

Board of Selectmen

Town of Upton



Massachusetts

Meeting Minutes of September 20, 2011
Mendon-Upton Joint Meeting

Location: Nipmuc Regional Middle / High School – Pleasant Street PDC room.

Present: Upton Chairman Robert J. Fleming, Member Kenneth E. Picard, Member James A. Brochu and Department Coordinator Terry Palmer
Upton Finance committee Member Jonathan Graves
Mendon-Upton Superintendent Joseph Maruszczak
Mendon Finance Committee Chair Rich Schofield
Mendon Board of Selectman member Michael Goddard
M-U Regional School Committee Chair Heather Applegate, Vice Chair Kathleen Drennan

Approved: October 11, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. Upton Selectmen Chairman Robert Fleming stated this is not a formal Board/Committee meeting and the minutes are for information only. Also whoever sponsors the meeting will be responsible for a clerk to take the minutes.

Chairman Fleming asked for comments on the question of what is a multi-board committee. Heather Applegate explained that to have all boards equally represented with an open dialog without one board to set agenda & to address how to fund the school budget.

Ms. Drennan stated she does not believe they need to formally establish as a group and have a mission statement; that they are a task orientated group with a key point being to improve communication during the budget process. Also this might be a one year need.

Mr. Maruszczak believes the School District has been fiscally conservative; with new hires employed at the lower pay scale. He also anticipates getting thru the FY12 budget well. Regards to the planning of the FY13 budget he believes it would be effective to meet early; preferably after the holidays and being able to report back to this Multi Board with three sets of rough figures

1. Maintenance – keeping what they have in place
2. Restorative budget – looking to get back the programs and offerings that were lost out in prior budget cycle
3. Strategic budget – hoping by Thanksgiving they will have the strategic process back in place – what type of programing do they need to look at to bring back this process

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Ms. Drennan stated they need to get a good early estimate of the budget.

- Hearing what is included in the Governor’s budget – this is usually late in the fiscal year
- Revenue estimates from both towns – knowing this could change but this could help their process

Mr. Schofield stated that Mendon would need this information a lot earlier, late November – early December.

Selectmen Ken Picard asked Ms. Drennan if they were basing the budget on revenue not expenses. Her reply is yes but they would also be basing the budget on expenses.

Selectmen Goddard stated focusing on the three approaches are good but we need to focus on the expense because the revenues are what they are.

Jay Byer of the Mendon School Committee stated the school needs another million dollars just for;

- Contracts – including the grades and steps increase
- Health insurance increase
- Travel/transportation increases

Ms. Drennan stated they have started negotiations with the faculty already.

Chairman Fleming stated they are all saying the same thing. The sooner we get some type of feedback the better.

Ms. Applegate commented that the governor’s budget may come back and fund transportation at a lower percentage. These are unknowns that could impact the budget.

Chairman Fleming stated the town has the same problem; we don’t know what the governor’s budget will be but we do know what our expense side will be; we then make an adjustment upon how the revenue falls out.

Selectmen Picard stated the minimum budget is the foundation and anything you can add to that is great if you get more revenue.

Ms. Drennan stated the minimum is keeping what they have right now and factoring in what they know will be or estimate what the increases in cost are such as;

- health care
- transportation
- possible contractual obligations

Selectmen Brochu stated with the new numbers or the numbers that are brought to them, the people want to see new ideas and approaches that come with the numbers, this could be important to sell the concept.

Rich Schofield discussed with all present the forecast plan noting;

1. objective
2. details of budget
3. revenue sources – state aid, 2 town contribution thru FY18
4. stipends
5. health insurance
6. net choice

- 91 7. charter
- 92 8. minimum local contribution
- 93 9. transportation increase
- 94 10. utilities

95 The next step is;

- 96 a) to confirm FY12
- 97 b) Take another shot at adjustments
- 98 c) Open up to the wider group for everyone to agree that this budget is about what we are
- 99 looking at if we do nothing

100 This information is shared with both towns.

101 Chairman Fleming requested that prior to the next meeting to email the update to everyone
102 so they can have time to review. Mr. Schofield will not have to go thru the presentation and
103 everyone can down load it and take time to digest it. He will send out the one he has now,
104 knowing it may be sometime before they can review it for changes.

105 Chairman Fleming thanked Mr. Schofield for his work.

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107 Proposed committee discussion

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109 Resource exchange between the two towns

110 Chairman Fleming would like to see it between the superintendent and the contact person for
111 each town. Mr. Maruszczak discussed having an open dialog with Upton's Town Manager, Ms.
112 Robinson focusing on 2 areas;

- 113 1. IT services – they will investigate but he asked everyone to understand they are obligated
- 114 with a contract for roughly \$20,000.00 for support
- 115 2. Snow removal – there is more opportunity for this discussion – he will get together with
- 116 the appropriate departments and see if some kind of consolidation is viable.

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118 Mr. Maruszczak asked to address a management study. Mr. Morin brought up the Special
119 Commission of School District Collaboration & Regionalization. This is a committee
120 established by the governor charged to look at what school districts can do to increase capacity
121 and improve collaboration in every sense of the word. The report is an assessment tool which is
122 a starting point for the district management study;

- 123 • District capacity
- 124 • Regionalization
- 125 • Collaboration

126 Mr. Maruszczak stated it would be a good fit for his office to engage in the assessment tool and it
127 could be done in a couple of weeks. He would be happy to prepare a report using this tool also
128 giving the backup data at the next meeting. Ms. Drennan would like to see the results published
129 on line. This is an initiative to self-assess. Chairman Fleming stated that he hopes everyone will
130 see there is no agenda here; they are all looking for an answer, no secrets everything is open for
131 the people to review. Selectmen Picard asked if this would address what is being now or if it can
132 be done less expensively. Ms. Drennan stated it addresses a lot of issues such as;

- 133 • Collaboration
- 134 • Having all the numbers in one place
- 135 • Top saving policy tools in each town

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137 Selectmen Goddard stated there needs to be a different way to fund the school and we need to go
138 back to the residents with facts and creative funding. There was discussion of what the
139 foundation is and how it is required to be used. Ms. Drennan will do research to find a good
140 narrative on how they calculate the foundation.

141 Mr. Schofield summarized the meeting to;

- 142 1. Management study
- 143 2. 7 year plan
- 144 3. Creative funding – with the resources going back to the towns respective with the
145 Superintendent

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147 Ms. Drennan reiterated that all boards must post their meetings. Mr. Schofield suggested a
148 regular meeting date. Also there was discussion of posting it as a meeting of the Multi Board
149 meeting on October 18 & November 15th.

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151 Chairman Fleming asked if Mendon would be willing to host the next meeting. Ms. Drennan
152 will reserve the same room for the meeting.

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154 Chris Ruso of Upton asked to speak on the fact that no other resident has attended these meetings
155 and also stated they are more than welcome to come to the meeting. The Boards and
156 Committees are doing a tremendous job for the town and committee to help make the town run
157 right; anyone who has a bad word to say can come to these meetings in open forum to voice their
158 concerns.

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161 Meeting adjourned @ 8:36 pm

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165 Respectfully submitted,

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168 Terry Palmer

169 Department Coordinator

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