

*Westwood Finance and Warrant Commission
February 4, 2014
Meeting Minutes*

Chairman LeBlanc Cummings called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

Finance and Warrant Commission (Fincom) members absent: David Blessing, George Hertz, Tom Looney, Ray Sleight.

Permission was granted to WestCat to record the meeting.

Tonight's agenda included a budget update from School Superintendent John Antonucci. Also attending:

- Heath Petracca, Dir. of Business and Finance.
- School Committee Chair Ellen Mason and member Josepha Jowdy.

FY15 School Budget

Chairman LeBlanc Cummings thanked Supt. Antonucci for attending tonight's meeting on short notice.

John Antonucci:

- The School Committee has not yet deliberated on the Superintendent's recommended budget; they will do so during February and March.
- School budget information is available on line.
- Provided Fincom members with the executive summary of his recommended budget.
- The FY15 recommended budget is a 4.24% increase over FY14. Although recent year increases have been in the 2 – 3% range, the Superintendent feels annual increases for MA communities should be in the 3 – 5% range.
- No cuts to services will be necessary in this budget recommendation.
- Salaries account for approximately 84% of the school budget. A recent new teachers' contract (three year contract) provided a "market adjustment" increase for teachers, a settlement the Superintendent feels is fair, just and sustainable.
- Westwood teachers' salaries had fallen behind those of comparable communities prior to these new adjustments.

Some other issues discussed:

- The School Committee has not yet discussed the \$2.25M University Station mitigation funds and for what purposes those funds may be used.
- The doors and HVAC work at the High School is just about completed.
- Chairman LeBlanc Cummings informed the School representatives of the recent Fincom meeting where WEAC (Westwood Environmental Action Committee) updated members on the Stretch Code and other general energy issues. How does the School Department interact with WEAC?
 - Although the School budget does not specifically identify energy expenditures, they are always trying to improve in this area. They interact with WEAC on a regular basis. It is a difficult balance for available funds; i.e., funding for controlling class sizes will prevail over energy issues.

Chairman's Update

- The next Fincom meeting is scheduled for February 24 which is the first public hearing for the Annual Town Meeting.
- February 25 the Fincom will meet for a comprehensive review of the 2013 OPEB valuation. The OPEB actuary will attend that meeting and perhaps the Town Treasurer.
- The current Fincom meeting schedule includes March 11 and 18. Perhaps only one of those dates may be needed. We will confirm over the next few weeks.

Miscellaneous

- Fincom member John Grogan serves on the Town's OBED Baker Task Force. John reported the reuse of that property is on a fast track (in order to have an option presented at the 2014 Annual Town Meeting). The RFP soliciting interested users was done on January 29.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Next Meetings

**February 24 – Public Hearing
February 25 – OPEB Presentation
7:30 P.M., Library**