

1 **APPROVED**  
2 TOWN OF PELHAM  
3 BUDGET COMMITTEE - MEETING MINUTES  
4 Thursday, November 5, 2015  
5 APPROVED – November 9, 2015  
6

7 **CALL TO ORDER** – at approximately 7:30pm  
8

PRESENT: Mr. David Cate, Mr. Bob Sherman, Ms. Daryle Hillsgrove, Mr. Michael Bilby,  
Mr. David Cronin, Mr. Leo Rush, Ms. Donna Dube, School Board Representative  
Brian Carton, Selectmen Representative Doug Viger

EXCUSED: Mr. Daniel Guimond

9  
10 Also present: School District Superintendent Amanda Lecaroz, School Business Administrator  
11 Deborah Mahoney, Director of Curriculum Instruction & Assessment Natasha Kolehmainen,  
12 Director of Student Services Mary Beth Goodell, Technology Director Holly Doe, Nutrition  
13 Services Director Kelly Rambeau, Director of Facilities Alan Miller  
14

15 Mr. Cate read aloud the press release announcement of the 2015 Town of Pelham Tax Rate Set.  
16 Property tax rate has been set at \$23.26 per thousand dollar of property valuation, an increase of  
17 \$.39, or 1.7% from 2014. Breakdown as follows:

- 18 • Town Government - \$6.90, a decrease of \$0.01 from 2014
- 19 • Local Education (school) - \$12.65, an increase of \$0.36
- 20 • State Education tax - \$2.42, a decrease of \$0.01 and
- 21 • County tax - \$1.29, an increase of \$0.05

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23  
24 **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

25  
26 **MEETING MINUTES**

27  
28 **October 29, 2015**

**MOTION:** (Sherman/Bilby) To approve the October 29, 2015 meeting minutes as written.

**VOTE:** (7-0-2) The motion carried. Mr. Cronin and Mr. Carton abstained.

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30 **November 2, 2015**

**MOTION:** (Sherman/Bilby) To approve the November 2, 2015 meeting minutes as written.

**VOTE:** (6-0-3) The motion carried. Mr. Viger, Mr. Cronin and Mr. Carton abstained.

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33 **2016 SCHOOL BUDGET REVIEW – (Representing the School’s 2017 Fiscal Year)**

34 School District Superintendent Amanda Lecaroz and School Business Administrator Deborah  
35 Mahoney came forward for budget presentation/review.  
36

37  
38 Ms. Dube asked for additional information regarding the item contained in the Executive  
39 Summary that pertained to *Administrator Compensation Market Adjustment* – Ms. Lecaroz stated

40 they reviewed the eleven Administrator's salaries that were not in line with the market. She  
41 reviewed 7-8 districts that were in the area to determine an average salary for those positions.  
42 She took the figure for the salary difference, divided it into three and submitted a proposal to the  
43 School Board that would increase the administrator salaries one third of the market. The plan  
44 would be to have a three-year plan; however, each year they will review the bottom line budget to  
45 see where they stand. Mr. Cate questioned if a person's years of experience was considered. Ms.  
46 Lecaroz answered no, that isn't a consideration for administrators. They are usually hired at a  
47 market rate based on qualifications and then increased based on experience. She noted there were  
48 not a lot of candidates for administrator positions. Ms. Dube asked if the districts had similar per  
49 capita incomes to support the higher adjustments. Ms. Lecaroz they reviewed comparable  
50 positions within the surrounding areas. Ms. Dube asked how the teachers would respond to  
51 administrators receiving a market adjustment and questioned if the same would be considered  
52 when re-negotiating their contract. Ms. Lecaroz noted they were currently in negotiations with  
53 the teachers. Ms. Dube stated she wasn't trying to deprive people from salary increases, she was  
54 just trying to hold the budget for the Townspeople. Ms. Lecaroz replied they were balancing the  
55 school's need to provide a quality educational program. In order to do so they needed qualified  
56 people in the positions by having a reasonable salary to attract them. She said at present, some of  
57 the salaries weren't reasonable.

58  
59 **District Budget**

60 2016 Adjusted Budget - \$10,612,724

61 2017 Proposed Budget - \$10,599,458 (*decrease of \$13,266*)

62  
63 Regular Education –

64 Perfect attendance required by collective bargaining agreement – Mr. Rush asked if that clause  
65 could be negotiated out of the agreement. He couldn't see paying people a bonus to do their job.  
66 He asked who negotiates agreements. Negotiations were conducted by a group consisting of Ms.  
67 Lecaroz, Ms. Mahoney, two School Board members, Human Resource Director and the School's  
68 attorney.

69  
70 Daily substitute salary – Mr. Bilby questioned why they budgeted so high (\$120,000). Ms.  
71 Mahoney explained the substitute expense goes against the salary line of the person absent. The  
72 Board was previously provided with a breakdown of the substitute evaluation showing the total  
73 substitute cost and expenses. Mr. Cronin asked for the daily substitute rate and how many were  
74 currently working as long-term substitutes. Ms. Mahoney replied \$65. per day. She believed at  
75 present there were less than ten.

76  
77 District paid retiree health insurance – Mr. Sherman wanted to know until what age it was paid.  
78 Ms. Mahoney replied it ended at age 65.

79  
80 Rental/lease software – Mr. Rush asked for an explanation of the items listed. Discovery  
81 education is a district-wide up to date digital resource, highly concentrated in the area of science  
82 and social studies. Read and Write for Google is licensed software contained on all district  
83 computers and will transfer to student laptops.

84  
85 Special Education –

86 Professional educational services and professional services – Ms. Lecaroz called attention to the  
87 items cut (\$92,000.00 and \$3,000.00). Of which, \$71,316.76 was reallocated for a transition  
88 teacher at the high school to service severely disabled students that stay at the school until age 21.  
89 The remaining amount is savings.

90

91 Tuition to private school – Ms. Lecaroz provided an explanation of the line items. She said there  
92 were students placed out of district because the current school and programs could not meet their  
93 particular needs. Costs range based on the program and level of assistance needed. Currently  
94 there are twelve students being budgeted for. Ms. Lecaroz stated anything not spent within the  
95 Special Education (1210 budget lines) section was turned back to the fund balance; they do not  
96 transfer any money from special education to other areas of the budget. Mr. Cate asked if the  
97 district received any return from catastrophic insurance. Ms. Lecaroz replied they received State  
98 Catastrophic Aid; however it was only funded between 18%-20%. Mr. Cate questioned if money  
99 was being set aside in a capital reserve fund. Ms. Lecaroz replied they had put money into a  
100 capital reserve the past two years, but were not planning a warrant article this year. Mr. Viger  
101 questioned if the tuition cost included transportation. Ms. Lecaroz relied transportation and  
102 extended school year costs were separate. Mr. Rush asked if any of the services could be done in-  
103 house. Ms. Lecaroz explained they had two revision plans for special education for students with  
104 significant disabilities and a revision plan for students with emotional disabilities. A large  
105 number of the students in out placement are in the area of social/emotional disabilities. She noted  
106 the transition teacher for severely disabled students would provide a budget savings. Next year  
107 they hoped to present a social/emotional program with appropriate staffing to address some of the  
108 budget lines. The goal was to bring some of the private tuition students back into district.

109  
110 Information Access fees – Re-think curriculum – Mr. Rush wanted additional information. Ms.  
111 Lecaroz explained it was computer training and curriculum for teachers and instructional  
112 assistants. The program is designed to apply behavior analysis and support many of the autistic  
113 students.

114  
115 Bilingual Programs –  
116 Mr. Rush questioned how many separate languages were being taught. Ms. Lecaroz replied the  
117 middle school taught French and Spanish; the high school taught French, Spanish and German.  
118 She stated the bilingual program was for students who come into district with a primary language  
119 other than English. The teacher assists the students to acclimate to the school and be taught in  
120 English. Mr. Rush wanted to know what languages the students were speaking. There were  
121 several languages listed. Mr. Sherman noted there were over sixty different languages spoken by  
122 incoming students.

123  
124 Extended School Year –  
125 Ms. Goodell provided an explanation of the services provided to students at the residential  
126 facilities.

127  
128 Physical Therapy Services –  
129 Mr. Cronin asked if the physical therapy service was contracted. Ms. Lecaroz answered yes.  
130 They have worked with a physical therapy company for a number of years. The budget line paid  
131 for two people, which was a cost savings from the district hiring their own therapist.

132  
133 Improvement Instruction –  
134 Ms. Lecaroz provided an explanation of the responsibility pool salaries per the collective  
135 bargaining agreement.

136  
137 Printing – Student reports for Smarter Balance - Mr. Bilby noticed this was a budget line not  
138 budgeted in the past. Ms. Lecaroz explained there were State-wide annual assessment reports  
139 (multi-page) they were required to print out and provide to parents. Previously the school was  
140 sent the reports, and now they are sent electronically. They have no other way to get the reports  
141 to parents except by printing. Mr. Bilby questioned if the reports could be loaded on the

142 Chromebooks. Ms. Lecaroz replied they were working to get the information loaded on  
143 PowerSchool (student's individual file).

144

145 Computer Instruction –

146 Mr. Cate asked why there was a drop in the budget lines. Ms. Lecaroz replied they redesigned  
147 the technology department and changed from a technology coordinator to a technology director or  
148 the district and a specific technology integrator at the high school.

149

150 Superintendent Service –

151 Salaries – Mr. Cronin asked if each of the eleven administrators had an independent contract.  
152 Ms. Lecaroz answered yes; they have annual contracts. Mr. Cronin questioned if there was a set  
153 salary percentage, or if it was negotiated. Ms. Lecaroz replied there were no set percentage  
154 raises. She noted that she had a multi-year contract and there was one other administrator that  
155 had a two-year contract. Mr. Bilby asked what it would cost to give the eleven administrators a  
156 3% increase. Ms. Lecaroz replied she would find out.

157

158 Miscellaneous – Mr. Bilby questioned why there had been a big increase. Ms. Lecaroz explained  
159 there were items in the budget line that weren't in the appropriate areas. She shifted the lines for  
160 transparency.

161

162 Building Services –

163 Overtime salaries for anticipated plowing - Ms. Lecaroz noted the school had additional parking  
164 lots. She noted the cost was budgeted for this year and next year. They were gathering  
165 information to determine the type of equipment needed to clear the school. Mr. Miller reported  
166 they purchased a blower attachment for their tractor which was used exclusively for the  
167 permeable parking lot.

168

169 Contracted repair & maintenance – replacement carpeting for portables – cost was put into the  
170 budget and then removed. Ms. Lecaroz explained the district owned the portables. As part of the  
171 high school project, the preliminary plan was to shift the direction in which the building faced so  
172 it could house the facilities department and technology department. Currently those two  
173 departments were housed in the garage and the equipment was sitting outside in the elements.  
174 Ms. Lecaroz said they would move the portables and then determine their needs. Mr. Sherman  
175 hoped when the portables were moved bathroom facilities would be added. Ms. Lecaroz replied  
176 it was still under discussion.

177

178 Regular Transportation –

179 Mr. Cronin wanted to know how many bus routes were run in a yearly basis. Ms. Lecaroz will  
180 provide information for the number of bus routes at each school. There is a one hour per day  
181 potential billing adjustment for any hours that exceed the normal hours (such as weather delay).  
182 Special education used three (in district) busses; there were no bus monitors assigned to  
183 individual students. Ms. Mahoney noted that the bus company had not charged for the additional  
184 hours, but because it was contained in the contract, those hours could be billed.

185

186 Technology Services –

187 Professional services – Mr. Cate wanted to know what the document management budget lines  
188 were used for. Ms. Lecaroz replied they had purchased a document management system in the  
189 FY15 budget. The goal was to have the majority of their files and documents kept electronically.  
190 The business machines were being used for a majority of the project.

191

192 Data communications – Mr. Rush inquired why the district used two internet service companies.  
193 Ms. Lecaroz answered that Fairpoint was the primary service and Comcast Business Class was  
194 their back up service for the internet.

195  
196 Technology Services –  
197 3 year agreement – hardware, software and support – Mr. Rush asked if the budget was an annual  
198 cost or if it paid for the 3 year agreement. Ms. Doe stated the budget line would pay for three  
199 years.

200  
201 Equipment additional-  
202 Chromebook 3 year lease - Mr. Bilby asked if the budget line was an annual cost. Ms. Lecaroz  
203 answered yes.

204  
205 Benefits & Fixed Charges –  
206 Mr. Rush wanted to know what fines the school was subject to. Ms. Mahoney replied they were  
207 related to the Affordable Care Act.

208

209 **Food Service**

210 2016 Adjusted Budget - \$1,076,021

211 2017 Proposed Budget - \$1,090,935 (*increase of \$14,914*)

212

213 Ms. Lecaroz noted that the Food Service is a self-funded program that had not lost money in over  
214 five years

215

216 Food Service Operations Elementary School–  
217 USDA Commodities Food – FY16 inflation – Ms. Rambeau explained that the increase was  
218 money given to the school by the USDA at the State level. This was dependent upon the school  
219 population and increased every year.

220

221 Mr. Sherman questioned if a breakfast program was served at all three schools. Ms. Rambeau  
222 replied they served breakfast at the middle school and high school. Ms. Lecaroz noted that the  
223 issue with serving breakfast at the elementary school was due to transportation. The children  
224 couldn't get to school early enough because of the bus runs for the middle school and high  
225 school.

226

227 Repairs & maintenance –

228 Walk-in and freezer repairs – Mr. Bilby asked if they were still under warranty. Ms. Rambeau  
229 answered no. She said they were having an issue with the flooring that will need to be replaced.

230

231 Food Service Operations Memorial School –

232 Food – food increase costs and local products – Ms. Rambeau said based on actuals and inflation,  
233 she increased the proposed budget accordingly.

234

235 Ms. Lecaroz commented that there would be increased costs at the high school that were designed  
236 to staff the new cafeteria with larger areas for preparation and service. They will be providing a  
237 larger variety of food, which was anticipated to increase participation. Ms. Lecaroz added that  
238 the food service program was paying \$80,000 (from revenues) toward the upgrade of the kitchen  
239 at the high school.

240

241 **Grants**

242 2016 Adjusted Budget - \$733,207

243 2017 Proposed Budget - \$730,000 (*decrease of \$3,207*)

244

245 Ms. Lecaroz stated that the budget was at no cost to the taxpayer. It was all money that came in  
246 from grants.

247

248 The Board reviewed the budget lines.

249

250 Budget review concluded. Mr. Cate asked the Board to provide any questions and/or proposed  
251 cuts/adjustments to him prior to Monday's meeting.

252

253 Mr. Rush asked what percentage the school could cut from the budget. Ms. Lecaroz replied she  
254 already made cuts from the budget. She couldn't predict any additional cuts. She felt doing so  
255 would significantly compromise the educational program. Mr. Rush noted two years ago there  
256 was approximately \$2 million unspent. Ms. Lecaroz explained when the items they control are  
257 reviewed they had actually underspent approximately \$34,000. In the past they received  
258 unanticipated revenues from Health Trust. She stated they had to budget special education and if  
259 money wasn't spent from those lines it was automatically turned back to the taxpayers.

260

261 Mr. Cate suggested if there were any proposed budget adjustments, they could be discussed at the  
262 next meeting.

263

264 **ADJOURNMENT**

265

**MOTION:** (Sherman/Dube) To adjourn the meeting.

**VOTE:** (9-0-0) The motion carried.

266

267 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:16pm.

268

269

Respectfully submitted,

270

Charity A. Landry

271

Recording Secretary