

**Advisory Committee Education Subcommittee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
2/14/2017**

Advisory Committee Education Subcommittee (“ACES”) members in attendance: Members Anderson, Coughlin, Kutsch, and Smallwood.

School Committee members and School Administrators in attendance: School Committee Members Calnan, O’Reilly, and Schreier; School Administrators Ferris and Galo.

ACES Chair Kutsch called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Deliberate school budget

The School Committee has decided on a 4-3 vote not to proceed with the High School Health and Wellness Center Warrant Article at this time. Instead, the Committee’s priority is Foster School. The Massachusetts School Building Authority statement of interest deadline is April 2017, with estimates for the feasibility study cost currently at \$790,000.

ACES discussed potential School budget increases for FY 2018 ranging from \$2 million (4.2% increase) to \$2.2 million (4.6% increase). Coughlin observed that a longer term conversation resulting in a multi-year approach for School budgets would help both the Town and School Committee better plan for School needs. With the Forecast currently showing a \$1.1 million shortfall, members discussed how to balance School and Town needs so that neither side was disproportionately impacted. With more than 80% of School costs for personnel, built-in systematic salary increases are driving much of the School budget increases.

Members observed that the Five Year Forecast regularly carries School budget increases at 2%, even though planners understand that that amount is neither reflective of historic trends nor contractual obligations. ACES members would like to address this practice with Town decision makers after this year’s budget process is complete.

Adjournment

Committee members voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Smallwood
Advisory Committee Education Subcommittee