

Town Council Finance Committee
July 21, 2015
Meeting Notes

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Frink at 6:10pm.

Roll Call

Members Present: Councilors Cerf, Frink and Watson.

Also present were Councilor Deb Peruzzotti and Town Manager Mark Oefinger.

Calendar and Communications

None

New Business

1. The following referrals were discussed;

2015-0132 State Funding for Education
2015-1033 Federal Funding for IDEA
2015-0134 Civilian School Children Residing in Navy Housing
2015-0135 State Mandate for Education

2. 2015-0132 State Funding for Education

- a. Discussed the current level of state funding for Special Education which is that the Town pays the first \$60,000 Special Education and the State picks up the rest. \$60,000 is 4 times the current unit cost of education which is approximately \$15,000. Watson suggested that the State should pay 100% over \$15,000. There was committee consensus on that. See item 6 below for action to follow on this issue.

3. 2015-1033 Federal Funding for IDEA

- a. Frink handed out descriptive information on IDEA. IDEA is the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its purpose is to provide children with disabilities the same opportunities for education as those students who do not have a disability.
- b. Frink mentioned that Dr Graner, during his April BOE budget presentation, informed the TC that we are currently being reimbursed at $\frac{1}{15}$ of the costs associated with IDEA and that it is supposed to be $\frac{1}{2}$ or 50%. Oefinger mentioned that the Town has had discussions with Congressman Courtney on this and other Federal education funding issues in the past. It was the consensus of the committee that the Town Manager should contact Congressman Courtney to continue resolving the $\frac{1}{15}$ vs $\frac{1}{2}$ funding levels. See item 6 below for the follow-up action on this item.

4. 2015-0134 Civilian School Children Residing in Navy Housing
 - a. Frink mentioned that Dr Graner, during his April budget presentation, informed the TC that there are 142 civilian children in Groton Public Schools that live in Navy Housing for which the Town no property taxes to support their education.
 - b. Cerf mentioned that the Town should charge the parents of these children tuition to attend Groton Public Schools. Oefinger mentioned that Federal Aid amounts to about \$3000 per student. For 142 students at \$3000 each that is \$426,000 in lost revenue. See item 6 below for follow-up action on this issue.

5. 2015-0135 State Mandate for Education
 - a. For discussion purposes Frink handed out a representative list of education legislation passed this year by the General Assembly. These included 3 new mandates as well as some relief measures for the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) and a change to the School Building Grant and Construction to allow municipalities to submit a grant application prior to securing local financing.
 - b. A general discussion followed regarding the financial impact of State education mandates on municipalities. See item 6 below for the follow-up action on this issue.

6. As a result of discussion on items 2 – 5 above it was unanimously decided to request a meeting with the BOE and bring the 4 issues above to their attention for ultimate resolution. The Town Manager was requested to set this meeting up for some time in August.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.