

**CHARLESTOWN SELECTBOARD WORKSHOP**  
**TOWN OFFICE**  
**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2022**  
**9:00 – 10:30 AM**

Selectboard Present: William Rescsanski (via Google meets) and Nancy Houghton and Jeff Lessels

Staff Present: Jessica Dennis, Town Administrator Pro-Tem

Additional: Lori Landry from Fall Mountain School District and Dave Jack from Municipal Resources (via Google meets)

The discussion started with the Selectboard gaining an understanding of how to \$1.5 M in unreserved fund balance is given back to the municipalities in the district. Mr. Jack explained that the district doesn't typically have money to return at tax rate setting time, as it usually goes into the reserve funds. Ms. Landry explained that due to Covid; expenses were down, since the students were not in school there were no buses running and the district had difficulties hiring so many positions were left unfilled.

Mr. Jack began to review the "Fall Mountain Regional School District Proposed FY 22 (Oct 2021) Apportionment Calculation" and "Fall Mountain Regional School District Proposed FY 23 (Oct 2022) Apportionment Calculation." It was explained the FY 22 was setting the tax rate in October of 2021 and FY 23 was for the proposed budget and tax rate setting in October of 2022. Mr. Jack explained that this worksheet has been used for a decade or more and is based on the articles of agreement. The \$1.5 M in unreserved fund balance is determined by the auditors and it is the most that has been returned the tax payers in a long time. The total amount given back to the tax payers at tax rate setting time was \$1.8 M. This is made up of the \$1.5 M in unreserved fund balance in addition to Catastrophic Aid and Medicaid and other revenue which is for the good of all the communities in the district. These funds are taken off the money needed to be collected by taxation.

School Districts are not allowed to keep contingency/fund balance monies as municipalities are allowed to, the funds must be returned to the tax payers. Mr. Rescsanski asked if there was a way for the District to determine how much of the funds belong to each Town and return the funds that way instead of using the formula. Additionally, was there a way to break the budget out per Town so that the formula was not necessary. It was explained that this would be difficult and what would happen in the event one municipality ended up in a deficit in a particular year? Ms. Dennis explained that perhaps the process of returning funds should be explained better, as members of the public and the school board have the understanding the 46% of the \$1.5M was given back to Charlestown, if the money is taken "off the top" of the amount needed to be collected by taxation, it appears that understanding is incorrect.

Ms. Houghton asked about the Election of Officers and if the article of agreement could be changed. Ms. Houghton and many others don't feel it is fair that the person running as the Charlestown representative could win in Charlestown and loss in other municipalities and



therefor do not win the sit. Ms. Landry explained that she had looked into this previously and unfortunately it doesn't have to do with the article of agreement, the individual must win the majority vote through the district not the particular Town they are running to represent.

Mr. Lessels stated that when the District was formed it was to help Langdon, Acworth and Alstead. Charlestown and Walpole had the population to support the District. The demographics of all the Town have changed in the last 50 years.

Ms. Landry spoke about researching how other Districts divide out their costs. She expressed that the Article of Agreement Committee has been meeting monthly and will hopefully gain some momentum. Ms. Landry stated that she liked the recommendation in Charlestown's Master Plan to eliminate the school in North Charlestown to help consolidate expenses. She would like to see that thought process District wide. For example, she would be in support of a regional middle school. Mr. Lessels inquired about seeing buses running with very few students on them. Ms. Landry responded that this was due to Covid. The nurses were noticing a trend that Covid was being transmitted on the buses, so the School has been doing "double runs" with less children on the buses. Covid numbers have been down the last couple weeks; the "double runs" were discussed and will continue for a few more weeks and then will be revisited.

Ms. Dennis inquired about the meeting in October then the Board voted to apply the additional adequacy revenue at tax rate setting time and that \$314,516.26 was listed for Charlestown; where can this number be seen on the tax rate documents. Ms. Landry explained that the District could either hold a special meeting for those funds, or just let them flow through for tax rate setting. She had spoken to Kaitlin Davis at the NH Department of Education, but did not have a good understanding of how those funds were applied or where those funds could be seen on the worksheet. Mr. Jack was not sure either. Ms. Dennis also inquired why the language was different on the worksheet. Under Charlestown, Langdon and Walpole it reads "Direct High school expenses by ADM," however under Acworth and Alstead it reads "Direct High School Expenses." Is ADM not used for Acworth and Alstead? Is this a typo or are those numbers calculated differently?

Mr. Rescsanski left the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

Mr. Lessels inquired about the testing scores within the district and why was Charlestown scoring the lowest? Additionally, Charlestown is spending the most money per pupil than the other Town's. Ms. Landry explained where test rates could be found; Mr. Lessels explained that he had already looked. Ms. Landry explained that she follows the test scores closely, but looks at them on a District level not by the Town. She further explained that the District was working to equalize programs across the district. There were different programs being run at different schools and the District is looking to standardize that.

Ms. Landry explained that students across the State had lower scores due the Covid. The District was looking to offer summer programs throughout the District. She recently met with some High School students and they requested individual tutors or other additional resources, it is apparent that even the students are aware of the change in their education. Mr. Lessels asked about career planning for students. Ms. Landry explained that the District is working with River Valley

College and they would like to resurrect the partnership they used to have with Whelen. The district would like to hire a career councilor to help student plan their courses.

Mr. Jack responded that while the conversation continued he looked at the worksheet for setting the tax rate and it does appear that Charlestown is credited 44.5% of the \$1.8M. Page two of the documents shows that Charlestown was given \$826,457 under "Other Revenue" which represents 44.5% of the \$1.8M. He will mark up the worksheet and send it to the Town for reference.

Mr. Jack left the meeting at 10:43 a.m.

All left the meeting at 10:48 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jessica Dennis, Recording Secretary

  
William Rescsanski

  
Shelly Blouin-Andrus

 3-16-22  
Nancy Houghton

Jeff Lessels

  
Jeremy Wood

(Note: these are unapproved meeting minutes. Any corrections will be made at the next Selectboard meeting on March 16, 2022)