

**Joint Budget Task Force Committee
Minutes of November 4, 2015
Town Hall, Selectmen's Chamber**

Present for Board of Selectmen: Alison Hughes, Tony Archinski, Linda Wright, Town Accountant, Ann Vandal, Assistant Town Manager/Finance, Jim Duggan, Town Manager and Recording Secretary Shannon Rowe Beaulieu

Present for School Committee: Betsy Murphy, Michael McNamara, Steven Stone, Superintendent of Schools and Bill Frangiamore, Business Manager

Present for Finance Committee: Louise Tremblay and Bob Corey

Mrs. Hughes opened the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

Review of "Draft" Report to Board of Selectmen, School Committee & Finance Committee:

Mrs. Hughes stated that the Committee has been presented with the Town of Dracut, Budget Task Force Committee Report to Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee Report dated November, 2015.

Mr. Duggan stated that this was a very good exercise with an impressive Committee.

Mr. Duggan reviewed the Table of Contents, Background, Charge of Committee, Format of Deliberations, Definitions of Terms, Revenue Projections "Assumptions", Expenditure Projections "Dracut Public Schools Assumptions" and Expenditure Projections "Municipal Assumptions".

Superintendent Stone explained how the revenue and expenditure projections were established for five years, getting back to the FY11 numbers over the next five years, the E-rate not being included in the projections, Union Contracts ending in FY17 and the Elementary transportation fees.

Mr. Duggan discussed the Expenditure Projections "Municipal Assumptions" and the Capital Improvement budget transfer.

Mr. Duggan reviewed the Findings: General Government, Findings: Public Safety and Findings: Dracut Public Schools.

Superintendent Stone discussed the need for focusing on social, emotional health, wellbeing and Special Education for their students.

Mrs. Hughes asked about Kindergarten funding? Superintendent Stone stated that they are assuming they will be losing Kindergarten funding.

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Mr. Duggan reviewed Findings: Regional Education and stated that there is no transportation fee for students attending Essex Agricultural.

Mr. Duggan reviewed Findings: Public Works and stated that that the Department of Public Works does a fantastic job.

Mr. Duggan stated that he took 10% of every budget back last fiscal year to close the budget gap.

Mr. Duggan discussed recycle centers and discussed the flat fee across the board for contaminated recycling. Mr. Duggan stated that Russell Disposal is currently absorbing the fee right now but they would have to add the fee in with the new contract for FY19-FY21.

Mr. Duggan reviewed Findings: Health and Human Services and stated that the Veteran Services Officer would be moving over to the Council on Aging in the future to better serve the Veteran's.

Mr. Duggan reviewed Findings: Culture and Recreation and discussed the need for seasonal help at the concession stand a Veteran's Park and the Skateboard Park.

Mr. Duggan reviewed Findings: Debt Service. Mrs. Vandal stated that they did not include the debt exclusions, discussed borrowing, MSBA projects and revenue schedules.

Mr. Duggan reviewed Findings: Miscellaneous and stated they are required to have the OPEB fully funded by FY37-38. Mrs. Murphy asked what the penalty would be for not funding the OPEB liability? Mrs. Vandal stated the effect on the Bond ratings is the penalty.

Dr. McNamara discussed the School Department having a \$55.00 per day buy back which has reduced large payouts.

Mr. Duggan reviewed Understanding Reserve Funds "Stabilization Funds" and "Free Cash".

Mr. Duggan reviewed Summary of Findings and discussed people coming to Dracut wanting a good school system and a great economic engine. Mr. Duggan discussed the Town receiving a \$960,000 MassWorks grant for Phase 1 for the corner of Loon Hill and Broadway Road and the signing into the Community Compact Program.

Mrs. Hughes discussed increases in staffing, contractual obligations and challenges. Mrs. Hughes stated that they are not asking for the cream of the crop, they are just trying to get the Town back to where it was five to ten years ago.

Dr. McNamara stated that this is a quality of life issue and what the Community wants.

The Committee agreed with the report presented dated November, 2015.

Mrs. Murphy discussed the need to invest in our own Community.

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Dr. McNamara discussed the cooperative effort between the School and Town and stated that he is very pleased with the process.

Mrs. Hughes stated that the goal is to fill the requirements and discussed having to be open to all options.

Ms. Tremblay agreed with Dr. McNamara regarding the cooperation between the School and Town during this process.

Mr. Archinski thanked all who created the final report.

Mr. Duggan thanked Mrs. Vandal for all of her hard work during this process.

Public Input

Ms. Karen Merrill, 7 Clyde Ave, appeared before the Committee and thanked them for all of their hard work. Ms. Merrill discussed the sick and vacation time she receives at her employment and asked what was the Committee's next steps? Ms. Merrill stated that she is concerned with the talk regarding an override and asked how they keep the momentum going? Mrs. Hughes discussed the final document going to the Tri-Board then to the individual Boards. Mrs. Hughes stated that the document will continue to be a living document with the Tri-Board. Mrs. Hughes discussed having to cut over the years which has allowed the Town to stay in the black and discussed not seeing a lot of wiggle room on either side. Ms. Merrill discussed putting pressure on the State Representative and discussed the Greater Lowell Technical School receiving 15% from the State and the Dracut Public Schools only receiving 2 1/2 %. Ms. Merrill discussed an override being optional with a plan.

The Committee discussed how to move forward with the final document.

Mrs. Vandal stated that the mission of the Committee has been met and she will send the report to the individual Boards.

Mr. Archinski stated that he would call for a Tri-Board meeting to review the final document.

Mrs. Murphy discussed the form and function of each Board.

Mrs. Hughes stated that this is an acceptable report, bringing the report back to the individual Boards and then to the Administrators.

Mr. Duggan stated that the charge of this Committee, was to bring the final report back to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Duggan suggested that each Board review the report which would allow this Committee to answer any questions the individual Board's may have.

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Mrs. Vandal stated that she would sent the report to the individual Boards to review, before their next scheduled meetings.

Mrs. Murphy stated that the report will be on the School Committee's agenda for November 23, 2015.

Mr. Archinski stated that the report will be on the Board of Selectmen's agenda for November 24, 2015.

The Committee agreed to present the final report to the individual Board's for their review. Roll Call Vote:

Bob Corey – Yes	Louise Tremblay – Yes
Alison Hughes – Yes	Tony Archinski – Yes
Betsy Murphy – Yes	Mike McNamara – Yes

Mrs. Allison Volpe, 32 Clement Road, appeared before the Board and discussed the plan with any change for FY17 and asked when would any changes need to be completed by? Mrs. Vandal discussed this being contingent upon the budget. Mr. Duggan explained that Town Meeting Warrant Articles need to be to the Town Clerk forty-five days before Town Meeting.

Mrs. Hughes thanked the Committee for entrusting her with the Chairmanship of this Committee and thanked everyone for all of their hard work.

Dr. McNamara discussed having any questions from the news media being directed to the Town Manager and discussed being proactive with the media.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

Next Meetings

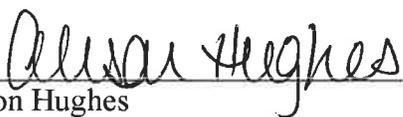
The meeting scheduled for November 18, 2015 was cancelled.

Adjournment

Motion made by Mr. Archinski to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Mrs. Murphy. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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Alison Hughes


Tony Archinski


Betsy Murphy


Dr. Michael McNamara


Louise Tremblay


Bob Corey