th Budget Summit II.

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ADJOURNMENT (Budget Summit II is scheduled for October 10, 2007): At 8:53 pm

- **BOS – Motion by Sel. Kuros, seconded by Sel. Potaski, to adjourn; unanimous approval.**
- **Finance Committee – Motion by Christine Horwarth, seconded by Mark Andrews, to adjourn; unanimous approval.**
- **School Committee – Motion by Michelle Taparausky, seconded by John Higgins, to adjourn; unanimous approval.**

*Minutes respectfully submitted by,
Tracy Leavitt, Assistant to the Board of Selectmen*

Minutes approved by Board of Selectmen:

Chairman Julie A. Woods

Sel. James F. Dwyer

V. Chairman Kevin J. Kuros

Sel. Dan Stack

Clerk Michael Potaski

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*Minutes respectfully submitted by,
Tracy Leavitt, Assistant to the Board of Selectmen*

Minutes approved by Finance Committee:

Chairman Ed Maharay

Mark Andrews

Peter Demers

Howard Fortner

Christine Horwarth

May Pat Wickstrom

Richard Young

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Minutes approved by School Committee:

Chairman Ernest Esposito

Peter Baghdasarian

James Haynes

Mason Seagrave

John Higgins

Jane Keegan

Michelle Taparausky