

TOWN OF ROCKLAND

FINANCE COMMITTEE

September 27, 2023

Present: *Chairman John Pumphrey, Nick LaBollita, Kelly Murphy, Bill Principe, Vice Chairman Linda Sternfelt, Bill Stuart*

Absent: *Cara O'Neill, Katie Dussault, Bobby MacDonald*

Guest: *Dr. Alan Cron, Superintendent of the Rockland Schools, Scott Curtis, Town Accountant, Doug Lapp, Town Administrator*

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM in the Lower Conference Room of Town Hall.

Dr. Cron presented information received from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Operational Services Division that the estimated rate of inflation for Special Education programs for FY 2024 would be 14%. This will leave a shortfall of approximately \$300K in the School Department's budget for FY 2024 over and above the amount approved at Spring's Town Meeting. Dr. Cron explained that there are 17 out of district students that cannot be served in the Rockland Schools, and that these transportation costs comprised the source of the shortfall. 33% of the School Department budget consists of Special Education costs, where only 18% of the students are considered Special Education students. The vast majority of the Town's Special Education students are served in the Rockland Schools. Town Administrator Lapp said that the source of funding this article would come from Free Cash, which totaled \$1.3 million after Town Meeting.

Mr. Lapp reviewed the other draft Special Town Meeting articles with the Committee. He noted that Articles 9, 10 and 11 had to do with zoning within the Rockland portion of the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station. If these articles are not approved, the project will more than likely not be developed. The developer will present to the Finance Committee at its next meeting.

Chairman Pumphrey noted that Secretary Cara O'Neill had resigned from the Finance Committee and asked if anyone wished to serve in that position, which is a paid position. The Committee members declined, and the topic was tabled. Minutes will be rotated among the members of the Committee going forward.

Vice Chairman Sternfelt made a motion to accept the minutes of the Committee's July 12, 2023 meeting. Mr. Stuart seconded the motion. Ms. Murphy and Mr. Principe abstained. All other members approved.

The Committee set the date for its next meeting, to be held October 18th at 7 PM at Town Hall, in advance of the November 7th Special Town Meeting.

There being no further agenda or discussion items, Mr. Stuart made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. LaBollita seconded the motion. All approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Sternfelt, Vice Chairman