

**Town of Colebrook
Board of Finance**

Minutes to the Meeting on February 11, 2015

Members Present

J. Millar, Chairman
T. Corvo
J. Dorazio
D. Johnstone
M. Neal

Absent

R. Carfiro

Others

J. Chittum
J. Jones, BOE

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by Chairman, J. Millar.

1. Superintendent Jay Chittum presented the Board of Education's 2015-16 budget. The budget of \$1,884,895 is an increase of 1.8% or \$33,417 over 2014-15. Salaries, up 6.0%, drive the increase. They reflect the new teachers' contract, the hiring of a more expensive replacement teacher than was budgeted in the current year, and additional hours for the bookkeeper. However, the increase may be cut in half if an early retirement offer is accepted. Enrollment will decline to 91 next year, down 21% since 2010-11. The Board noted that a strategy to deal with this decline will be helpful, if the consolidation with Norfolk does not go through. Questions regarding the proposed budget may be e-mailed to J. Jones, J. Chittum, and J. Millar for discussion next week.
2. The Board of Education will reschedule a meeting with the Board of Finance to discuss the recent facilities study of the Colebrook Consolidated School. The study seeks to identify essential maintenance and upgrades, if the proposed consolidation with Norfolk is not approved and the Colebrook school continues in use for another five or 10 years.
3. Briefly discussed a draft of the Region 7 budget that was presented to the selectmen on February 10. It proposes a 4.3% increase in 2015-16. Most of the increase is for special education, including a new social worker. Significantly, the budget defers action on the additional graduation credits mandated by the State, and it assumes that health insurance will increase by only 3.0%.
4. The preliminary budgets for the Board of Education and Region 7 described above, coupled with assumptions of a 1.7% decline in the grand list and a 2.0% increase in the Selectmen's budget, produce a deficit of \$224,944 in 2015-16 at the current mill rate.
5. T. Corvo moved to accept the minutes of February 4, 2015. Second, D. Johnstone. Passed unanimously.
6. M. Neal moved to adjourn. Second, J. Dorazio. Passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha F. Neal
Secretary