

**Town of Concord
Finance Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting & Public Hearing
February 25, 2019**

Present: Thomas Tarpey, Dean Banfield, Peter Fischelis, Grace Hanson, Mary Hartman, John Hickling, Richard Jamison, June Rzepczynski, Phil Swain, Brian Taylor and Andrea Zall

Absent: Karle Packard, Scott Randall and Christine Reynolds (one vacancy)

Others Present: Several Public Officials (as noted below) and about 50 members of the public for the hearing; Finance Director Kerry Lafleur; LWV Observer Maureen Kemeza

Mr. Tarpey called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, prior to the public hearing. The purpose of this meeting was to begin considering the FC's position on the Town Meeting warrant articles.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Tarpey and seconded by Ms. Hartman, it was unanimously **VOTED** to consider a "consent agenda" and only discuss those articles about which FC members have questions. Mr. Tarpey read off the article numbers/subjects, and no objections or questions were raised on the following articles: 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 17 and 46.

On a **MOTION** made by Mr. Swain and seconded by Ms. Rzepczynski, it was unanimously **VOTED** to recommend Affirmative Action on the following articles:

- Article 3 - Meeting Procedure
- Article 4 - Ratify Personnel Board Classification Actions
- Article 5 - Classification & Compensation Plan for Regular Status Positions
- Article 7 - Appropriate Funds - Municipal Capital Projects
- Article 8 - Authorize Expenditure of Revolving Funds under MGL ch. 44, §53E½
- Article 9 - Authorization to Accept MGL ch. 32b, §20—Other Post-Employment Benefits
- Article 17 - Use of Free Cash
- Article 46 - Unpaid Bills

Article 6-Town Budget Mr. Swain noted that the budget had come in within the FC Guideline. He also noted that some expenditures included in this budget will require larger appropriations in the future (such as the addition of 4 new firefighter positions), so support of the FY20 budget implies support in future years. Mr. Banfield noted that in order to meet the FC Guideline, it was necessary to tap the Stabilization Fund for additional funds. He questioned how expenditures from the Stabilization Fund are appropriated. Ms. Lafleur responded that the motion made under Article 6 at town meeting will include an appropriation from the Stabilization Fund, although mention of

this was not included in the warrant. Ms. Lafleur referred to page 174 of the Town Budget book, where the FY20 draw-down of \$245K from the Stabilization Fund is noted. Mr. Tarpey asked for a breakdown of the Stabilization Fund creation and expenditures, so that this could be further discussed at the March 7 meeting. No position was taken on Article 6 at this time.

Article 18 –General Bylaw Amendment –Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) Ms. Rzepczynski noted that the FC members all support the concept of a SGR, but we heard criticism from several citizens at the hearing questioning the need to codify the concept. She suggested that the FC consider fine tuning how the concept is presented—the generic presentation needs more clarification. Ms. Hartman suggested that the message is getting lost with the method we are putting forward for the SGR. If Article 18 passes, then SGR is still advisory, but she wonders what would happen if Article 18 were to fail—how would the FC pursue the concept going forward? It was suggested that a more comprehensive discussion of Article 18 be deferred to the March 7 meeting.

Article 23 –Appropriate Funds –Affordable Housing Development Ms. Hartman recommends that No Action be taken on Article 23. She feels that tapping free cash for affordable housing burdens the same people—it is ironic to use property taxes to fund affordable housing, when many folks are already struggling to keep up with the high property taxes in Concord. She suggested that if we have excess free cash that it be placed into a Stabilization Fund to offset future capital needs. She also questioned whether \$500K from free cash would be a good deal, since we would only gain one or two units. In the past, the Town appropriated \$1 million to fund 83 units (with private and other funds picking up the bulk of the costs).

Mr. Banfield made the following **MOTION**, which was seconded by Mr. Swain:

To recommend **NO ACTION** be taken under Article 18.

During the discussion, Mr. Tarpey expressed the opinion that the need for affordable housing is compelling. He noted that the \$500K request this year would most likely be followed by similar requests from free cash in the subsequent 3-4 years. These funds will provide a kick starter while we await legislative approvals for other affordable housing initiatives. He admitted to not initially supporting the use of free cash for this purpose, but was convinced by the hard work and testimony of the Affordable Housing Funding Committee (AHFC). Ms. Hartman noted that in reading the report of the AHFC, the use of free cash was not one of the primary recommendations. Mr. Hickling expressed support for the No Action motion. Mr. Jamison expressed concern that other groups would feel free to go after free cash if this were to pass, and felt that this would start a slippery slope. Mr. Swain expressed support for affordable housing in general, but not for this article. He noted the recent support of the FC for Junction Village funding. Ms. Zall suggested that Concord should come up with a better way to finance

affordable housing, emphasizing the importance of opening up Concord to more people who wish to live here.

A **VOTE** was taken on Mr. Banfield’s motion, which **PASSED** on a vote of 10 to 1 (with Mr. Tarpey opposed).

At this point the meeting concluded to begin the public hearing.

Public Hearing on Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Chair Tarpey opened the public hearing at 7:00 pm in the Hearing Room at the Town House. Mr. Tarpey noted that the hearing was being broadcast live by MMN and would be available for later viewing. The focus of tonight’s hearing will be the CPC recommendations and the school articles.

Article 22 –Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Appropriation

Recommendations Terri Ackerman, Chair of the CPC explained that Concord has adopted a surcharge of 1.5% to fund Community Preservation Act projects (community housing, historic preservation, open space, and recreation). She noted that the State currently matches Concord’s appropriation by 19%. In FY20, an appropriation of \$1,811,419 is recommended. She noted that requests totaling \$2.5 million had been received. She reviewed the projects as follows:

Project/Description	Category	Amount
Town of Concord–Regional Housing Services Program	Community Housing	\$19,000
Town of Concord–Junction Village Assisted Living	Community Housing	\$300,000
Concord Free Public Library Corp.–Expansion & Renovation of the Main Library & the Heywood-Benjamin House	Historic Preservation	\$500,000
Concord Home for the Aging–110 Walden Street Preservation Project	Historic Preservation	\$20,800
Town of Concord–Gerow Recreation Area Improvements	Open Space Recreation	\$100,000 \$100,000
Town of Concord–White Pond Beach Access Improvements	Open Space Recreation	\$75,000 \$175,000
Town of Concord–Warner’s Pond Dredging Project	Open Space Recreation	\$50,000 \$25,000
Town of Concord–Emerson Land Acquisition	Open Space	\$90,000
Town of Concord–Heywood Meadow Stone Wall Extension	Open Space	\$21,619
Town of Concord–Old Calf Pasture Habitat Restoration	Open Space	\$5,000
Town of Concord Public Works–Emerson Field Improvements	Recreation	\$300,000
Staff & Technical Support	Administration	\$30,000
TOTAL		\$1,811,419

Ms. Ackerman noted that the total cost of the Library project is \$10 million, so the CPC funding is only a small portion. She also noted that the Warner’s Pond dredging project

is a multi-year project. Ms. Hartman inquired of the status of the Junction Village affordable housing project. Ms. Ackerman responded that the applicant had been rejected for state tax credits last year, and is in the process of reapplying. A response is expected in June/July 2019. Mr. Fischelis asked for a confirmation that the \$30,000 administration appropriation was to fund administrative staff, signage, and the like, and would be ongoing. Ms. Ackerman confirmed that was correct. Resident Diane Proctor questioned whether the Junction Village request for state tax credits was the second such request, feeling that it was in fact the third request. Marcia Rasmussen, the Director of Planning & Land Management responded that the 2019 application to the State was the second such request, but the FY20 request to the CPC was the third of three applications.

Article 10—Minuteman Regional Technical High School District Budget Carrie Flood, Concord’s Representative to Minuteman, noted that she will be completing her eighth term on the Minuteman Regional School Committee. She reviewed guiding goals of the school, which include creating successful educational opportunities for students; promoting excellence in teaching; integrating high quality technical education with academic instruction; demonstrating practical connections between multiple disciplines; and fostering a safe, healthy learning environment. She noted that 60% of Minuteman graduates go on to college. She reviewed Minuteman’s accomplishments. She noted that enrollment history has been relatively stable among member communities. Enrollment has declined among non-member communities, mostly due to changes in state regulations regarding eligibility for students in non-member communities. She noted that costs per pupil continue to rise, despite Minuteman’s reduction of 15+ teaching positions. Enrollment initiatives have started, and admission requests have increased. Minuteman hopes to welcome one or two new towns to the district in the near future. Ms. Flood noted that the major factor in a community’s assessment is the four-year rolling enrollment for the community. Debt service is peaking in the next few years. Concord’s FY20 assessment has increased 45% due to increased enrollment and Concord’s share of the new building costs. **There were no comments or questions.**

Article 11—Concord Public School Budget Superintendent Laurie Hunter emphasized that zero-based budgeting (ZBB) had been used to develop the FY20 budget. The process included a review of all budget areas, including legal, salaries, staffing, contracted services, special education, and supplies & materials. In addition, the central administrative staff has been reorganized, resulting in a reduction of three FTEs. The former legal firm used by the School Department charged \$1,100/hour, while the new firm charges \$220/hour, with no loss of quality.

Dr. Hunter highlighted the budget drivers for FY20, including the following:

Budget Driver	FY20 Budget Increase
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Contracted Services	\$287,331
Employee Separation	\$286,002
Salary-Aides	\$149,661
Substitutes	\$176,861
Salary-Teachers (double-step to align w/ CCHS teachers)	\$1,101,036
Supplies & Materials	\$420,085
Salary-Clerical	\$70,893
Salary-Maintenance, Custodial, Bus Drivers	\$155,704
Total	\$2,647,573

She also highlighted the FY20 savings that were identified through the ZBB process:

Cost Savings	FY20 Budget Decrease
Legal	\$14,337
Salary-Non-Union	\$38,500
Salary-Support Staff	\$82,038
Salary-Tutors	\$748,269
Special Education Tuition	\$716,515
Total	\$1,599,659

Dr. Hunter reported that during Phase 1 of the Retirement/Separation Incentive program (FY18), 8.5 teachers retired, resulting in FY20 savings of \$185,491 (since new teachers are hired at a lower rate of pay). Under Phase 2 (FY19), 9.0 teachers retired, resulting in FY20 savings of \$228,212. Dr. Hunter summarized the FY20 budget request for CPS is \$39,390,163, which represents an increase of \$1,143,268 (2.99%). She considers this a level-service budget. She noted that this increase is \$143,268 above the FC Guideline. When asked what she considered the benefit of ZBB, Dr. Hunter indicated that the process resulted in savings of \$1.6 million. Jared Stanton, Director of Finance & Operations, suggested that without the savings identified by ZBB, the CPS budget increase would have been \$2.7 million. Dr. Hunter noted that ZBB will be used on an ongoing basis in coming years. Ms. Hartman noted that \$1.6 million was identified in cost savings and the budget increase is \$1.1 million—so where did the other \$500K go? Dr. Hunter responded that those savings went towards funding other portions of the \$2.6 million budget drivers, many of which are contractual. In addition, she felt a need to restore some areas of the budget which had been cut in previous years. Mr. Banfield noted that the supplies budget was one of the areas of “add back,” so what is being presented is not really a level-service budget. He asked whether the budget could be further reduced by \$143K to comply with the FC Guideline.

Dr. Hunter responded that all principals were asked to provide an itemized list to justify every line item. Mr. Swain asked whether the budget includes new Assistant Principals at all elementary schools. Dr. Hunter responded that this idea is still under review, and any decision on adding an Assistant Principal will be cost-neutral. In response to a

question from Mr. Hickling, Dr. Hunter indicated that the two-year early retirement incentive program will be completed in FY19.

Resident Ned Perry noted that the slides that were presented showed no historical data in terms of budget costs of prior years. He recommended that the slides be improved in this regard for town meeting, so that citizens can better understand what is being requested. Resident Miguel Echavarri commended Dr. Hunter and her staff for providing more transparency in the budget documents. He commented that obtaining accurate budget information from the School Department in the past was a challenge, and the “actuals” column frequently did not match the “budgeted” columns. He appreciates the effort that went in to assure that actual expenses are being charged to the same line item where they are budgeted, to better track expenses.

Article 12 –CPS Capital Projects Superintendent Laurie Hunter presented the capital budget for CPS for FY20, which is included in the Town Manager’s 5-year capital plan. She noted that for the 2019-2020 school year all 6th grade students will be housed at Peabody and all 7th-8th grade students will be housed at Sanborn. She noted that this will alleviate a lot of current issues and offer a great benefit to the middle schools. The capital projects are as follows:

Capital Item	Amount
Replace CPS Telephone System	\$200,000
Security Upgrades–Thoreau & Willard (cameras)	\$30,000
Middle Schools:	
Contingency	\$100,000
Reconfiguration (Sanborn science lab & art room)	\$217,000
Carpeting and Asbestos Abatement	\$273,000
Painting	\$80,000
TOTAL	\$900,000

Dr. Hunter noted that the carpeting and painting projects at the Middle Schools are wellness and health issues. She indicated that the three elementary schools are in good shape, and she is exploring other sources of funds to upgrade some items. She reported that Ripley is in need of upgrades (\$2.8 million), but this year she is focusing on the three areas noted above: phone system, security upgrades, and Middle School upgrades for current students. Mr. Swain commented that these items don’t feel like a ZBB, and he questioned how the \$900K expenditure is justified. He also asked whether Carlisle will be paying its fair share of any upgrades at Ripley. Dr. Hunter responded that a discussion about managing shared costs will take place at an upcoming School Committee meeting, noting that the Regional High School is not currently being charged for any portion of the cost of bus parking. She also responded that she worked closely with Ms. Lafleur in developing the capital budget, which she started from scratch.

Mr. Banfield questioned the energy units at Alcott and Thoreau. Dr. Hunter responded that the estimated life expectancy is 10-15 years, and some have lasted only seven

years. Some of the heating units are bringing in cold air. Mr. Echavarri noted that the phone system upgrade is being fully charged to CPS, and questioned why Carlisle was not included in the cost sharing. Dr. Hunter responded that she will first discuss the bus depot cost-sharing, and will make a decision once she sees how that goes.

Article 13 –Authorization to Accept MGL c. 71, §71E–School Property Fund School Superintendent Laurie Hunter reported that under the current system, any rental income that is collected by CPS goes into the Town’s General Fund. This state law enables any rental income to be returned to the CPS budget. She estimated that the rental income is about \$15,000/year. **There were no comments or questions.**

Article 14 –Concord Middle School Feasibility Study Superintendent Laurie Hunter started her presentation by indicating that there are still a lot of moving pieces for this article. She explained that funds are for a feasibility study to review the site and determine where on the current Sanborn site a new building would fit, and then to prepare a schematic design of a new school. This would not be a detailed design. The plan at this point is to build one new building on the current Sanborn site. She noted that applications for MSBA funding support were made in 2017 and 2018, and both times were rejected. There is lots of competition for funding and she feels that it is unlikely that Concord will rise to the level of MSBA support in the near future. Although self-funding will be more expensive, waiting for MSBA support is risky since systems failures and cost escalations are likely. She noted that the Sanborn building is 55 years old, and Peabody is 49 years old.

Dr. Hunter reported that in 2016 a Facilities Planning Committee was formed. Finegold Alexander Architects were hired to answer the following questions: (1) What would it take to remain in the current buildings for 10 years? (2) What are options and estimated costs for a renovation project? (3) What are options and estimated costs for a new building? Finegold’s findings were that the two buildings are deteriorated, obsolete and at the end of their lifespan; the two-campus configuration is inefficient and expensive; and the current situation creates struggle for the school community, resulting in sub-optimal educational experience. Finegold estimated the cost of remaining in the two buildings for 10 years and attaining an appropriate educational environment at \$34-47 million. The operational inefficiency of operating two buildings is estimated at \$548K/year. Dr. Hunter reviewed the current outdated infrastructure of the buildings: original heating lines, plumbing lines and electrical systems; PVC roofs are at the end of their projected lifespan; septic systems are 50 years old; ventilation and air circulation are non-existent; hazardous materials are in both buildings; no fire suppression system; concrete flaking off the Peabody building.

Dr. Hunter displayed a chart identifying the 12 schools that received MSBA funding in 2018. She explained that schools are rated “1” to “4” in terms of building condition, with

1 being in the best condition and 4 being “emergency repairs needed.” Under this MSBA rating system, Sanborn and Peabody were rated 2. Of the 12 schools receiving funding in 2018, two were rated “1”; seven were rated “2”; one was rated “3”; and one was rated “4”. All schools rated 1 for general environment and were average or under rated in capacity. Finegold has suggested that a 125,000 s.f. building would deliver the desired educational programs, at a projected cost of \$648/s.f. This would bring the total estimated cost to \$81 million in 2019. She emphasized that the cost will increase substantially each year that we wait, noting the construction cost growth of 6.93% per year from 2010 to 2016. For estimating purposes, the likely cost of a new middle school will be \$90+ million. The estimated peak-year impact on the median household tax bill would be \$1,015. Although the School Department plans to reapply for MSBA funding in 2019, she questioned the value of waiting. She also emphasized that a lot of items that Concord would want in a new middle school would not be included in the reimbursement rate, such as an auditorium and regulation gymnasium. She estimated that the MSBA reimbursement rate would be 20-25% (\$18-22.5 million). This amount would be significantly consumed by waiting.

Mr. Taylor asked whether the wealth of a community factors into its eligibility for MSBA funding. Dr. Hunter noted that Brookline did not receive any MSBA funding for its new high school, but did receive funding in 2018 to replace a 100-year old building. Mr. Swain noted that MSBA funding was approved in recent years in Lexington, Belmont and Wellesley, so some “wealthy” towns are obviously eligible for funding. He also noted that asking the town to self-fund a new middle school is a lot to ask, given that we are approaching a peak debt period, and given that we fully funded a new Willard School and recently built a new high school. He also noted that the School Department had reported to the FC in 2014 and 2015 that the two middle school buildings had a life expectancy of 15 years. In 2015 at the FC public hearing prior to town meeting, the Deputy Supt. for Finance reported that following a discussion with the Facilities Manager, it was determined that the middle school buildings are both sound and with proper upgrades, the buildings could last an additional 30 years. He commented that the FC and taxpayers relied on these statements when making a decision about funding earlier requests. He asked Dr. Hunter for an explanation.

Dr. Hunter responded that she looked at the capital plan that was on paper in those years, and millions of dollars were planned to keep the two middle school buildings up-to-date. At some point, the School Committee questioned whether those dollars would be wisely spent, and improvements stopped following the replacement of the heating systems in 2014-15. The current message is of heightened urgency for the buildings. Mr. Swain emphasized that the hard questions need to be asked, particularly whether we are at the point to add to the Town’s debt.

Resident Maureen Kemeza commented that the “feasibility study” title for Article 14 is really more than that—she sees this as a request to “green light” the building of a new middle school at the Town’s expense. She does not feel comfortable with the request. She noted that the Finegold Report provided two options—(1) build a new school; or (2) build an addition onto Sanborn. She questioned why the second option wasn’t considered, which would cost half as much as a new school. She asked that the School Committee and Department be more transparent in its presentation. Dr. Hunter responded that the Finegold Report emphasized the cost effectiveness and improved learning environment of a new building, and she agreed to include more transparency in the future. Mr. Stanton noted that the Finegold Report estimated the cost of constructing a new building at \$68 million vs. building an addition onto Sanborn at \$60 million.

Resident Louis Salemy introduced himself as having worked on the high school project, and considers himself an expert on MSBA funding. He felt that we were lucky to receive MSBA funding for the high school, crediting the funding to chance political influences. He noted that Sanborn has asbestos that would have to be removed, so he felt any renovation project could not be safely done with the students still remaining on site.

Resident Yuval Erlich commented that it would be a big mistake to perpetuate past mistakes. While we are concentrating on facility costs, the Superintendent is emphasizing the improved learning environment that is needed. He felt that there is no question that a new building is needed—the question is when. If \$34 million would need to be spent over the next ten years to maintain the current buildings, to be followed by construction of a new building, then where are the savings? Resident Charlie Blair asked whether a “model” school could be built, therefore saving considerable cost. Dr. Hunter responded that state subsidy incentives for building a model school have decreased considerably. She agreed that while some savings could result in building a model school, she anticipates that some customizing would be required to meet Concord’s needs.

Resident Ned Perry noted that about 10 years ago town meeting faced a request to build two elementary schools at once, which was rejected by the voters. Eventually the requests were brought forward separately, at a much higher cost. He urged that we look at cost savings for moving forward now rather than putting it off. Resident Miguel Echavarri commented that “words do matter.” Voters were told in 2015 that the two middle school buildings were in good shape and an investment of \$6 million over a period of a few years would assure that the buildings would last another 30 years. Then in 2017 we were told that the buildings were horrible and beyond repair. Since any new middle school building project would be under the control of the Town Manager, he was more inclined to support it. Resident Cynthia Wood noted that Article 14 is written to have the funding under the control of the School Committee, while we have been told

that the construction would be under the control of the Town Manager. She asked that this be clarified at town meeting, and that a timeline be included to explain the vote we are being asked to take.

Article 15 – CCRSD Budget Superintendent Laurie Hunter introduced the CCRSD FY20 budget request of \$34,687,733 (Concord’s assessment \$23,344,987), which she noted was within the FC Guideline. She explained that ZBB was used, and all budget areas were reviewed, including Legal, Salaries, Staffing, Contracted Services, Special Education, and Supplies & Materials. She also reported that there was a reorganization of personnel structures in the central administration.

Dr. Hunter reported that the FY20 budget drivers were as follows:

Budget Drivers	FY20 Budget Increase
Contract Services	\$147,685
Employee Separation	\$96,651
Insurance	\$220,392
Athletic Coaches	\$125,062
Salary-Support Staff	\$111,126
Salary-Teachers	\$521,044
Software/Hardware	\$118,201
Total	\$1,340,161

Dr. Hunter reported the following cost savings that had been identified by ZBB:

Cost Savings	FY20 Budget Decrease
Transportation	\$158,627
Salary–Tutors	\$60,297
Special Education Tuition	\$101,481
Total	\$320,405

Dr. Hunter reported that during Phase 1 of the Retirement/Separation Incentive program (FY18), 3.0 teachers retired, resulting in FY20 savings of \$67,110 (since new teachers are hired at a lower rate of pay). Under Phase 2 (FY19), 3.0 teachers retired, resulting in FY20 savings of \$69,395. Dr. Hunter reviewed the OPEB contribution history for CCRSD, noting that the actual contribution made each year has been lower than the required ARC; however, we are still in a strong position, with the highest contribution rate in Massachusetts among regional schools. The total OPEB fund balance as of June 30, 2018 is \$3,734,391. In FY20, \$563,444 is being proposed for funding OPEB (vs. a required ARC of \$785,368). She feels that this is a healthy contribution. She reported that Moody’s has placed CCRSD on a negative outlook–watch list due to a heavy reliance on and low balance in the E&D account. Moody’s is not concerned with the OPEB contribution. She noted that CCRSD has been using the E&D account as a revenue source to fund unbudgeted items for several years, and this spending pattern

has shifted going forward. She reported the following history of using E&D as a revenue source:

FY18	\$700,000
FY19	\$689,000
FY20	\$350,000

Dr. Hunter summarized the assessment comparison, including debt, for the past two years:

	Concord	Carlisle	Total
FY19	\$22,654,028	\$7,367,213	\$30,021,241
FY20	\$23,344,987	\$7,678,252	\$31,023,239
Difference	\$690,959	\$311,039	\$1,001,998
%Δ	3.05%	4.22%	3.34%

There were no comments or questions.

Article 16—CCRS Capital Projects School Superintendent Laurie Hunter explained this proposal, which asks for approval of the Regional School Committee’s \$2 million debt authorization for the following projects at the high school: reconstruction of access road; installation of lighting along the access road; repair of sidewalks and curbing; and restoration of parking to previous levels. She explained that the \$2 million is a very conservative estimate, and firm numbers will not be known until bids are received. She explained that driving the discussion of the \$2 million request is a desire to complete construction of the loop road, which had only been patched following construction of the new school. She explained that the other big project is parking, which is not really additional parking—it is a restoration of the parking that was onsite prior to construction of the new high school. She also reported that the bathrooms at Memorial Field are not in compliance with required building codes, but those are not included in this request. To bring this building into compliance, 44 bathrooms would need to be added. The School Committee is considering requesting a waiver of this requirement. Gale Associates evaluated the campus access road as part of the campus feasibility study, noting a number of areas that need attention (cracks, patches, ponding, uneven pavement, potholes, etc.). The condition of the base material on the roadway is unknown, but the \$2 million assumes a full reconstruction may be needed. The cost of the roadway reconstruction is \$1,224,812.

In discussing the parking situation, she explained that the demand for parking far exceeds supply, and there is a lot of illegal parking going on now. Pre-new high school there were 548 parking spaces onsite. There are currently 413 parking spaces. Several actions have been taken to address the parking deficit, including moving faculty parking to the upper turf lot; renting spaces from the Beede Center; numbering the spaces to improve enforcement; and promoting carpools. Despite these efforts, parking capacity remains inadequate. Most juniors are not allowed spaces, and students arrive at school early in order to grab spots, defeating the intent of the later start time. All of this has

added stress for families and staff, and has proven to be a huge distraction. Under this article, 104 additional parking spaces would be created, and would be subject to approval of the Natural Resources Commission to increase the impervious surface to 22%. The estimated cost for the parking spaces is \$790,903. Dr. Hunter estimated that Concord's share of the \$2 million borrowing would be \$210,000/year for 10 years.

In response to a question from Ms. Zall, Dr. Hunter indicated that a parking permit costs \$300/year. Resident Nick Pappas, a member of the Climate Action Advisory Board, noted that the Town has very aggressive climate goals, including a goal to encourage and facilitate carpooling; and to develop plans to decrease parking demands. He requested that a parking management plan be prepared, with the idea that a balance is needed. Dr. Hunter noted that she is trying to corral a lot of efforts to solve this problem. Mr. Pappas expressed concern that there is a willingness to throw money at the problem, but not a willingness to change behavior. Mr. Banfield asked how many of the previous parking spaces were used by bus drivers, who are now located elsewhere. Mr. Taylor noted that the increase in the number of spaces being proposed will still not solve the problem, since there will still be a parking shortage. Dr. Hunter noted that many students have no other way to get to after-school activities except by car. Ms. Hanson asked for the total of capital projects for FY20 for the schools -- \$2 million for the high school and \$1.5 million for the middle school. Mr. Fischelis asked whether a parking garage was considered. Dr. Hunter responded that a garage had been explored, but was very expensive.

Mr. Swain thanked Dr. Hunter for seeing a problem and trying to fix it. He expressed frustration, however, that two years ago we were told that the number of parking spaces at the new high school would be 30 more than were present at the old high school. While he recognized that Dr. Hunter is addressing an expressed real need, the information provided to us is different from what was received in the recent past. In addition, he questioned the estimated cost of the road repairs, which he felt was too high. Ms. Zall noted the cost per parking space is \$7,900, and she asked whether funding is sufficient to handle the drainage issues.

Resident Diane Proctor suggested that consideration be given to splitting the article into two parts, given the disagreement about parking—one for improvements to the access road and one for additional parking. Dr. Hunter indicated that this conversation was held by the School Committee, and a decision was made to keep the two projects together. Miguel Echavarri suggested that parking fees be put towards constructing new spots. Dr. Hunter responded that parking fees are currently used to offset operating expenses at the high school. Mr. Echavarri again emphasized that words matter, noting the inconsistencies that have been told by the School Committee and previous School Administrators. He feels that the current need is difficult to believe, given past statements that parking was adequate.

School Committee Member Wally Johnston commented that when he first came onto the School Committee, the bus transportation issue was at its peak. He naively advocated that students be urged to use the bus more. He has come to realize that the lack of parking has produced a stress issue at the high school, and this appropriation is the simplest way to make the biggest impact to reduce stress.

Resident Yuval Erlich suggested that a plan be created to encourage the use of electric cars which take smaller spaces. He suggested that an incentive be placed for a higher parking fee for larger cars. Dr. Hunter responded that she was not interested in penalizing the students for the car choices that parents make. Resident Julie-Ann Cancio questioned the design of the parking lot and whether it would be paved, lighted, and include drainage. Dr. Hunter indicated that early vetting of parking options has been done. Ms. Cancio suggested that the parking problem could be solved at a lower cost, noting that lights at the Beede Center light her house all night. If the parking lot were to be lighted, then the impact on the neighborhood should be weighed. She noted that turtles are lured out with light. Maureen Kemeza asked whether parking would be available along the access road. Dr. Hunter responded that there is parking now, and this would remain, on one side of the road.

Follow-up on Article 22 - Marcia Rasmussen remarked that after further thought, she is not positive whether 2019 is the second or third round of state funding request for Junction Village. This will be reviewed and a response available with a call to her office

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita S. Tekle
Recording Secretary

Documents Used or Referenced at Meeting:

- 2019 Annual Town Meeting Warrant
- Handouts for Articles 22, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16