

Buckland Finance Committee Minutes
February 29, 2016

Meeting called to order at Buckland Town Hall at 7:23 p.m.

Committee members present: Karen Blom, Cynthia Caporaso, Bill Knittle, Paula Consolo

Others present: Selectboard members Dena Willmore and Rob Riggan, School Committee Representatives Martha Thurber and Glenn Cardinal, town manager Andrea Llamas.

Moved discussion of school budget to the top of the agenda.

School Committee has put forward a single warrant article, but Andrea says that article doesn't specifically state how we will be assessed for preschool costs and she doesn't believe this is proper procedure. Some selectman would like to see the preschool costs in a separate article because the Regional Agreement does not currently cover preschool, even though there is a warrant article that will be moved to change that.

The cost of preschool is up about \$350,000 from what the community was told last year. This is because preschool enrollment is much higher than anticipated. This is partially why the school operating budget is up 3.3 percent and Buckland's town assessment is up more than 6 percent this year. Another factor is tuition costs for out-of-district special ed students.

Martha Thurber reported that the school's strategic planning committee has two goals:

1. Keep students in the district (Find out why they are going to other schools, enhance the existing curriculum/choices, and market Mohawk's advantages.)
2. Look for the most efficient way to deliver the curriculum in terms of facilities, teaching staff, and operations.

Discussed Rowe joining the district. Paula remains against this until the voting rights are changed. Dena says we can make our vote contingent upon the passing of the change to voting rights in the Regional Agreement.

School committee reps departed.

Karen moved that we accept the minutes from Dec. 21, 2015 as amended. Bill seconded. Unanimously approved.

Karen moved to accept the January 18 minutes. Cynthia seconded. Unanimously approved.

Committee signed the January 14 minutes, which were previously approved.

Discussed need to complete the memo to the town. Selectmen are meeting on April 26, so we will try to have memo done and vote on warrant by April 21.

Short discussion on our meeting with Shelburne Finance Committee and idea of having joint services between the two towns.

Discussed budget

Dena reported on COLA for the Northeast as compared to Buckland salaries:

	COLA	Buckland salaries
FY13	1.5%	2.9%
FY14	1.5%	1.9%
FY15	1.9%	2.5%
FY16	0.0%	2.0%
Total	5%	4%

Dena will go back a little further because Andrea thinks that the FY13 raise came after a couple of years for no raises.

Karen requested that Andrea supply income/revenue sheets showing the various salary increases and how they affect the overall budget.

Went through each line item to see where biggest changes occur.

Budget Line 7 – Andrea needs to take a class

Line 37 – IT – Need to add a firewall to the computer system

Police budget is up. Need to get an explanation for increases. Discussed moving the police to the highway garage property, but this wouldn't be done this year.

Line 47 – Increase is due need for more electric inspections for solar installations

Mohawk operating assessment minimum contribution is based only on 01338 households; Dena thinks we can petition to change this and our contribution will go down.

Line 117 -- \$60K needed for highway garage studies.

Karen will discuss increase with the Senior Center and the Buckland Public Library, which is once again asking for increased hours.

Line 86 – This is for two people so we will change the wording from “manager” to “management.” Need \$1,000 more for the increase in responsibilities.

Line 94 – County retirement; we have no control

Line 96 – Shows an increase from single to a family plan insurance

Line 97 – New retiree

Decided that we need to discuss capital and debt exclusion polices in the near future.

Line 140 – showing result of article to transfer \$25K for Reed Bed from Enterprise Fund.

Dena and Rob leave at 9:48 p.m.

**Karen moved to transfer \$1,400 from Reserve Fund for the appraisal. Paula seconded.
Unanimously approved.**

Andrea leaves at 9:51 p.m.

Paula leaves at 9:52 p.m.

Discussed whether there is need for another meeting before department meetings on Saturday, March 19, but decided against it. Request that each finance committee member meet with the head of the department they report on:

Karen: libraries and senior center

Paula: highway

Ben: Police

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Next meeting is Saturday, March 19.

Respectfully submitted by Paula Consolo