

RTM Finance & Budget Committee Special Meeting Minutes 10/20/2014

The special meeting was held jointly with the RTM Education Committee. The meeting was called to order at 8:33 p.m. by Dennis Maroney - Chairman of the Education Committee. The meeting was recorded by Channel 79 for the public.

F & B members present: A Rycenga, D. Ritchie, T. Duffy, J. Davis, J. Palen, R. Cardone, M. Thorne, M. Banks, G. Dupont, S. Anderson, and B. Hayes.

Absent: J. Boulton, B. Ball, K. Hoffman, and A. Millar.

Guests: W. Fox- Town Counsel, Board of Education Chairwoman - Betsy Haggerty-Ross, BOE members H. Shea. K. Stein, and C. McNamara, M. Lynch - Director of Facilities, Michael Feeney- Director of Finance, members of the public, later joining the meeting First Selectwoman - Jayme Stevenson and S. Marks.

With 11 of 15 F&B members present there was quorum.(Education Committee also had quorum)

The first item on the agenda was a discussion on Resolution approving the Town of Darien's acquisition of a property located at 32 Hoyt Street, Darien, Ct. (The resolution did not have a number assigned to it.)

Betsy Hagerty- Ross spoke about the property and gave an overview of the purchase. The town had named the property as a desired acquisition many years ago and had previously attempted to acquire it but was unable to agree to terms. The property is currently surrounded by town land. Access to the property is currently through the Holmes Elementary school parking lot creating safety concerns. It was noted that the Board of Education does not know the final use of the building or it would be demolished. A consultant firm Malone & McBroom will be conducting a best use facilities study for the Board of Education and if the acquisition is approved would include the property in their report. It was also noted the BOE has expressed a need for space with 35 Leroy being used to full capacity for storage of files etc. . The acquisition of 32 Hoyt Street had previously been approved by the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen.

A discussion was held and a question was raised if the \$775,000 purchase amount would be the true final cost of the acquisition. If the building were to be demolished or refurbished there could be additional costs. It was determined that the committees were charged with voting on the actual property acquisition and not potential uses. The additional expenses if any would have to be presented in a separate resolution.

Jayme Stevenson spoke about the purchase and also noted that the town had unsuccessfully tried to acquire the property in 1996. Mrs. Stevenson presented a map with potential new setbacks for Holmes Elementary from planning and zoning if the property were to be acquired by the town.

Further questions were raised regarding the appraised value of the property. It was suggested by Town Counsel that these discussions be held in executive session for the value of the possible purchase with town elected officials allowed to remain in the room and members of the public not present as the property had not yet been in a settled contract. At 8:55 a motion was made by S. Anderson to hold an executive session and seconded by J. Palen. The motion to hold an executive session was unanimous. The members of the public left the room.

With no further questions a motion to end the executive session was made by D. Ritchie and seconded by R. Cardone. It was unanimous and the public was allowed to return to the meeting at 9:13 p.m. .

Mr. Maroney asked if there was any public comment. Marli Hayes a resident of Darien spoke and addressed safety concerns as well as class overcrowding. Additionally two other residents spoke and also raised concerns about safety and other issues. They were also in support of acquiring the property.

Mr. Maroney asked if there were any further questions and hearing none asked if the committees would like to hold their respective votes. A motion was made for the F&B Committee to vote on the Resolution for the Town of Darien to acquire the property at 32 Hoyt Street, Darien, CT. by A. Rycenga and seconded by T. Duffy. The resolution passed with 10 members in favor, one against (S. Anderson), and no abstentions. The Education Committee also approved the motion in their own vote.

The next item on the agenda was the discussion of the Board of Education budget for 2015-2016. Mr. Maroney had some questions from his committee for the Board members. Mr. Maroney is going to send a copy of the questions to the BOE so they can review them and respond. In the interim Mrs. Hagerty- Ross said the first look at the enrollment numbers would be discussed at the upcoming BOE meeting on October 28th,2014. The following two BOE meetings would give outline to the Superintendent's proposed budget. At these meetings the first outlines of the budget will be delivered and interested parties should attend or watch on channel 79.

Mr. Maroney thanked retiring Board of Education member Heather Shea for her many years of service! T. Duffy thanked retiring RTM member Anita Rycenga for serving on the RTM for the past nine years! The two committees separated to attend to their final agendas.

J. Palen proposed further discussions regarding the review of the budget for the F&B Committee occur after the upcoming BOE meetings. The consensus was to postpone discussions for a future meeting.

J. Palen asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes of the RTM F&B Committee special meeting held on 09/29/2014. With 9 in favor and two abstentions (G. Dupont and A. Rycenga) the minutes were approved.

A motion to call the meeting to an end was made by D Ritchie and seconded by A. Rycenga at 9:45 p.m. .