

**Franklin School Board Joint Finance Committee with City Council Minutes**  
**Franklin Middle School – Bessie C. Rowell Memorial Library**  
**December 20, 2016**  
**At 6:00 PM**

**Present:** Superintendent Daniel LeGallo, Business Administrator Amanda Bergquist, Tim Dow (Franklin School Board Chairperson), Deborah Brown (Franklin School Board Member), Scott Burns (Franklin School Board Member), Tony Giunta (City Councilor), Bob Desrochers (City Councilor), Elizabeth Dragon (City Manager), Judie Milner (Finance Director), Jim Wells (City Councilor), Janet Desrochers (Franklin Resident), George Dzujna (City Councilor), Heather Moquin (City Councilor), Olivia Zink (City Councilor), Cathy Viau (School Board Clerk)

Tony Giunta called meeting to order at 6:01 PM

Deborah Brown stated that items A through K under number two (2) were not listed on the agenda sent to her and they had no prior knowledge of these topics coming up for discussion. It was also stated that these were not the ideas from the superintendent as stated on the agenda. These items did not come from the school board but rather the city council. The only items from that list that may pertain to the joint committee are:

- (b) Cost savings realized through energy efficiency projects, solar installs
- (k) Savings from Block Grants from Feds (just an explanation of what this is)

The following items are part of budget process therefore not sure of the budget needs yet as the budget process is just beginning for next year. Currently, it is the understanding that there is already a \$1.4 million deficit for the next school year which is the equivalent to 18 (eighteen) teachers.

The Franklin High School is working with Winnisquam on a student swap program for such classes as woodshop, drama, AP classes and AutoCAD. The school district is still working on finalizing the “FLIP” program to begin next September.

It was stated that consolidation may not be discussed until after one year of denial from the school board.

Discussion was held regarding the progress being made in the LSR status. The text is not available yet.

Discussion was held regarding the freezing of stabilization and process that is in place to communicate this information to a larger forum. Many other districts are partnering up for this cause.

Discussion was held regarding LSR for building aid.

Friday there was an article in the Monitor regarding Merrimack Valley moving forward with a letter regarding adequacy aid. Seven school districts including Franklin are joining up. Superintendent LeGallo has also sent a letter out today. The districts are partnering up to show a united front. The school and city sides were thanked for their efforts in coming together on this.

Discussion was held regarding a letter that was sent to the city from their Attorney Paul Fitzgerald in regards to the school contracts not being ratified by the city council.

It was inquired as to where the agenda items came from and Tony Giunta stated it was him but it was made to look like Dan LeGallo, Superintendent, which it was not.

Some worst case scenarios discussed were:

- Reduction of sports by \$100,000 of the \$250,000 or maybe even all
- Supplies/Stipends
- Reduction of 16 teachers and 2 staff
- These would be absolutely crushing to the district. It would mean class sizes of 25-30 students, high school would barely have an elective left (only 17 teachers in the entire building)

There needs to be more discussion regarding how both the city of Franklin and school district can share the burden rather all falling onto the school district. Every single department needs to evaluate and come up with a plan straight across the board for both school and municipal.

The city stated that if the city cut services that would be a reduction in people, and there are very few services to be cut. It was stated that there are only three officers on duty at a time. The recreation department are almost completely self-supporting. Discussion was held that the city has a net budget of \$6 million dollars and \$11 million dollars gross. The city has implemented electronic services. It was stated that the fire and police departments are both at full staff. Other departments of the city are the highway department and transfer station, etc.

The school loses 4% every year due to stabilization.

There is \$2.76 million dollars in the fund balance which is at 11.22%. They continue to try to build the fund balance.

Eighty-four homes in Franklin have been foreclosed on.

It was stated that meetings and work sessions are open to the public for both the school and city but there continues to not be much participation from the public.

Discussion was held regarding everyone needing to work together as a team.

There needs to be more growth in the city. A water park and new apartments are coming into Franklin. It was stated that no one will move to Franklin until school improve. The city needs to show more interest in the schools. It was stated that the city had an increase of \$103,000 each year in contractual raises and department heads did not take a raise.

Principals received a 1.5% raise totaling \$6,000. For three years the school board has not taken a salary which is a total of \$3,000 per year.

Students cannot be educated properly without proper funding. The city needs to take more interest in education and its employees.

The school district has been dinged by the state for having too many first year teachers which could potentially affect accreditation.

Franklin is currently a dependent school district.

Discussion was held regarding timely reporting and tax rate setting.

Everyone is beginning work better together.

Something needs to happen within the state level as well. There needs to be more revenues and increased momentum.

Each entity needs a better understanding of the other departments.

The current administration has overcome many of the issues brought on by former administration and all must move forward from it.

Discussion was held regarding city contracts.

Audits are what verifies the numbers, validity of funds and grants. The staff at the school level are working through these things. Each entity is equally important and must be supported in such a manner.

Discussion was held as to whether or not the schools in a city can put funds into a special reserves account like town of up to 2.5%, if so, what is the process and procedure.

The Franklin Middle School roof is the first priority on the list but may need to be done in phases.

Two out of three years the city received raises.

How is the city planning to help get the schools' budget to where they need to be? What is the city going to contribute towards the shortfall gap?

Discussion was held regarding GASB-68.

No discussion of consolidation with the school board until after February 15, 2017 as the school board voted against it unanimously.

There needs to be more thinking outside of the box.

The city is proposing consolidation of services and elimination of duplication.

Each entity needs to come up with a proposal of what a reduction of \$100,000, \$200,000 etc. looks like.

A review of raises needs to be done and look at the “big picture”.

The goal is to have the school budget done by April as people need to be informed of RIFs by the 15<sup>th</sup>.

The school department heads will be going over their proposed budget with the superintendent within the next two weeks.

It is important to be sensitive to morale during these times.

Governmental funding is a serious issue for schools.

Amanda Maguire provided the board with a handout with city and state tax information.

Allocation of taxes was discussed as well.

There is a need to improve perceptions of schools, city, hospital etc.

There is a need to do more recognitions of teachers and staff such as teacher of the month. We must all support and work together.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.