

Town of Raymond
401 Webbs Mills Road
Raymond, Maine 04071

BUDGET/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, May 19, 2008

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: Rolf Olsen; Ralph Bartholomew; Dennis Cole; Jean Carter; Bob Gosselin; Susan Accardi; Charles Leavitt; Marshall Bullock; and Jerilyn Ward.

BUDGET/FINANCE COMMITTEE ABSENT: None

SCHOOL COMMITTEE: None.

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STAFF ATTENDANCE: None.

OTHERS: None.

1. Call to order. Rolf Olsen called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm at the Broadcast Studio.
2. Approval of the minutes of May 5, 2008.
TABLED
3. Review of the 2008-2009 School Budget.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Olsen noted **Article 36** relative to the wording in which the School Department has made some changes. Mr. Olsen asked to rescind their recommendation and go with the new wording.

MOTION: Robert Gosselin motioned to rescind their motion for Article 36. Seconded by Marshall Bullock.

VOTE: Carried.

MOTION: Robert Gosselin motioned to recommend Article 36 as written in the May 15, 2008 draft of the warrant. Seconded by Marshall Bullock.

DISCUSSION: It was noted that without consolidation our current contract with Windham would end in 2013. Mr. Olsen added that the School Board is recommending Articles 36 & 37.
VOTE: Carried.

Article 37:

MOTION: Robert Gosselin motioned to recommend. Seconded by Jean Carter.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Leavitt felt this was a stopgap move and the question of school choice will be discussed again in the future. Mr. Bartholomew felt that these questions and the referendum to vote their position on choice were binding. Mr. Olsen noted that the state will dictate what an annual tuition rate will be per school. Ms. Accardi added that the state set fee does not include extracurricular activities other than \$30 per pupil which is not near what those activities cost.

VOTE: Carried.

Article 50:

DISCUSSION: Mr. Olsen noted that a correction was made as \$1,478,383 in additional local funds.

MOTION: Marshall Bullock motioned to rescind their vote on Article 50. Seconded by Jerilyn Ward.

VOTE: Carried.

MOTION: Robert Gosselin motioned to recommend \$1,478,383 in additional local funds of which \$1,314,734 is the amount over the EPS. Seconded by Sue Accardi.

VOTE: Carried.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Gosselin would like to revisit **Article 32** because it might mislead the voter in that it is a choice which we can make. Mr. Olsen felt it makes a statement that we're not in agreement with their way of levying county tax and there must be some way to make the County Commissioners listen to the towns. Mr. Leavitt felt this recommendation shows that the County article was studied by the Budget Committee, was found to be lacking, and if it were any other entity submitting it, it would not have been recommended.

MOTION: Ms. Accardi motioned to request that the calendar sign outside the town hall advertise their meetings in the future. Seconded by Charles Leavitt.

VOTE: Carried.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Bullock asked who directs the auditor. Mr. Olsen replied the Selectmen. He asked if the Budget Committee has any input for the direction of the audit. He questioned the accrued sick time for the schoolteachers and would like to see the paper trail and how it is accounted for.

Mr. Leavitt wanted to ask the Board how they felt about the principal's newsletter of 5/8/08. He questioned the appropriateness of her article. Mr. Bartholomew said his only problem was with her request that voters turn out to vote for the school budget. He saw this as an innocent comment. Mr. Olsen added that historically the school has sent home requests that the parents support the school budget. He didn't believe that the Budget Committee had any power relative to this type of prose. Mr. Leavitt asked to be able to read this article so that the public who had not seen the newsletter can hear it. Ms. Accardi concurred so that everyone has an opportunity to hear it. Mr. Leavitt felt that this article cast dispersion on the Budget Committee's opinion on the budget. He asked if they shouldn't have a policy established for opinions in print. Mr. Olsen felt that only the school could form such a policy. He added that the newsletter is a public document and anyone can get a copy of it if requested. Mrs. Ward agreed that this document

was emotional, and is one sided. Mr. Leavitt felt it was lobbying for one side of the issue by a public employee. His concern was that it was directed to a targeted part of our community and not the whole.

Mr. Bullock agreed but felt that the school should be represented in this discussion and felt that reading the document would not be prudent at this time. Mrs. Ward said she felt it was one sided but saw it as an avenue to create a discussion about the reasons for the amounts in the budget. She noted that the Budget Committee's intent is to have a balance for all taxpayers and their town services. Mr. Olsen asked if this were to be read would that obligate any correspondence or articles about budget business to be read into the record. Mr. Leavitt felt that this was different because it came from a public official. He said that if anyone would like a copy, please contact the school to receive one. Mrs. Ward added that the Budget Committee would be happy to answer any questions from the public.

Mr. Leavitt felt that some assumptions should be discussed that: 1) Raymond provides a superior education, 2) choice and private school subsidies using public funds are a benefit to the town as a whole, 3) should one department of a town continue to encumber 80% of the tax dollar without having a negative impact on the other town services. Mr. Olsen said that possibly it only says that we're not spending enough on the town side of the budget. Mr. Gosselin concurred saying that the town budget was under LD1. 4) the school's administrators and teachers are under paid and over worked, 5) Raymond property values will decline with the reduction of our budget for the schools, and 6) a \$350 increase in property tax per \$250,000 property is per the mil rate and does change with the value of the property.

NOTE: Town Meeting, May 28, 2008, 6:30 pm, at the Jordan Small Middle School gymnasium.

ADJOURNMENT: Rolf Olsen adjourned the meeting at 8:28 pm.

Louise H. Lester
Town Clerk