

**Dresden Finance Committee  
Hanover Town Hall**

**Monday September 17, 2007  
Hanover NH**

Present: Cheryl Lindberg, Athos Rassias, Thomas Blinkhorn, Robert Bruce, Henry Scheier, Irv Thomae, Al Converse, Paul Tierney, Karen Kayen, Bill Garrity, Peter Christie, Dick Podolec and John Hochreiter

The chair called the meeting to order at 4:36 PM.

The first order of business was the reorganization of the committee. There was discussion on the question of unofficial two year leadership terms. Two candidates emerged the first being a nomination by Henry and seconded by Athos for Cheryl Lindberg for one additional one year term as Chairperson of the Dresden Finance Committee. The second was the nomination of Dick Podolec by Paul and seconded by Henry. Dick responded to the nomination with appreciation but asked not to be considered as he has undertaken other responsibilities that would make it difficult for him to serve in a leadership position. By unanimous acclamation Cheryl was elected Chairperson of the DFC.

After further discussion Karen nominated Dick Podolec as Vice Chair and the nomination was seconded by Paul. By unanimous voice vote Dick Podolec was voted to be Vice Chair of the DFC. John Hochreiter was nominated by Henry to the post of Secretary. There being no further nominations John was elected by unanimous voice vote.

The question of time of the meeting and the length of our agenda was brought up for discussion. 4:30 was considered to be a better time for all and it was requested of the chair that time estimates be established on the agenda and that we make an effort to adjourn no later than 6:00 PM.

The chair brought up the question of proxy votes and after considerable discussion it was determined that members need to be present to vote. The members asked that items requiring a vote be considered early in the agenda thereby facilitating everyone's schedule. There was a motion presented by Paul and seconded by Karen that members need to be present to vote. The vote was unanimously in favor.

It was noted that there would be a meeting just prior to Thanksgiving on November 19<sup>th</sup> and the chair questioned if people planned to attend. The next regular meeting will be Monday October 15 in Tracy Hall, Norwich.

The Minutes of August 20, 2007 were presented with a correction to paragraph one on page two, the word principals was misspelled. A motion to approve the

minutes with the corrections was made by Athos and seconded by Peter. The vote was unanimously in favor by all present at the August 20 meeting. Item 5 on the Agenda the Dresden 2009 school budget. The chair asked Paul Tierney to go over the handouts of budget analysis that he had prepared for the meeting. Paul explained that he hoped to capitalize on the early work that Bill Bender had earlier presented to the DFC. Paul worked with John Aubin to research the ten year period from 1996 to 2007. Paul noted that due to the differences in reporting or data gathering during the time period it was impossible to truly compare category by category. The presentation of the spreadsheets was applauded by a number of members of the DFC as a substantial beginning to understanding trends and “big picture” financial indicators. Tom noted that “you have made a very valuable contribution to this dialogue”.

The data was noted to be preliminary and before any conclusions are derived from it we need to involve John Aubin and have him “bless” the accuracy of the numbers.

There was considerable discussion on the inclusion of Debt Service in numbers with the group being almost evenly split as to the benefit. There was also discussion on the gross or net nature of the numbers relative to the Richmond Middle School and the question of sixth grade tuition.

The overall conversation suggested that this format could get us to a methodology that could allow us to analyze budget to budget. It was the sense of the group that a subgroup of the DFC should be formed. The intent of the group is to refine the data and involve John in the development of the methodology. We would hope to agree on a set of benchmarks which might help us frame better conclusions. This format should help us lead a discussion in the community of expectations and trends.

Henry noted that we should be sensitive to the amount of time we require of John Aubin. We should inquire of Wayne about the availability of time.

Dick asked where are we going with this data. After considerable discussion it was noted that this is a much longer range view rather than simply a year to year budget. There is considerable concern among the members of the DFC that budgets such as we have experienced over the identified time period are unsustainable given what we know about wages. Peter Christie has asked Betsy McClain of the Town of Hanover to provide data and statistics on wage growth in the region. There was concern that we could not analyze this data in time for this budget cycle. It was also noted that we should begin to make our concerns known to both the Dresden School Board and the community relative to the disturbing trends that seem to present themselves. We must begin to put people on notice that the institutional (do the same thing year after year) frame of mind that we perceive is not reconcilable with the data we see in terms of wage growth in the area.

Bob Bruce needed to leave the meeting at 5:35 PM

Various tactics were discussed such as letters to the editor, presentations to the Dresden School Board and our input to the final budget approval. We must however, what ever we do, make it clear that the trend cannot support itself for very long.

Paul offered to consolidate information and asked that questions be e-mailed to him. More discussion revolved around actions to involve the community and the Dresden School Board.

A sub committee of Bill, Irv and Paul will approach John Aubin and Wayne Gersen to refine the data presented.

Athos needed to leave the meeting at 6:03 PM.

Item number 6 Budget Guidelines, it was noted that we applauded Stan Williams efforts in framing the discussion around guidelines but it was the sense of those present at the School Board meeting that the Board was not ready for change. There seemed to be a lack of sensitivity to the public's money. The guidelines are now in the hands of the School Board and our input to them for this cycle is finished.

There was a motion to adjourn by Tom and seconded by Bill. The meeting adjourned at 6:10 PM.