

## **Town of Bedford Finance Committee**

Town Hall, Selectmen's Meeting Room

March 5, 2015

Members in attendance: Rich Bowen, Elizabeth McClung, Paul Mortenson, Barbara Perry, David Powell, Steve Steele (Chair); Ben Thomas.

Others in attendance: Leon Cierpial, *Bedford TV Board*; William Deen, Cable Television Committee; Victor Garofalo, *Director of Finance and Collector/Treasurer*; Brad Hafer, *School Committee (Chair)*; Michael McAllister, *School Committee*; John Monahan, *23 Railroad Ave*; Millie Seaborn, *Cable Television Committee*; Joseph Serra, *Bedford TV Board*; Jim Shea, *Cable Television Committee*; Mark Siegenthaler, *Selectmen*; Alicia Tillman, *30 Pine Hill Road*; Julie Turner, *The Bedford Citizen and Bedford TV Board*.

**Minutes:** Ms. Perry moved that the minutes of February 26, 2015 be accepted as amended. Ms. McClung seconded. The motion passed, 7-0-0.

**Town Meeting Article 8~ General Bylaw Amendment, Cable Television Committee:** William Deen of the Cable Television Committee read a statement, explaining why his committee has placed a petitioner's article on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. In summary, the committee came to believe, following its presentation to the Selectmen on December 8, 2014, that the Selectmen and Town Manager 1) do not provide sufficient oversight of cable funds and 2) reject that it's within the Cable Committee's job description to provide oversight. The "root of the problem", Mr. Deen said, is that the Town Manager and Selectmen do not want oversight of \$2m annual revenue derived from a portion of Comcast and Verizon fees.

If passed, Article 8 would effect a change of wording in the General Bylaw that would add the words "monitor and advise" to the Cable Committee's responsibilities. Mr. Deen said, to the committee's way of thinking, the revision would "endorse the status quo". In other words, the new language would verify the scope of work already being done by the Cable Committee.

John Monahan, formerly of the Cable TV Committee, said that in his tenure, the skills required of a member were of a technical sort. Now, it appears to him that what is required is more managerial. In his view, the language change is "not wrong or intimidating."

Jim Shea, chair of the Cable Committee, said he was speaking as a citizen. "The Cable Committee's responsibilities were last updated in 2009 at Town Meeting. At that time, the responsibilities of monitoring the two cable contracts [with Comcast and Verizon] and monitoring the PEG access contractor were added to the bylaw. This proposed additional responsibility is simply to further clarify the committee's job. The committee, in my opinion, should be observing the Town's cable television finances if it's going to do its job correctly, which is to give advice to the Selectmen about the operation of Bedford's cable television system. These things are intrinsically linked."

Mr. Shea added that the Cable Committee alone had conducted a town-wide survey to understand the needs of the community leading up to the recent renewal of the Comcast contract. "Based on the

information the committee gathered, we negotiated to obtain the revenue to support the needs that we identified. The committee was skilled and mature enough to be able to handle that part of the equation on its own; it seems logical that the committee should have an awareness of the funds that we've obtained for the Town and how those funds are applied to the operation of cable television."

Town Manager Reed addressed the Finance Committee, referencing a letter Mr. Shea had written that acted, in Chairman Steele's words, as a sort of talking points document. For the record, Mr. Steele noted that FinCom was also in possession of a letter from Town Counsel that struck a note of caution on the proposed bylaw language change; letters from several Cable TV Committee members; and an email from Selectman Bill Moonan [liaison to the Cable Committee].

Mr. Reed said he wanted to speak to Mr. Shea's letter specifically "because I think there's a lot of detail left out. From my perspective, it's appropriate to address every detail in that letter to help you make up your mind about whether or not to recommend approval of Article 8."

Mr. Reed said the official financial records generated by the Town's accounting system are not easy for the non-financial public to understand. The records are in the format required by the State but in order for the information to be accessible, the documents need to be translated to another format. Mr. Reed provided such translation documents for the Cable Committee but, he said, there can be a difference between what the official records relate and what the translated documents say.

Mr. Reed explained: "Town departments often keep an unofficial, parallel Excel spreadsheet of their budgets that makes it easy for them to follow and use as a guide during the fiscal year...Instead of providing the system reports that are difficult to understand, I as Town Manager, created spreadsheets that would simplify the information and provide a more readable and understandable format for the Cable Committee. This practice started in about 2005 after the Town transitioned to having an independent PEG access provider rather than having Comcast run and finance the studio [that was then] at Bedford High School. The Cable TV Revolving Fund was first established in November 1999 as the depository of Comcast capital funding for PEG access equipment at the high school studio.

"Recent statements have been made regarding the accuracy of the Town's records. A wrong impression of the status of records has been cast by the statement: 'good administration and oversight of this money is sometimes lacking.' The likely reason for this statement is that there was a difference in the Revolving Fund balance shown on the unofficial Excel spreadsheets as compared to the official accounting records of the Town government as maintained by the Finance department. The two sets of records are not tied to each other. It is possible for the spreadsheets to be incorrect because they rely on the Town Manager's office staff to keep the spreadsheets up-to-date when transactions occur. The official accounting system also differentiates between encumbrances for funds that have been obligated for a purpose as opposed to those funds that have already been expended. The unofficial spreadsheets, on the other hand, do not reflect encumbrances and are not meant to capture expenses until the invoices are paid."

Mr. Reed said that in 2014 the Cable Committee observed that there was a difference of \$5,100

between the two types of records—official and unofficial. The discrepancy, Mr. Reed said, was due to the lag time between posting encumbrances for the Selectmen’s meeting room and a piece of equipment for the TV studio on the official record and paying the invoices as noted on the unofficial spreadsheet.

Additionally, Mr. Reed said that there are two “pockets” into which cable licensee funds are deposited. One payment goes directly to Bedford TV for the purchase of equipment. The other payment goes to the Town for “telecommunications/technology needs.” Mr. Reed said the destinations for these two revenue streams are made clear in separate sections of the license agreement, but there has nonetheless been confusion about why the Town—and not the Cable TV station—is receiving the second of the two funds. He added, “The Selectmen regularly approve all expenditures from accounts under their control—operating, grants and gifts— when they sign warrants for payments at each Selectmen’s meeting.”

Franchise fees—over \$3,000 annually— were also addressed. Mr. Reed said that revenue from the fees “is not restricted to public educational and governmental access. The language of the Revolving Fund allows use of these funds for services ‘related to operation of access channels.’ The survey conducted by the Cable TV Committee asked questions about operation of access channels. It was therefore entirely appropriate to charge \$1,312 for printing a town-wide survey to the Revolving account where the annual franchise license fees were deposited.”

Mr. Reed closed his statement with these words: “There is no error, as stated by the [article’s] proponent, who has written to you. And the suggestion of a more careful administration [of these funds] is misdirected at best.” A related implication that there is another \$7,000 error attributed to correction to the Selectmen’s Meeting Room project is, Mr. Reed said, “absolutely inaccurate.”

Selectmen Siegenthaler then characterized some of the previous comments directed at the Selectmen and Town Manager as “insulting.” But, he added, the situation at hand was quite simple: someone on behalf of the Cable Committee has proposed a change in the language of the bylaw that a majority of the Selectmen feel to be unnecessary. “The Cable Committee has access to the information that they believe they want to see, when they want to see it; Town Counsel has cautioned us that the language itself changes the context of the bylaw and the potential ability for the Selectmen to do what we need to do on behalf of the community. We’re also somewhat concerned about the precedent of having an advisory committee insert language like this and the affect it might have on other committees and future actions. On a four to one vote, the Selectmen recommend disapproval of this article.”

FinCom questions and comments: Ms. Perry said her first impression upon reading the relevant materials was that a change in the process of providing financial information is needed, not a change in the language in the bylaw. She added, “I’m still not clear about who authorizes expenses—I would assume the final decision lies with the Selectmen.”

Ms. McClung asked what Mr. Deen meant when he said the Selectmen’s meeting in December “inspired the challenge” for the Cable Committee. Mr. Deen said he was referring to a question from Selectman Moonan that asked “Why are you concerning yourselves with Cable TV finance?” Mr. Deen said the

Cable TV's recommendations had been offered in the spirit of collaboration and he took exception to being told that the Committee was stepping beyond its boundaries.

"This was a mind-numbing moment for me, having just made the presentation for the committee," Mr. Deen said. "In my two years' experience on the committee, we'd always concerned ourselves with the finances. We thought we had done quite a good job in representing the interests of the town citizens, actually in collaboration with the Selectmen. We'd made procedural recommendations, several of which were adopted. And there was gradual improvement in the way these monies were managed. Article 8 is really about maintaining the status quo and responding to this challenge of 'why are you talking to us about money?'"

Mr. Reed said he believed the way the Selectmen spoke to the Cable Committee was in reaction to the committee's critical way of representing the finances. He added that Cable Committee would still do what it does today, if the bylaw change doesn't pass.

Ms. McClung asked why financial reports would be generated that no one can follow. Mr. Reed replied that the State requires the format but even Town departments transfer financial information to the more readable format. He added, "As a favor to the committee— I created the spreadsheet for them several years ago. It used to be that the Comcast money for PEG access went directly to Bedford TV and for the first time—when the new contract with Comcast went into effect about a year ago—that money then came to the Town. We had to make changes to make it easier to understand. The committee came to me and to the Selectmen and said they wanted to separate and track this better so we revised the spreadsheet and added subaccount account numbers....It should be easier to track now. Unfortunately, the remarks being made in the letter are way off-base and unfair."

Mr. Bowen emphasized the way that the Town keeps its books is subject to State guidelines and regulation by the Department of Revenue. "It's been in place for decades and it's really difficult to understand."

In response, Mr. Shea said that Article 8 was not a reaction to how the Town's finances are reported. "I don't think the committee has any great concerns about delays in the spreadsheet reporting versus the main accounting system. The concern is that we, as a Town, have not yet had a budget for several hundred thousand dollars in capital funds that were obtained from the cable operators for unique purposes that were a subject of negotiation with those operators. The Cable TV Committee took the initiative to establish a recommended 10-year capital plan for use of those funds so that the Town would have sufficient funds to meet its needs. We were concerned that there were various disbursements being made from the accounts without the prior knowledge of the Cable TV Committee or the Selectmen. We are not being judgmental about whether the things being purchased were wise or not... When the Committee made its presentation to the Selectmen on December 8th, that was really the major focus: to show all the work that the committee had done over several months and to propose a budget. Committee members were basically told, as Mr. Deen said, that it isn't the committee's purview to make recommendations on Cable TV funds."

Mr. Deen agreed that the changes to the accounting Mr. Reed has made have been positive but

concurred with Mr. Shea that the contention was not based on how the records were kept. "There's still a lack of plan and insufficient knowledge on the part of the Selectmen who are authorizing disbursements without knowing how much money is actually there and what the competing needs might be three or five years from now. The committee has taken on some of those functions. In an ideal world, we wouldn't be taking about Article 8. The language in [the revision to] Article 8 should be obvious as one of several functions of the committee. Article 8 is there because the Selectmen on December 8<sup>th</sup> chose to challenge the committee's position...and to resist a diminution of what we think has been a responsible and productive record of advising the Selectmen over a period of years."

Mr. Powell said the proposed revision seems simple. He agreed that "monitor and advise" do not seem scary or powerful but, rather, positive and supportive. And, he added, "It seems like we've spent the last couple of months putting pressure on a lot of other committees to do more pro-active thinking and advising, more supervision [of their funds]...I'm inclined to favor this."

Mr. Steele said he sees the language change as more of a clarification, an articulation of the status quo.

Mr. Mortenson said he admires the passion of the Cable Committee that shows they care about their work. On the other hand, he believes the Town Manager has offered financial information in good faith and would continue to do so. "I don't think the Cable Committee is being shut out...While "monitor and advise" aren't scary words, I think we should heed the letter from the Town Counsel. [The new wording] can be seen as an infringement on the Selectmen's powers. It's a political issue at this point. For that reason, I would be against Article 8."

Mr. Thomas said, to his way of thinking, words matter and they can be inflammatory, as demonstrated by the exchanges at this meeting. "I think we have to be incredibly careful...Words can result in reactions that we don't want. But words can be subjective, too. I was at that December 8 meeting and my recollection doesn't match any of the recollections I've heard here tonight... Bylaws matter even more than words because they last a long time and they're legal."

Mr. Thomas said he had looked into the current bylaw's description of the Cable TV Committee's duties and there is "no mention of finances or money at all." He asked if there ever had been a financial component to the committee's charge.

Mr. Shea said there had "never directly" been a financial component. Mr. Thomas said he wasn't looking for an indirect reference. Mr. Reed said, for a time, there had been no job description at all, only that the Selectmen appoint a cable TV committee. At some point, one of the Charter Review committees recommended that all Town committees be given specific responsibilities; those responsibilities were then added to the bylaws.

Mr. Thomas asked if any other Town committees have the level of fiduciary oversight being sought by the Cable TV Committee. Mr. Reed said that, other than the Recreation Commission Revolving Fund that was created by State statute, no other department's revolving funds are controlled by their oversight committees; revolving funds are, instead, locally established and reaffirmed each year by Town Meeting. Ever since the Cable TV's fund was established, it has been "under the control

of the Selectmen.”

Mr. Siegenthaler said the Selectmen acknowledge the Cable Committee’s positive contributions. “But, for whatever reason, the committee has also suggested things that the Selectmen felt were beyond the necessity of their direct monetary oversight. If the proposed change to the bylaw is simply going to be the status quo, then you don’t really need to change the bylaw because you have status quo....And we’re advised by Town Counsel that there are some pitfalls to changing the bylaw.”

Mr. Deen said he was happy to hear Mr. Siegenthaler express support for the committee. He added that he would like the committee and the Selectmen have a collegial relationship.

Mr. Thomas said it seemed as though this was a good point to move forward from. He added that FinCom has paid a tremendous amount of attention to how revolving funds are being used and the Selectmen are aware of FinCom’s concern that there be multi-year plans developed for how funds will be expended.

“We certainly are very interested in this and will push forward, no matter what happens with Article 8,” Mr. Thomas assured. “Also, I believe in distribution of work. I like how our Town government works, I like that it’s mostly collegial— despite little blips on the radar every now and then— but I don’t generally believe in distribution of responsibility without an incredibly good reason because I think it’s inefficient and causes problems. I’m pretty much swayed by Town Counsel that it’s not a necessary or good change at this point. I don’t think I support this. But I do encourage everyone to work together and I strongly encourage the Selectmen to start paying careful attention to the funds under their control, to develop plans, and to illuminate everyone of how things are going and where and why.”

Mr. Powell said he wants to be consistent with the message being sent to all departments and committees about their revolving funds. “We’re providing the scrutiny but we’re not deciding ourselves what should best be done with this money and where it should be spent...Is there a place for the Cable Committee to be part of the discussion?”

Mr. Siegenthaler answered that there is a role for the committee to play. He added that it should be kept in mind there is now a contractor providing public access that runs the TV studio. That provider also has a vision/plan for what the future holds and they must also have a place at the table. “They have a plan and the Cable Committee has a plan and it all has to get mixed together somehow.”

Mr. Reed said that the areas of responsibility are difficult to understand with “different buckets of funding.” The contract with the public access provider includes a plan with language about capital funding and capital planning—and role for the Cable Committee spelled out.”

Mr. Thomas urged a meeting between the Cable Committee and Selectmen to formalize how to move forward. Mr. Steele agreed and added that he is comfortable with the language revisions in Article 8.

Mr. Thomas said he would be happier with the language change if Town Counsel was happier with it.

Mr. Mortenson moved that the Finance Committee recommend approval of **Article 8~ General Bylaw**

**Amendment, Cable Television Committee** as written in the warrant. Ms. Perry seconded. The motion failed to pass on a vote of 1-5-1.

Mr. Mortenson moved that the Finance Committee recommend disapproval of **Article 8~ General Bylaw Amendment, Cable Television Committee** as written in the warrant. Mr. Bowen seconded. This motion also failed, 4-3-0.

FinCom will revisit the issue at its next meeting.

**Model 3.1:** Mr. Garofalo reviewed the changes that were made to the financial model since the last meeting, either as a result of new information from the State or because of decisions made by FinCom.

Due to the State's elimination of the School Lunch line item for FY15—which would be used as an offset—Mr. Garofalo changed the income and expense line items by the same amount to balance out the change. Mr. Garofalo reduced the State Aid by 2% as discussed but he reduced it after subtracting the eliminated School Lunch amount.

“That being said, the governor released his numbers and State Aid shows a 3% increase in Unrestricted Local Aid and Chapter 70,” Mr. Garofalo said. “However, if you look closely into the Cherry Sheet, our amount isn't going up 3%. There's a very heavy hit to Veterans' Benefits—it shows a decrease. It goes from \$142,000 in FY15 to \$106,000 in FY16. It's a reimbursement and we expect 90% but the governor's budget is using 75%. So, essentially, we're not looking at a 3% increase in State Aid, we're looking at a .89% increase.”

The governor has also proposed eliminating HAFB education funding. Mr. Bowen noted that this time last year, Bedford was in the same position with regard to this funding. The budget will go back and forth between government entities but, as Mr. Bowen related, “the concern is the governor has the last word. The legislature has the right to override but it becomes very difficult. Last May, the funding for Hanscom students was voted in; last November, it was removed again.”

Mr. Steele said he called Rep. Gordon about this who was taken aback that the line item had been unilaterally eliminated. Mr. Steele said, “I can see the governor's point of view: it's a lot easier to disappoint two communities than it is the whole state. That being said, Rep. Gordon intends to put the funding back in the House budget. He's having a hard time with the fact that something that isn't subject to appropriation has been eliminated without a thought for the ramifications. He's trying to gather some facts. He said it would be hard for the House of Representatives to say they support the military if they don't support this. He seems optimistic, without being confident, [that the funding will be restored.]”

Mr. Garofalo said, at this point, there is no guarantee the funding will materialize. “It would be better to enter Town Meeting without that \$516,000 revenue and come into Special Town Meeting [in November] and make the adjustment then.”

Mr. Bowen agreed it would be highly risky to budget the funds without having them in hand. He added that once the matter is decided, it will be “all or nothing.”

Mr. Hafer said now that there is a law in place to guarantee the reimbursement, it should be harder to just wipe out the funding. The group that advocates for Hanscom funding on Bedford' behalf says there may be additional recourse to take, now that the funding has been passed by law.

Mr. Steele and Mr. Thomas said they feel comfortable level funding State Aid, even with the governor's assurances that State Aid will go up. The Committee reached consensus to remove Hanscom funding from the budget until more is known. If the money does come in after the budget is approved, it will go to Free Cash.

Because the Assessors have said it should, Mr. Garofalo has increased their Overlay Reserve from \$850,000 to \$950,000; State Assessments have also gone up to \$407,654 due to MBTA and SpEd.

Mr. Bowen recommended that the State Aid revenue number be increased by \$28,000 and the State Assessment number also increase by \$28,000 to balance out the revenue and expenses. With the Committee's consensus, Mr. Garofalo changed the assessments to \$407,654 and aid to \$6,174,488.

The Snow deficit remains at \$650,000. It is possible that the DPW can cover more than the additional \$50,000 expected to bring the total up to \$700,000. There is also potential money coming from the Feds from snow emergencies. These adjustments can be made at STM.

Mr. Garofalo said he has reduced Health Insurance expenditures by \$200,000 due to a lower-than-anticipated overall-average increase of 7.6% versus 10%.

With the change to the Assessors' Salary line item as discussed on February 26<sup>th</sup>, the Budget Surplus is (\$289,208). If the additional \$129,761 the Schools are looking for is approved, the Surplus would be (\$418,969).

To cover the negative Surplus, Mr. Bowen proposed using the \$50,000 in the Stabilization Fund and then borrowing money instead of paying cash for a number of capital projects. "The Sabourin Field lights, bleachers and Davis School security video would come up to \$362,783 plus the \$50,000 would bring it up to a difference of only a few dollars," he calculated.

Mr. Thomas asked what borrowing for those projects instead of paying cash would do to the debt-to-operating budget ratio. Mr. Garofalo said it made little impact. Currently, the debt scenario is 9.14%, forecast to drop down to 8.82% in FY17.

Whether to bond these or other capital items or drop capital projects off the list for FY16 was discussed, as was the process, considering that CapEx has not yet been apprised of the situation and FinCom has voted to recommend approval of the \$2.4m Capital article. Mr. Reed pointed out that postponing something from this year's capital projects list would add to next year's list of capital needs.

The idea of bonding some projects now but pay for them with cash once revenues come in was countered by an argument to postpone projects until cash is in hand. Ms. McClung asked whether any of the departments could be persuaded to withdraw one or more of their projects. Mr. Bowen pointed out that interest rates are low, making bonding easier; Ms. Perry voiced discomfort with bonding anything

more right now because School building projects loom in the near-to-middle future. Mr. Reed voiced his opinion that, if the capital projects are being dialed back in favor of giving the Schools, the postponed capital projects should come from the School side, not the Town side.

Mr. Garofalo said he could reduce the Health budget by another \$20,000, making the deficit \$348,208. The Committee reached consensus that the capital projects funded by the tax levy should be decreased by that amount.

Mr. Steele asked for a show of hands to see how many members favored bonding now but switching to cash if it's available. Three members voted "yes." Ms. Perry said her vote depended on how long the bond would be for and what would be bonded.

Mr. Powell said he felt that the new capital plan should be supported, after all the work that had been done to establish the new, long term scenario. Ms. Steele asked how members felt about removing projects but reconsidering them again at STM. Several supported that course of action.

Ms. Perry, as FinCom's liaison to CapEx, said the next CapEx meeting is on March 18—the week before Town Meeting. This would be the first time a change of plan could be considered. She added she has a problem with taking 9% off the Capital list; however, if projects do come off the list, she believes they should be taken from the bottom, not cherry-picked. "As much as I object to additional bonding, we've come to this point, it's in the warrant, it's gone through months of discussion. Next time we should consider [leaving a little room] and not approving absolutely everything we want."

Precedent for putting forward capital projects at STM was discussed. While past projects have gone forward at that time, the capital sequence usually culminates at ATM in the spring rather than the fall. Mr. Thomas said he believes Capital should be viewed "as a holistic plan rather than in pieces"; with the six-year plan, approving projects in the fall could be a new strategy.

Mr. Bowen said if projects are cut off the list from the bottom up, ten projects would have to be eliminated to reach the \$348,000 mark. Mr. Steele said he was talking about timing, not about elimination. Mr. Mortenson wondered if FinCom would be comfortable bonding in the fall if the expected revenues don't appear. Mr. Steele said there additional information in the fall on which to base bonding-versus-cash decisions.

Abbie Seibert, School Committee liaison to CapEx, asked Mr. Garofalo to supply the original financial model from the fall that showed what capital projects—at the time— were anticipated for bonding and what projects would be paid from the Tax Levy. "The original one had only a certain amount of sewer money in there and then a whole lot of sewer things happened," she pointed out. "The Finance Committee decided to not recommend bonding and so the bonding line item changed."

Mr. Bowen agreed and recalled that there had been an "unusually large number in Unused Levy and we decided to put that towards Capital. There was a good half a million left over from last year. [By bonding this amount in projects] we'd be going back to a model from two or three months ago. I don't see that as so sinful."

Checking his files, Mr. Garofalo said the three Capital projects originally recommended for bonding were Sabourin Field lights, the town-wide telephone system and half of the School Technology project for a total of \$565,000. He added that Capital had also absorbed projects thought to be eligible for Community Preservation funding that were later found not to be eligible.

Asked to share his opinion on what course of action to take, Selectman Siegenthaler said he believed it would be best to bond the projects now but change to cash at Special Town Meeting, if the needed revenue appears. "The additional burden on the overall debt, as Victor has said, is probably not the worst thing we've seen and it will give us time to know that all the plans and efforts people have made are still moving forward. I think we all agree about controlling the debt but to upend the whole capital process at this point would be much more disruptive...We'd be using fall Town Meeting as a mechanism to pull back on bonding if and when we do have the money."

Mr. Bowen calculated that the additional bonding would increase the annual debt service by \$42,000, assuming a ten-year window.

Mr. Garofalo added that he expects to refinance some bonds that will save the Town "in the neighborhood of \$500,000 over a ten-year period".

Mr. Powell said—if FinCom were to recommend an additional \$348,000 be bonded than what the warrant now says—Town Meeting must approve that recommendation by a 2/3 vote.

Mr. Bowen moved that FinCom increase bonding by \$348,208 and reduce by the same amount the funds to come from the Tax Levy. Mr. Powell seconded. The motion failed, 3-4-0.

Ms. Perry said she couldn't support the motion because it was a blanket amount without specific projects identified.

The Committee then turned to specifics. Mr. Reed recommended the Committee consider the Davis School generator [\$123,000] as one of the projects that could withstand a 2/3 vote. The other items identified were Sabourin Field lighting [\$175,000] and the bleachers [\$65,000]. The total of these projects = \$363,000.

Mr. Bowen moved to bond Sabourin lights, Sabourin bleachers, and the Davis School generator for a total of \$363,000. Mr. Powell seconded. The motion failed, 3-4-0.

Mr. Thomas said FinCom should supply the amount to be taken off the funded-by-Tax Levy capital list; CapEx and the Selectmen should identify specific items.

Ms. McClung made a motion to remove \$345,000 plus or minus \$15,000 from the total of the capital article to be funded by the Tax Levy. Mr. Mortenson seconded. The motion passed, 5-2-0.

To clarify FinCom's position for the upcoming Selectmen's meeting, Mr. Steele said FinCom would be open to delaying it, removing it, or bonding it. "If someone asks what the consensus is, I think we have the same consensus for bonding it and delaying it versus removing it."

Mr. Bowen moved to increase the School budget by \$129,761. Mr. Mortenson seconded. The motion passed, 5-1-1.

Mr. Hafer thanked the Finance Committee for “meeting the Schools where we hoped.” He added the School Committee would review School-related capital projects to see what might be postponed.

**Article 7~ General Bylaw Amendment—Volunteer Coordinating Committee:**

Mr. Mortenson moved that the Finance Committee recommend approval of Article 7. Mr. Bowen seconded. The motion passed, 6-1-0.

The Committee will decide its recommendations on Articles 8 and 9 at the next meeting. Mr. Steele asked that members compose talking points for the articles they are slated to speak to.

**Meetings Attended:** Mr. Thomas reported that 9 out of 10 applicants were interviewed for the Fawn Lake Advisory Committee at the most recent Selectmen’s meeting.

Discussion took place about whether the Selectmen should encourage the ZBA to favorably consider Red Heat Tavern’s application to occupy Building A of the re-developing Bedford Marketplace.

Mr. Reed said the draft of proposed legislation concerning an additional 8 full liquor licenses will change to remove language about permitted locations. The draft has yet to be reviewed by Town Counsel; Mr. Reed’s sense is that the proposal has the support of a majority of the Selectmen. Assuming Town Meeting votes to approve this article, the proposal will go through the State’s legislative process which should take 6-18 months.

Mr. Powell moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Perry seconded. The motion carried, 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kim Siebert, FinCom Recording Secretary