

Tri Board Meeting of the Board of Finance,  
Board of Education, and the Board of Selectmen  
Dec. 7, 2015 – SVAA Facility

Members of the Board of Education present: Jeanne Gee, Lori D'Ostuni, Susie Keane, John Richter, Natalie Semyanko, Michael Sepko, Matt Service, Kendra Wiesel; absent George Beiter

Board of Selectmen present: First Selectman Mack, Selectmen Tim Reynolds, Mel Chaftez, Krystal Holmes; absent Joanne Sullivan

Board of Finance present: Justin Donnelly, Ryan Anderson, Chris Childs, Eric Harrington, Anne Huntington Mickelson, Tracy Eccles, J. Michael Stevens  
Absent: Brian Kost

Chairman Donnelly noted those members present and absent.

Mr. Don Miner welcomed the Tri Board Meeting to the SVAA facility and offered a tour for anyone who wished to see more of the SVAA facility.

Chairman Donnelly noted that 74 years ago, the Japanese declared war and attacked Pearl Harbor. He asked that we remember all the lives lost and join together in the Pledge of Allegiance.

He then called the meeting to order and asked that everyone introduce themselves to the meeting and note the Board on which they serve. Mr. Donnelly noted that we are missing Brian Kost from the Board of Finance, and Joanne Sullivan from the Board of Selectmen, George Beiter of the Board of Education, and Deborah Cerrato, Director of Finance.

I have had the privilege to call this Tri Board Meeting every year since I have been Chairman. This is a new year, a new beginning; we have a new administration, a new First Selectman, a new BoE Superintendent, and a new Assistant Superintendent, and newly elected members on each of these three boards.

We will begin the budget discussion, as the Charter forces us to work together and that is a good thing. I would like to point out that our fiscal Policy reflects the inflation rate and we will attempt to hold to that as a benchmark.

Mr. Childs stated that we have 3 major capital projects that we are beginning. The bonding will put a strain on our budget for the next six years.

First Selectman Mack noted that we will be interviewing bond counsel and reviewing the bonding process. We will collaborate together.

Mr. Donnelly noted that he and Ryan Anderson have already met and discussed their fiscal plans with the BoE.

Karen Barasi, Superintendent, BoE invited all to attend the first BoE budget meeting. We are doing this in public with a full board. We start at zero budgeting, and we will ask for what we need. This is an assessment year for the BoE. What do we really need for children? I am bringing a new format, a borrowed budget format, which is more transparent than in the past.

Mr. Donnelly stated that Ryan and he both plan to follow the BoE budget process. Chris Childs and Michael Stevens will both participate with the PBC. That way we can follow the process and be aware of any incoming problems.

Selectman Reynolds noted the declining enrollment of students. How will the Board of Education address this?

BoE Chairman Jeannne Gee spoke to the problem of declining enrollment. Ms. Barasi, is assessing this declining enrollment very carefully. Many towns are addressing the same problem. Ms. Barasi noted our special needs costs are going up.

Mr. Donnelly stated that our Grand List is increasing in small increments and we will be following up on improving the grand list. It takes new commercial development to raise the Grand List.

First Selectman Mack stated that Patrick McMahon and she are on it.

Mr. Anderson stated we will have dialogues with the Boards; we have a fiscal policy of holding to the inflation rate. We hold to a fund balance of 12%; our budget is going to be tight. We may need to have more of these meetings and collaborate. Mr. Childs noted that we need to have environmental remediation studies done on all projects before actual construction.

First Selectman Mack stated we will have remediation studies done and we are in the process of formulating the stages each project will require, i.e. relocation of staff in the Town Hall. If we can combine similar services, we could save money.

Mr. Anderson stated we need to work with all on capital projects. We have a process, and need to work together. Mr. Donnelly noted that we may have another Tri Board meeting during the budget process. The Tri Board should be the strategic planners and movers.

Citizen Comment: Mr. Bruce Rietburg asked questions about the budget progress. Could we have partnerships with other towns and save some money?

Chairman Donnelly thanked all who were present. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bobbie C. Kling, Secretary Tri Board Mtg.Dec.7, 2015.minutes