



FINANCE COMMITTEE
September 18, 2012
Meeting Minutes

Room 210, Billerica Town Hall

Meeting was called to order by Mary McBride, Chairman, at 7:00pm:

Members	Present	Absent	Excused	Arr. Time	Dep. Time
Mary K. McBride, Chairman	X				
Thomas Aquavella, Vice Chairman	X				
John Piscatelli, Secretary	X				
Mark Efstratiou	X				
Ed Giroux		X			
Patrick Logue, Jr	X				
Rino Moriconi		X			
Scott Morris	X				
Philip J. Newfell	X				
Kathleen Paulsen		X			
Anthony Ventresca	X				
John Griffin, 1st Associate	X				
David Howe. 2 nd Associate	X				

Mary opened the meeting and mentioned that the agenda had changed considerably since this afternoon.

She then introduced Superintendent of Schools Tim Piwowar who then introduced: Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Sam Rippin; Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Dede Galdston; and Cathy McCulley, the K - 8 STEM coordinator.

Article 3 through 8 are all on the agenda for contracts however Articles 5, 6, and 7 will not be discussed as the contracts are still in negotiations and Article 8 will be withdrawn as there are no negotiations scheduled prior to town meeting. If we reach agreements on Articles 5, 6, and 7 we will come back prior to Town Meeting.

Article 3 - To Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement – School Custodians - To see if the Town will raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum to fund the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Billerica School Committee and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, Council 93, Local 2747, Custodial Employees; or act in relation thereto.

Tim said that Article 3 is a new 3 year contract. 0% for FY13 and there is a traditional wage reopener for 2014 & 2015. In the highlights of the language of this contract the most substantial is a change to the function clause. Previously it said there was mandatory custodial coverage required when outside groups were using facilities and this now contains thresholds for assigning custodial help. Replaced language based solely on the contract. Occasionally somebody could have two bites; one through contract and one through civil service now only contract. Previously we had maintenance that could only do maintenance and that has changed. There is a financial incentive to reduce sick leave cost. Tony: with this contract does it have a pay increase on the last day of the previous year like the other contracts did? Tim, in essence they did get a 1-1/2% pay raise. Tony said he has mentioned in the past about the wages of public employees versus private and wanted to know in these contracts what are we doing to bring it back to more sustainable regarding benefits, asking taxpayers to come up with more money and in essence we are putting out 1-11/2% raise. Tim the 1-1/2% is a previous increase and this one does not include any increase. In the grand scheme of things we still need to make sure we still place ourselves in a good position within our communities. We need to pay a wage where we are competitive

with other communities. Tony what has happened is it has led to our facilities falling apart. Mary said we are discussing only what is in the MOU. Tony wants them to work on the contracts to make them look more at this. Mary suggested that very soon we will have a presentation by the facilities study group which will address this issue and you should bring it up at that time. Mary suggested that maybe Tim & Tony should meet individually to discuss this issue. Scott: Would like to add a question about the 3rd bullet- what ability to do outside contractor work with inside personnel, can you talk about how that works. Tim essentially the MOU says if we want to paint an area of the school, previously only our maintenance classified workers could do that work, and that means only 2 ½ of the 47 or so custodians. If they were unavailable we would have to go to an outside contractor and pay the prevailing union wages. We can now post the job and employees could put in to do this work. Plumbing issue is coming up and we could now offer this to our own plumbers at time and a half instead of going outside. Scott this would be outside their scope of work. Phil read a statement that he had prepared in regard to a statement he had made in the past and why he was changing his mind. He is looking to see an excellent school and he thinks you are working that way. John G: there are how many in this union? There are roughly 50 in this union per Sam. John G: on the piece about the extra work you mentioned prevailing wage, how do you not pay that, or could there be issues with the local unions to get that work. Are we in a position in the town that we would be hiring unionized people or not, how does that work? Tim said we would be fully compliant. The law says you can use your own employees; outside of your own people the contractor must pay prevailing union wages. David: bereavement adding nieces or nephews?? How many days do they get? Tim, bereavement for niece or nephew is 1 day; it allows 5 consecutive days for immediate; 3 days for in-laws; 1 day aunt/uncle/niece or nephew. Tim said there is no cap on bereavement. David on sick leave we are giving bonuses for not using? Tim when we looked at last year's sick leave there would have been 3 people that qualified. David: When they are out we get less hours but they can get 170 days for themselves so they still make it at the other end if they don't use it. Tim said yes that is correct. Tim the language regarding sick leave/retirement was in previously and does not apply to new hires. Mark: function clause at least one must be present in the building after hours? Would that lead to savings or less rental fees for other depts.? Tim said we were analyzing that now. If we have groups that use the buildings and don't cause any issues we will not have people come on board if not necessary. But it would also allow us to put some money back in our account; savings for groups and income for us. John P total value of this contract is what? Tim what the total compensation for all employees, roughly 50 people at approx \$2M times 3 years equals about \$6M. John P in the contract is there performance numbers. Tim we do have the right to evaluate but the language is a procedural thing not contractual. John P: how did you managed the outsourcing issue from last year. Tim it was a difficult process and feels for the employees and their families. The school dept. put out an RFP too compare price point quality of outside vendors. Actually we were surprised that the costs related were higher than we had anticipated. Amount of savings in year one would have not been \$100K and the reality of that and when we looked at the qualitative value it was lower than what is coming from our current employees and that is what went in with the decision process. Was there a small savings yes, worth having no. John what would the ongoing savings be. Years 3, 4 & 5 increased substantially and our contracts were lower. Mary said she was glad you altered the function clause; might not be a serious budget buster but more appropriate for town depts and community groups.

After much discussion a motion to recommend Article 3 was as follows:

Motioned by:	Phil Newfell
Seconded by:	David Howe
In Favor:	8
Opposed:	2
Abstained:	0

Article 4 - To Fund Collective Bargaining Agreement – School Administrators - To see if the Town will raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum to fund the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Billerica School Committee and the Billerica Administrators Group affiliated with the Massachusetts Association of Professional School Administrators; or act in relation thereto.

Tim said that this is a wage reopener for a now expired contract. Article 4 is previous contract. Identical to what was approved for other union contracts. ½% increase on the salary schedule only June 30, 2011 retroactive, 1-1/2% 2012 \$31, 907 which requires no additional funding.

David: this is the only financial part in this the retroactive and schedule 1-1/2%? No other terms for the MOU per Tim.
Mark: how does our pay compare to towns around us? Tim every district has different factors. Generally we are competitive but more in the middle of the road for compensation. Patrick: article 4 curious about withdrawing article 8 does that mean that language could come back to haunts us. Tim languages ceases on article 8 July 1 2012 until the end of the new agreement. Patrick concerned that the escalator is a bad idea. Tim cannot speak to this because of ongoing negotiations.

After much discussion a motion to recommend Article 4 was as follows:

Motioned by:	John Griffin
Seconded by:	Mark Efstratiou
In Favor:	8
Opposed:	2
Abstained:	0

Article 19 - To Fund Curricular Adoptions for Billerica Public Schools - To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$350,000 to fund the adoption of new educational programs aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the national Common Core standards; or act in relation thereto.

Tim said that Article 19 seeks to use \$350,000 from Free Cash to support the purchase and implementation of mathematics curriculum resources to support students across all schools, K-8, in response to the new Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. These frameworks were adopted by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in 2011, and are expected to be fully implemented in all school districts for the 2013-2014 school year. These new frameworks are in response to both the implementation of the national Common Core curriculum standards and the Massachusetts DESE periodic ten-year curriculum review process.

We are looking to use this as free cash because we need a onetime infusion of money. We are going to be replenishing through our operating budget. This is a onetime use of money so we do not have to wait for 6 years to get into this program. DeDe said we wanted to all our students do their best. We are moving forward as a district. Back in 2011 as a state we did ELA (English Language Arts).

A motion was made to open the public hearing as follows:

Motioned by:	Tom Aquavella
Seconded by:	Phil Newfell
In Favor:	10
Opposed:	0
Abstained:	0

DeDe continued that one of the first steps we did was determine what our math vision is for Billerica and this work was done by a committee. What we have done is make sure what we are doing is what is necessary. This is a pretty big shift about what we are doing in Math. Now 48 states have adopted new standards and with the adoption we have to align in our district. We know that as a country we are lagging behind the rest of the world. When you look at the statistics we are down in the scale. In Billerica a lot of research has gone in to see what they are doing as a country and what we are doing. It involves deepening the problem solving. Emphasis toward understanding math, she doesn't think she has it because that is not the way she was taught. We have remained stagnant. We need to provide our teachers the new standards and work with teachers so they understand their own understanding of math so they can implement. Tim: Phil made his comments earlier and it piggy backs; we have been stagnant and average and we do not want to be stagnant and average, we want to be the best in the area and we need to provide. DeDe new standards we are focusing on; 21st century skills; the students of today are entering into a world that is different than the world we came from. They need to know and understand math. Mathematics is more vigorous. Narrowing of the scope of what we do. Students need to understand numbers and operations. With those skills they then move into a deeper understanding. These standards have a coherence and logical sequence. Cathy the big idea that came out: two words: focus and coherence. Each grade

level would have less to work with but learn how coherence goes from K-8 to make sure that everyone understands with a deeper focus. Tim when we say less there use to be a little bit in each of the grades, the idea is to consolidate it into one grade level and do it better and deeper.

DeDe these standards are not a new way of doing old business. K – 12, each grade level will require mastery of all standards for that grade. Previous standards spanned multiple grade levels. The teachers will understand that as well. Each teacher will understand this. Students learn differently so the teachers have to make sure the students move forward having achieved the level.

Tim: we are seeking to fund as free cash, a one time influx of funds. We will replenish ongoing through our own budget. Initial quotes would come from 2 different vendors, we have not identified any vendors yet, if approved a committee will work throughout the year. Those costs would be approximately \$350,069. These quotes include student textbooks, manipulatives, and online resources, as well as teacher resources. This is all stuff.

New program will be implemented in the fall of 2013. This is what the state wants. This is in his recent memory the first time we are going before town meeting asking for any educational support. We have gone before town meeting for capital expenses. We do not have this line in our operating budget and some of the other line items would have to go. This is the core, and fundamental for what we do. Based upon our purpose of being an upper echelon school system this is necessary. Mary said that because we do not have a certified free cash figure whatever motion we pass at the end will be pending a free cash number.

Phil: what happens if this article does not pass? Tim: realistically two bad plans one plan B which will impact the operating budget and take 5/6 years so the students will suffer, 2nd you need to pull away from another source of funding and trying to get \$350K would be: building use, reducing personnel, including people we need to teach this. We know from the budget discussions last spring and something we need to have will have to go. Phil: any money from DOE? Tim NO. Phil: you mention 2015 what happens if the goal is not met then what? Tim: the MCAS is going away PARCC will be assessing under the new frameworks, not a good thing not to be teaching with that. DeDe the state is committed to a 10 year cycle so we know that new frameworks will not come out for another 10 years. Phil if we do not pass this now it will cost us more money in the long run. Tim better to purchase together. John G: you anticipate that the annual continuation will be \$100K give or take, Tim said give or take yes, there are certainly replenishing supplies. John G: This is Math what is next? You are looking for a one time influx for a curriculum. What about 2-3 years from now what else. Tim, English Language Arts made a lot of purchases last year and their standards did not change as much as Math. We could use money in our budget last year for ELA. Next big one will be science which has been on hold for 5 years. That is one that we may be able to plan for a little better. Science is also a subject that you are doing more experimentally. HS level more money built in. David you are right the kids in Europe are smarter than our kids. You have known about this since 2011 and you weren't able to do anything financially to prepare for this. You did not bring it up in the spring either? Are you saying we have been teaching our children wrong for years? The method of understanding numbers and functionality; are our teachers going to be able to do it. Tim: We know more now, secondly as DeDe said simply adopting the program is not going to do it we need to training and support for our teachers. Operating budget going forward will contain this. David: how long to get teachers up to speed. Tim: This will be ongoing. David no idea what science will be? Tim: Correct. David we will be back here again. Tim: We would have come for a building budget if not curriculum. David: what about the old stuff we purchased, no savings on that? Tim there is not much. DeDe said K-5 books are consumables; you get a workbook so you cannot resell that. DeDe Science they will give us 2 years one to examine and one to implement. David said you are supposed to be able to take care of your needs with the half we give you, students are now paying for things. Hoping we are off on the right foot but not being prepared financially gets me wondering. Mark doesn't think other kids are brighter than our kids the teaching is different. Know the testing is going to change will our percentages go up? Tim: that is why we are doing it we want to increase. If the program is aligned with what students are expected to do it will. DeDe said we do an analysis of MCAS and we know that our students have the problem solving, and critical thinking is where our student drop down. Thinks with the new standards and resources our teachers will have a better chance to teach the students how to do critical thinking. Cathy we are building with in the resources and the "how to do it". Mark how many in K-8, is approx 4200 it is probably about \$90 per kid what we are asking for? Patrick: has a kid in school. One of the things he has an issue with it when it goes into the school budget we lose accountability for it? Tim: anything that gets purchased with this funding source will go to curriculum. Tony: wanted to know if we were going back to the way we taught math in the early 40's is that what we are doing? Tim wasn't around so cannot answer the questions. Cathy: no what becomes a little different is explaining the mathematics and what they have learned over the time is that might not make since. Teachers rescue them instead of helping them make the connections they need to make on their own. Scott: you guys talked a little about K-12 but now K-8. Easier at 9-12 to implement piecemeal

because in high school students are taking different math topics – some Algebra 1, others Geometry. Tim if our actual costs come in lower for K-8 we would take the differential and move it into 9-12 so we do not use the operating budget. We start at K-8. MCAS end of life is schedule for 2015. 2013-14 it will reflect the standards in the new framework so PARCC. MCAS to PARCC what brought it about? These new frameworks were started because of Common Core. A couple of years back no child left behind. Each state set their own standards. Now all consistent. Scott what kind of spread are you considering? Cathy: workbook may now be an interactive journal. May have a practice group; one line on a smart board, podcasts that come with programs; students can also access some of them. Tim: Traditional workbooks, textbooks online resources to go with it: K shapes, numbers, etc. Scott: textbooks: do we buy per student? Tim each student has their own textbook. DeDe when we look at all the different companies, online version is accessible per most vendors. Scott: statewide change every other town is looking at this? Could we partner and piggyback with them? Cathy leaders met all year last year and some of the things we are doing came out of that. We met with Chelmsford and other schools, meeting and talking all the time. Tim: no price point with it. Cathy & DeDe are part of regional networks. John P: supports the intent on the warrant. He considers it an investment. He had some questions on the budgeting process which were explained by John Curran. Tony: have you looked at this money anywhere else? Tim everybody is adopting it simultaneously so it is not there to look at.

After much discussion a motion to recommend Article 19 was as follows:

Motioned by:	Phil Newfell
Seconded by:	David
In Favor:	9
Opposed:	1
Abstained:	0

Mary thanked Mr. Piwowar et al and asked for log ons for the new members.

A motion was then made to reconsider Article 19 so we can amend the wording on the vote on Article 19 as follows:

Motioned by:	Phil Newfell
Seconded by:	Tony Ventresca
In Favor:	10
Opposed:	0
Abstained:	0

A motion to recommend Article 19 pending the approval of free cash was as follows:

Motioned by:	Phil Newfell
Seconded by:	David
In Favor:	9
Opposed:	1
Abstained:	0

Article 17 - To Fund the Substance Abuse Committee To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$25,000 to fund the Substance Abuse Committee; or act in relation thereto.

John Curran said that this was a standalone article. You might consider it could be within the school budget but goes beyond the school system and that is why the Police Chief Dan Rosa, and DeDe Galdston are both here to speak to this tonight. The article is about abuse of drugs. A lot different today and they can destroy people and their family's lives. We want to be on top of this issue. We have to put our foot forward to make sure our kids have a safe environment in school and in our town. He has sat in on some of the programs that we have done where they have had speakers come into the town hall for these seminars. Parents were there. We have to continue to as to invest in the kids, in our committee and that is why it is a standalone item. We as citizens have to address the issue and educate parents and educate the kids. The funding will be out of free cash. Only \$25K but well spent; \$15K targeted to grades 4-7, \$5K after school programs,

\$2500 survey costs (administrative), \$1500 for a town forum on substance abuse, \$1K for operation costs. Not just the schools but the community. Cannot stress how important this is even though it is a small appropriation. DeDe will now continue as she has the program. DeDe: One of the things that John pointed out Substance Abuse committee is it is a town committee. At least once a month we meet. Committed group of people took the survey data and we tried to find areas of concern that we should focus on. We do not provide enough support for our middles schools after school. Provide some sort of programming we have control over. With the community we want to reach across to the entire community. We have data for students within the schools but we know it is everywhere not just in the schools. Fully developed action plan, whether we have money or not; having funding would make a difference in the mission of the group. Chief Rose said he would be remiss if he did not come here to support this article. This committee has worked very hard without any funds to try to bring awareness to this issue. It goes back to opiate abuse when we had a spike in the community using those drugs. Not just in Billerica but everywhere. There is a definite lack of anything being done on the preventive end. He could see the results on the other end of it. Hopes that town meeting will support with funds to support their mission. Phil: will support. John G: will this funding be able to be sustained in the future operating budget? What is the goal. John C from the town side investment he knows that the mission is going to change and he will be involved to see where it will go and he would be willing to provide funds if they are available as long as this is an issue. David: essential this would be an ongoing thing? Maybe make it every year? Patrick; for it but he would like to see where our money is spent in a committee report to town meeting. Scott: same as Patrick about a report. Question on the survey \$4K. This action plan was before we had this warrant article. \$2500 to administer the survey? Dede Every other year we would survey the students 6-12, 2007 & 2011 when you use survey data you should do it more frequently. The survey would be to see what we put together if it has an impact. Scott: Can we bring in house? DeDe recommended staying with the outside service. Not just our students but compares against state and national norms. Thinks it is a better benchmark to use the outside firm.

After much discussion a motion to recommend Article 17 pending free cash was as follows:

Motioned by:	Phil Newfell
Seconded by:	Patrick Logue
In Favor:	9
Opposed:	1
Abstained:	0

Article 18 - To Fund Regulatory Compliance of DPW Facilities To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to fund \$55,000 for regulatory compliance audits for DPW facilities on Boston road and the Wastewater Treatment Plant per the Consent Decree issued by DEP/EPA; or act in relation thereto.

John Curran said this was \$55K to conduct an audit of the DPW facilities on Boston Rd. This is obligatory per consent decree issued by the DEP. ACO, Administrative Consent Order, is a mandate. Most DEP mandates are unfunded. The ACO is a violation of the clean water act, 1979 – 2004 during that time this issued This audit will deal with how we store our salt, how close to wet lands, how we store our hazardous waste. It will provide us with a good insight as to what our needs will be if and when we can address our needs of the DPW. \$55K quote we received so we go out to bid on the actual audit. DPW would liked to have seen it last spring but we now have the free cash. Clearly we will make sure that any items are corrected prior to the audit. John will do it personally because he does not care to have an expansion an ACO. Phil Water treatment plant as well as the Letchworth Ave facility? John is not sure this is part of it. Future status of that area on Boston Road? John no plans to move at this point, would like to see what our need is based on this audit. This is next to a river so there are a lot of disadvantages to that area but it is centrally located. Phil: if we cannot expand in this area maybe we should look elsewhere. John C: one of the biggest areas is the storage of vehicles, especially in winter months. Would the DEP allow something like this? John it would have to be approved by them where it is near a wetlands & river. David: when was this decree issue? John 2001 is when it was issued. We have been dealing with this decree but we are dealing with the audit now. There were issues that have been corrected. Mark: \$55K no way you could have taken it out of article 20 or 21. John C a different item that is why it was treated as a separate article. Those are capital items. Patrick: bad feeling on this article. EPA in the past his family he has an issue especially OSHA that is how they raise their capitals. He thinks this is a bad time to do it. John shares some of his sympathies but to not do this is going to cause more fines. Patrick if they condemn the building then we will have more issues. John: they will take it out of our local aid if we don't do this. Patrick: won't vote for it. Tony: Don't get a good feeling about this. If we did fail if they came in tomorrow and the audit failed would we be forced to build the new facility next day. John: If we fail the

audit, our job would be to correct the issues that we know they will come up with. The deficiencies may be the way we store our salt, chemicals, dispose of our oil, he doesn't see a new facility as a requirement here. It is not that grave. Scott: this will be a state run audit through the DEP/EPA. John we hire an independent 3rd party to do the audit, we hire the firm they don't. Scott: Is that a standard item that a town would go out and purchase? John: Yes it is standard that we would outsource it to a company that does it. John P the biggest expense with a brand new facility would be placing our vehicles under cover in the winter? John: You could put the vehicles in anything and you could do that and it might not be as much as rehabbing the administrative piece of it. Some of those pieces would be more expensive than storing vehicles. John P bottom line do we have a choice? John C they are telling us we have to do it. If we chose not to fund it they will get their money anyway. Mary: the fact that we have a wastewater master treatment plan in place? He agrees with that. We have developed a better relationship with the wastewater treatment plant but he doesn't know that it will trickle in.

After much discussion a motion to recommend Article 18 in the amount of \$55,000 pending free cash was as follows:

Motioned by:	Phil Newfell
Seconded by:	Mark Efstratiou
In Favor:	8
Opposed:	2
Abstained:	0

John Curran said he does expect the free cash to be available on Thursday.

Tony asked Mary if it is possible to ask presenters to get the information prior to meetings. Mary said she will try to get them to give us the information to us earlier then they do and she agrees with Tony that it is important. Tony said it was part of the job to have it ready for us.

A motion made to close the public hearing at 9:10pm was as follows:

Motioned by:	Tom Aquavella
Seconded by:	Tony Ventresca
In Favor:	10
Opposed:	0
Abstained:	0

Scott asked to have all of the information that was delivered in paper tonight to be electronically distributed.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was as follows:

Motioned by:	David Howe
Seconded by:	Mark Efstratiou
In Favor:	10
Opposed:	0
Abstained:	0

Meeting adjourned at 9:12pm.

Submitted by:

Barbara A. Doherty,
Recording Secretary