

**2013 Fiscal Study Committee
Minutes
September 4, 2013**

Attendance: see attached

Chairs: Maurice DePalo and Henry Fitzgerald

At 7:05 PM, Mr. Fitzgerald called the meeting to order.

On a motion by Mr. Ryan, second by Mr. Convery, the minutes of the August 21, 2013 minutes were approved.

General Update on Progress

Mr. Fitzgerald asked for Committee members to share their progress to date in general terms.

Mr. Ryan described a good meeting recently with the Town Manager to review Local Aid, but cautioned that it is unlikely that this subcommittee will find any new source of significant revenue that is not already accounted for. Mr. Willingham shared a similar opinion explaining that there is a bit of a learning curve to be able to get a good understanding of this revenue stream. He added that he hopes the work of the broader Committee will be of some value to the administration after the report is published.

Mr. Holland reported that there is an upcoming meeting scheduled with the Town Engineer and the Town Planning to explore the particular concerns of the public works departments.

Mr. Austin reported on a good recent meeting with Dr. Sawyer and Mr. Hurley and explained that it is a challenge to get a handle on all aspects of the school department budget.

Mr. Gooley reported on a recent meeting with the Library Director, Ms. Dolan, adding that the subcommittee covered all financial aspects of the library operation. Mr. Austin added that it will be difficult to find new sources of revenue to go directly to the library.

Subcommittee Updates

State Aid – Mr. Ryan provided a brief review of the revenue and charges associated with state aid, highlighting the fact that the Town has not received any meaningful increase in many years. Mr. Willingham shared Mr. Morgado’s characterization of the “cherry sheet” (i.e., state aid) as a political document which reflects the Commonwealth’s values during a particular year which will change from time to time.

Grants – Mr. Willingham remarked that the feedback he received from the Town Manager is that many grants are not worth exploring because they may support a business the Town ought not pursue. The Town does leverage the ability of the Worcester Business Development Corporation to apply for and manage specific grants of value to the Town.

Pensions / Healthcare – Mr. Cygielnik provided a brief overview of a recent meeting their subcommittee had with the Town Manager, highlighting the pending reform of retiree health insurance as expressed in House Bill #59 (OPEB reform).

School Department – Mr. Samia and Mr. Palitsch provided a brief review of special education costs and the Circuit Breaker formula, the Chapter 70 formula, and school choice.

Public Safety – Ms. Kasperzak provided a brief review of her subcommittee's recent meeting with Police Chief James Hester, adding that Chief Hester provided an excellent overview of the demands of the department. Particular emphasis was given to the current demands/workload of the dispatchers and turnover in this group. Mr. Flynn provided a brief review of the subcommittee's recent meeting with Fire Chief James Vuona, adding that the Chief provided a good sense of the department's current demands.

Employee Compensation – Mr. Forletta provided an overview of his subcommittee's work. An extended discussion ensued on the topic of teacher salaries. Mr. Forletta shared a handout on average teacher salaries across the Commonwealth. Mr. Samia remarked that average salary is a difficult indicator to use independent of other important data. Mr. Samia also added that a better indicator of teacher compensation is expressed in the comparison of Assabet Valley Collaborative Schools which places Shrewsbury at the median of maximum salaries.

Mr. DePalo explained that he recently met with the Treasurer/Collector, Town Clerk, and Town Accountant. Mr. DePalo added that the subcommittee charged with researching local receipts ought to meet with these individuals to learn more about this data.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 18 2013 at 7:00 PM in the Senior Center.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas M. Gregory
Assistant to the Town Manager

Referenced Materials
Minutes of August 21, 2013

Fiscal Study Committee Attendance Record	
	4-Sep-13
Henry J. Fitzgerald, Co-Chairman	x
Maurice M. DePalo, Co-Chairman	x
Adler, Mark	
Alperson, Gary	
Austin, Brian	x
Berquist, Florence	x
Campaniello, David	
Collins, Peter	x
Convery, Patrick	x
Cox, Jacqueline	
Cygielnik, John	x
Flynn, James	x
Forletta, Bernard	x
Gooley, William	x
Holland, Robert	x
Hollenback, Melissa	
Hoogasian, James	
Karas, Matthew	x
Kasperzak, Heather	x
Keohane, Kathleen	x
Kickham, Barbara	
Kristant, Cheryl	x
Marshall, Kelly	
Palitsch, Jason	x
Pitney, Patrick	
Rubin, Jordan	
Ryan, Robert	x
Samia, John	x
Schwartz, Daniel	
Shaw, Preston	x
Willingham, Mark	x
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