

**Minutes**  
**Town of Lexington Appropriation Committee**  
**October 24, 2005**

Members Present: A. Levine (Chair), D. Brown (Vice Chair), R. Eurich, R. Cole, J. Bartenstein, E. Michelson, P. Hoffman.

Additional attendees: M. Young (Budget Officer); C. Lamb, S. Stoltz, G. Burnell, and W. Hurley (Capital Expenditures Committee).

Items Distributed: School Capital Emergency Repairs Report (E.M.), Updated Budget Forecast Spreadsheet (R.C.)

The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:00 PM by Al Levine in Town Office Bldg. Rm. 111.

1. Al L. discussed his preparation of the committee's report for the Special Town Meeting. He said he would be asking Michael Young to assist him with some tables for the introduction.

2. Issues that the committee would like to see addressed at the Budget Summit include:

- a. What action is needed to appropriate the \$250,000 NSTAR grant for Harrington?
- b. Will the \$350,000 that is currently in the budget will be adequate to address municipal contract settlements?
- c. The funding sources for each article.
- d. Understanding if the Schools have estimated energy costs at current market prices in any attempt to come up with a "high-end" estimate.

3. Deborah B. identified the following as the latest positions in regard to the School articles:

- a. The FY06 budget request would be for an additional \$847,396 and the school would manage all other operational deficits within this new budget.
- b. An analysis of the entire school population has determined that the estimated, additional, potential SPED liabilities over and above the newly requested amount would be \$200,000–\$250,000.
- c. The approximately \$67,000 of emergency roof and HVAC repairs would be done within the current maintenance line item.

- d. The request for approximately \$144,000 for D&E for roofs and HVAC under Article 6 would not be made. The schools would reprioritize a currently approved appropriation and use those funds for this work.

4. CEC members joined the meeting to discuss the Special Town Meeting issues. Charles L. reported that he had participated in a tour of the LHS Gym roof and believes the D&E money is needed in order to get a quality bid. He also reported that the School Committee was working on reprioritizing the 2005 ATM Article 30 appropriations and thus freeing up the \$144,360 for the D&E on these projects—eliminating having to ask for additional funding at the STM under Article 6. CEC supports this approach.

5. CEC reported on the progress of ongoing projects:

- a. Clarke energy — the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the project is under way (EMS system & lighting controls) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the project (refrigeration, rooftop condensers) is being submitted to NSTAR for approval.
- b. School Administration Building—the Permanent Building Committee has selected the architect, with unknown cost estimated.
- c. DPW Barn—The PBC is narrowing down architects prior to selecting one, and costs are ball parked at \$10–12 million.

6. The meeting recessed at 5:55 PM, moved to the Selectmen’s Meeting Room to join the summit, and went back into session at 6:07 PM. It was reported that the Article 4 request would be for \$528,178, Article 5 would be for \$847,396, and Article 6 would be indefinitely postponed.

Helen Cohen (Lexington School Committee) stated the committee’s position that the additional requested Article 5 funding would only be used to fund the identified deficits and all unspent money would be returned. Any new deficits would be covered by the current appropriation. This also assumes that all surpluses are also applied to the identified deficits. Dr. Paul Ash (Lexington School Superintendent) estimated that the worst-case scenario that could still arise for SPED could be as large as an additional \$220,000, and that 10–14% of discretionary funds would be encumbered as a method of reserving money for this contingency.

Selectman Peter Kelley asked this Committee’s opinion of whether to ask for this appropriation at the STM or at the ATM in April 2006. Alan L. reported that the majority of the Committee was in favor of a STM appropriation. This action would give the Town Meeting the flexibility to support or reject school requests. Eric M. reported that he did not vote with the majority, and he was still withholding his opinion until he understood the funding sources and whether reoccurring revenue was being used to fund reoccurring expenses.

After presentations were complete, this Committee took a poll and unanimously supported the School Committee's request for \$847,396 under Article 5.

Eric M. asked whether the motion under Article 5 to reduce the Minuteman line item by \$57,000 would cause an unintentional disapproval of the Minuteman assessment. Carl Valente (Lexington Town Manager) answered that was not the case.

Alan L. asked: 1) if it was within the scope of the warrant to add the Minuteman reduction to Article 5 (the answer was yes); 2) if the School Lunch revenue would have to be appropriated (the answer was no); and 3) what was the worst-case estimate for potential energy overruns (the answer was \$50,000).

Deborah B. expressed her belief that even though Article 6 would be indefinitely postponed, it was very important that a complete explanation of the particulars of the switching of expenditures be taken given at the STM.

The following items that were relative to the FY2007 budget process were discussed:

- a. The \$254,000 NSTAR rebate for the Harrington School project was assumed in the current cost projections, but will have to be appropriated at the ATM.
- b. A schedule of budget creation dates will be created and forwarded.
- c. The next summit is scheduled for 11/30/05 @ 5 PM.

7. The Summit concluded and this Committee recessed at 7:33 PM. At 7:41 PM, the meeting reconvened in Town Office Bldg. Room 111.

8. Deborah B. moved that we support the request for \$847,396 under Article 5. The motion was approved 7-0. Questions still exist as to what the School Committee would cut if this request were not approved by Town Meeting.

9. There was a discussion about the viability and the advisability of creating stabilization funds for SPED and energy, and comparing these overages with the annual overage for Snow and Ice removal. It was pointed out that the S&I overages are allowed by law and a mechanism exists just for that purpose.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Michelson

*Approved December 15, 2005*