

**Town of Colebrook
Board of Finance**

Minutes to the Meeting on February 18, 2015

Members Present

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

Absent

R. Carfiro
J. Dorazio

Others Present

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. by Chairman, J. Millar.

1. Discussed the Board of Education's 2015-16 budget that was presented by J. Chittum on February 11. Several of the follow-ups requested last week are still pending: (i) a breakdown of enrollment by class, (ii) the assignments of each paraprofessional by class or student, and (iii) a zero increase budget. The latter item will give the Board a better sense of the dynamics and tradeoffs in the school budget process.
2. Questions were raised about several areas of the budget. Raises for non-certified staff appear to be in the 2.5% to 3.0% range. This exceeds the 2.0% expected to be proposed for other town employees and should be coordinated with the Selectmen to prevent friction. It also exceeds benchmarks such as consumer prices and hourly wage rates in the private sector. Second, the additional hours proposed for the bookkeeper were questioned. The uniform chart of accounts mandated by the State may be just a one-time conversion rather than a permanent increase to reporting requirements. Colebrook's treasurer, A. Gardner, has been asked to look into this. Third, the savings achieved by eliminating the part time custodian were more than offset by an increase to overtime expense. Other questions concerned what the new line item for "substitute stipend" is and how the cost of 2015-16 health benefits compares to the actual cost in 2014-15. Overall, the Board felt that the budget could be reduced by \$10,000 (more if an early retirement occurs) without adverse effect. J. Millar will follow up with J. Jones.
3. T. Corvo moved to accept the minutes of February 11, 2015. Second, D. Johnstone. Passed unanimously.
4. M. Neal moved to adjourn. Second, J. Millar. Passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha F. Neal
Secretary

