

State of Rhode Island

County of Washington

In Hopkinton on the sixth day of March 2017 A.D. the said meeting was called to order by Town Council President Frank Landolfi at 6:30 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 1 Town House Road, Hopkinton, RI 02833.

PRESENT: Frank Landolfi, Thomas Buck, Barbara Capalbo, David Husband; Town Solicitor Kevin McAllister; Town Manager William McGarry; Town Clerk Elizabeth Cook-Martin. Absent: Sylvia Thompson.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR CAPALBO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HUSBAND TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(A) (1) BOARD/COMMISSION INTERVIEW – ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW, CONSERVATION COMMISSION.

POLL VOTE:

IN FAVOR: Landolfi, Buck, Capalbo, Husband

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Council President Landolfi reported that the person or persons being discussed have been notified in advance in writing and advised that they have the right to have the discussion held in open session.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR CAPALBO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HUSBAND TO RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION SEAL THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION.

IN FAVOR: Landolfi, Buck, Capalbo, Husband

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Council President Landolfi reported no votes had been taken during the Executive Session.

The regular session opened with a moment of silent meditation and a salute to the

Flag at 7:00 P.M.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Town Council Meeting Minutes of February 21, 2017 and Town Council Meeting Minutes of February 6, 2017 were removed from the Consent Agenda.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR CAPALBO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HUSBAND TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS FOLLOWS: Set March 20, 2017 as a hearing date for a Multi-Event Permit filed by the Friends of the Hopkinton Land Trust for 3 concerts at Depot Square; Set March 20, 2017 as a hearing date for a Special Event Permit filed by the Ashaway Sportsman Club for Huck Finn Day.

IN FAVOR: Landolfi, Buck, Capalbo, Husband

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

The February 6, 2016 minutes were amended on page, 8, first paragraph, line 7 to insert the word “lower” so the sentence ends with “a lower kelvin rating”. The February 21, 2017 minutes were corrected on page 1, second paragraph, remove Thomas Buck from the first line; on page 2, first paragraph, last sentence, change \$20.63” to \$20.53; on page 5, third paragraph, strike “Buck” where it indicates “Buck Husband” as the Councilor who seconded the motion.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR CAPALBO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HUSBAND TO APPROVE THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 21, 2017; TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 6, 2017 WITH CHANGES NOTED.

IN FAVOR: Landolfi, Buck, Capalbo, Husband

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

PUBLIC FORUM

Ed Thompson, Route 184 Extension, lives near the existing CT truck stop on the RI side. He addressed the Council in regards to the two proposed truck stops in Hopkinton indicating he was opposed to them as he would have to be looking at it

and it would tear the Town up. He felt the State will not do anything for the Town. He noted that he has had to clean up damage to his yard because drivers do not realize it was a dead end road. He has had over \$2,300.00 damage to his front yard from trucks. He felt the existing truck stop near his home should be revamped rather than build two new truck stops which would be a waste of money. Council President Landolfi noted a letter of opposition has been sent to the Governor, the RIDOT, our Federal and State delegation and the Federal Transportation Secretary and he hoped that these efforts would stop it.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT REPORT

Council President Landolfi reported there were Budget Workshops held on February 23 and February 27, 2017 and to date the Council reduced the budget by \$51,000.00, this amount includes \$44,000.00 related to the School and \$3,000.00 from the Council, there had been a formula correction; He reported he had attended a meeting with Lt. Governor McKee on February 24, 2017 relative to the car tax issue. The Lt. Governor would like to rally people together because counties like Providence that have a higher tax rate for cars, will get the lion's share of the \$220,000,000.00 the state takes in from taxing cars, so in essence they would be rewarded for having a higher tax rate. Lt. Governor McKee would like to see the Town come up with a Resolution, and that he would send some information to the Solicitor, that would highlight the inequities with the Governor's plan and the House Speaker's plan relative to how they rebate municipalities, because it is revenue to us. Council President Landolfi feels the car tax would eventually be either reduced by 30%, which is the Governor's plan, or totally eliminated entirely, but our fear is with what would happen with the \$1.4 million the Town receives from the State from motor vehicle taxes. There will be more to come on this matter; He reported he attended a Breakfast Meeting with Superintendent Ricci on March 4, 2017 along with Councilor Buck and their counterparts from Richmond and Charlestown. Some of the highlights of the meeting involved the school districts' request for a portion of the Town's tipping fees; the Town has no portion to share as all of our tipping fees go to the Town of Westerly, so the District will be looking for Charlestown and Richmond to make up the difference; also, the possibility of considering a Resolution regarding

restoration of the Categorical Transportation Aid; He reported there will be a new process that will require parents to register their children for bus stops for the fall start of school that may eliminate busses; there was an update on the RYSE School: Robinson Green Beretta (RGB) is the chosen architect and an expense schedule is to be established regarding architectural and other fees. Because there will be a financing gap between when expenses start coming in and the issuance of the bond, there may be discussion on whether to use Chariho surplus funds to help out in the interim. Mr. Ricci will address this aspect. The timeline for completion of the RYSE project is September 2018; there was also a lively discussion was held on the proposed 2018 Chariho budget.

NEW BUSINESS

This matter had been scheduled for discussion regarding the Chariho School District proposed budget for FY 2018, possibly including members of the Chariho School Committee and/or representatives from the Chariho School Department. Those present: Superintendent Barry Ricci, Assistant Superintendent; Finance Director and School Committee Members Georgia Ure and Catherine Giusti.

Superintendent Ricci touched on some of the points from the Council President's Report. He noted it was very important to issue the bond and have proceeds from the bond available in the year in which we are to receive the housing aid otherwise you pay on the bond on the receipt of 61% in housing aid. The bond proceeds are not available until the building is substantially complete, which is not uncommon. It is a timing issue that may require some gap financing, such as a short term loan, or if the amount is reasonable, he could propose to the school committee, to use fund balance and then repay fund balance, which would eliminate closing fees and interest payments. Final calculations are not yet available so it is too early for him to make the determination now. With regard to bussing, he explained that bussing is planned based on walking distances now, so anyone eligible via the walking distance is programmed on a bus whether or not they use the bus. Some students don't use the busses; parents drop them off or students drive, so busses run on roughly 62% capacity, so in an effort to be more efficient, they will ask parents to register their children for bus transportation if

they need it and then they won't create routes where transportation is not needed. He met this afternoon with Kevin Gallagher, Education Policy Assistant to the Governor and three representatives from Bristol-Warren school district relative to passing another Resolution this year. They again made a case, as they did last year, for fully funded transportation categorical aid. He explained this aid was instituted when the regionalization bonus was removed and a funding formula instituted. The transportation aid was to partially offset the loss of the regional bonus because our geography for transportation is so much bigger than it would be if it was a single district. The eventual goal of the legislation around transportation categorical aid was that the State and the District were to split the cost of transportation 50-50 with a progression to that 50-50 number. The problem is that it is not codified in the law, so it is level funded each year, and each year we must beg to get it back. This year the shortfall is \$185,000.00 which is significant. Last year it was over \$300,000.00 because it was two-year's worth. Last year it was restored. He expected the School Committee to pass a resolution on Tuesday evening to support the restoration of the aid and the reimplementation of the regional bonus. Once they do that they will circulate them here. The Governor's Office, our Senators and Representatives will probably introduce legislation to codify the transportation aid into law, so they may ask for attendance a rally at the State House the same night the hearing is held to testify in favor of its passage.

Council President Landolfi addressed the school budget. There were reductions of about \$313,000.00 initially but found out from Finance Office that \$185,000.00 we thought would be included on the revenue side would be been taken away in Categorical Transportation Aid so the net amount in revenue from the Town's perspective is \$47,000.00, or around 35% of \$128,000.00 (\$313,000.00 less \$185,000.00). He feels from the size of the school budget, more could be done to reduce the budget further to help the Town out; He pointed out that \$374,000.00 of an increase this year is nearly four times the Town's discretionary spending on the Town's side, we have to purchase dump trucks , police cars and other needs, this one year alone. He wants the school committee members and the

administration to know that he feels there should be more of a collaborative effort made early on, as our Council, vs. Charlestown, Richmond, Stonington and Westerly – they all have finance boards. We get into our budget early on and we go through it line by line so we know early on, what is going on with the budget. He is asking for collaboration early on and feels this would help to foster mutual respect and collaboration; this particular budget doesn't have that and he is disappointed. He noted if there is one more meeting on March 14, 2017 where the school committee could address the budget one more time, he is making a plea for them to reduce it further, so the Town does not have to use its savings to offset and satisfy our Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). By reducing the school budget by an additional \$170,000.00 would keep us whole and level funded, for our capital improvements. Superintendent Ricci indicated he has reached out any number times and invites anyone to meet with him either at his office or here in Town – whatever works best. He stated they have an idea of the budget number around the Christmas break and then it is released with workshops scheduled in January. It is one of the reasons he holds breakfast meetings, to keep everyone informed. He confirmed that Council President Landolfi is seeking \$170,000.00 in additional reductions by the School Committee. Council President Landolfi responded yes; that would make us whole on our CIP this year. Superintendent Ricci assumed he was taking into consideration what was returned last year and Council President Landolfi responded, yes, we received the \$130,000.00 and it is already factored in. Superintendent Ricci asked if he was connecting the \$170,000.00 reduction to the categorical aid. Council President Landolfi responded no, it is entirely separate and obviously he doesn't want education to be affected. He explained the reason he backed into that was we are using \$152,000.00 from our savings to supplement the \$92,000.00 CIP; if we had an extra \$170,000.00 in cuts there would be no structural deficit: the CIP would be \$92,000.00 and our capital transfer would be \$92,000.00. He felt it is a small amount to ask based on what he analyzed; other Councilors may have larger requests. As to the Superintendent's point about collaboration, Council President Landolfi stated we all made recommendations early on at the Omnibus meeting, Councilor Capalbo has been at every budget meeting and whether the Council

makes recommendations on capital improvement reductions or any budget reduction for that matter, from his perspective it falls on deaf ears; our recommendations are never taken into consideration and that is what he means about finding out about what is happening; listening to what we really need or want and taking something into consideration. Superintendent Ricci noted often times there are as many recommendations as there are people and often times, conflicting recommendations about their budget. He did not want the Council to leave the meeting tonight thinking that; they don't ignore recommendations there just may not be agreement. There are twelve members on the school committee and there is not always agreement there either. Councilor Capalbo had some general comments. She noted she was familiar with the budget and had been to all the budget meetings. She noted the Town had supported the budget the past two years and this Council had also supported the RYSE building proposal. She stated she represents all citizens; the citizens who can afford the extra tax as well as the citizens who are having financial difficulties and cannot afford the tax. She stated the past couple of budgets had \$300-\$500,000.00 increases. She felt this year the budget was particularly high; over a \$1.6 million dollar increase and then teachers were added back in. She felt Mr. Ricci has done a great deal of work, was very aware of the concerns of the Town and has always, paid attention. The three teachers added in by the school committee had not been in the Superintendent's budget. They were added by the school board which she did not disagree with because she felt the elementary school class sizes should be smaller, but if you are going to go up by \$189,000.00, you must cut \$189,000.00. She felt if the transportation aid comes back at \$185,000.00 that's pretty much a wash. She encouraged the School Committee to look at deeper cuts but also encouraged the School Committee to add back in their Stipend. She felt School Committees stipend cut of \$24,250.00 was ill conceived and poorly considered as it does not give any respect for the time and work that the School Committee is supposed to do to earn the stipend. They are supposed to go to meetings, committee meetings and when Mr. Ricci needs them in Providence, she wants them in Providence as well. They are supposed to earn it and it is for people who are not wealthy; she felt the school board must think they are wealthy. The stipend pays for auto

maintenance, parking, gasoline to go to and from board meetings and committee meetings, time at the State House, pizza and Chinese food – dinners for your children, husband or wife and child care expenses. She felt it was very unwise to take out the stipend and encouraged the school committee to put it back in. She does not wish to sabotage the work done by the administration, the students, the teachers and parents who have created one of the top school districts in Rhode Island, which she feels is amazing and that they have done a wonderful job. She felt there would be an understandable increase with the NEA Contract and health insurance increases. She stated Superintendent Ricci was asked by the school board, and he gave to the school board, a document that had \$505,000.00 in cuts that could be sustained by the school. He also gave them a \$1.5 million dollar cut document to show the damage that would be done if the budget was level funded by cutting \$2 million out as has been recommended by others and she felt that would be deadly. She stated there are a number of things that can be cut without touching teachers salaries, pensions, health care, academic programs, sports programs, maintenance, equipment, building repair and housing aid numbers, new RYSE construction. She felt the school board needs the fund balance as it stands. She stated they could implement \$800,000.00 in cuts without touching any of that. For instance, she believes the following items can reasonably be cut and they come from Superintendent Ricci's documents: \$246,042.00 health insurance premiums; that's because health insurance increases come in at an estimated percentage and the percentage can be dropped, reducing fuel oil \$50,065.00; reduce electricity \$33,636.00; eliminating elementary ground services \$15,624.00. She stated some of these have been done already but they all add up to \$800,000.00. She went on: Tri Town Task Force, which has two people for \$28,195.00. She stated we have social workers, guidance counselors, school counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, teachers and a resource officer and she felt the school could do without \$28,000.00 for the Tri Town Task Force, which the State is also taking all the local funding away. If you are going remove two buses and one bus monitor that is \$140,535.00; three teachers are not getting TA's so they need to reduce the General Teachers Assistants hours and that is \$143,975.00; eliminate advanced placement exam fees which is \$26,304.00; delay

replacement of adult laptops which is \$38,087.00; reduce purchase service nurse for \$15,120.00; there is a duplicate entry for the telephone of \$4,358.00. She added there were a number of other small ones: eliminate VM ware subscription as this has already been done, reduce stipends for curriculum development at the high school as that has already been done, eliminate dishwasher leases as that has already been done – these add up to approximately \$15,000.00. The increase for core school revenue as that may also be done and that is \$4,000.00, reduce purchase service psychology evaluations which is \$5,000.00 as that may have been done. There is also line item 931 that she knows is not \$44,500.00 and she knows its somewhere else in the budget and she would like that cut. She stated that this all adds up to \$820,135.00 and did not cut teacher, salaries, pensions, health care, academic programs, sports programs, maintenance, equipment, building repair and housing aid numbers or the RYSE construction project. Her concern is the citizens of Richmond and Hopkinton will vote the budget down and the second shot at the budget may also be voted down. She felt the school can't afford the budget to be level funded and encouraged the School Committee to take a good look at cutting \$700,000.00. She reviewed the data from past Chariho Budget referendums. When a budget is uncontested, voter turnout in Hopkinton averaged 258, Richmond 218 and Charlestown 203. When a budget is contested, voter turnout in Hopkinton averaged 712, Richmond 717 and Charlestown 232. She is aware there have been some cuts made but feels the School Committee can reduce the budget further and cut another \$500,000.00. She noted Donald Trump was supported in two of the three towns and the voters are angry; teachers get raises that our citizens do not. If the School Committee passes the budget without cutting the budget, they will see a \$2,000,000.00 drop and she did not want that to happen. She encouraged them to work together to cut \$700,000.00 to \$800,000.00 or people will come out and will vote the budget down. Superintendent Ricci stated he understood but there were as many opinions about their budget as there are people; she makes great points, going deeper into that second list, we won't be the same district but ultimately he believes the community decides what they want for education. He did not feel this community wants that \$1.5 million in reductions. Councilor Capalbo agreed. Superintendent Ricci stated he has to

advocate for high quality education, which he will continue to do and believes he has done efficiently. He noted he regrets he can't bring in the same budget he has brought the last five years and he hoped the relationship that he has fostered with the Town Council that they believe if he could, he would but he can't do it this year. He stated he has heard both of them and is sure the School Committee will consider what they have said. Councilor Capalbo noted the NEA Contract is this year and a big health care raise is this year insurance; granted the teachers will have to absorb some of that raise too but she truly believes \$800,000.00 or \$900,000.00 has to be done. They started at \$1.6 million and they've got to get it down \$700,000.00, plus you may get \$185,000.00 back and then they can keep the three extra teachers that Richmond wants; those three extra teachers in four years will cost close to a half a million considering top step teacher salaries, benefits, pensions, stipends and salary. She agrees that the budget must go up this year and understands but there are things that can be cut that do not involve academics and do not involve students. She felt he was wise to point them out and he had done a lot of work, she wished the school committee had done more work at cutting the budget through in depth study. The citizens in Richmond are upset and Hopkinton is not tickled either. Superintendent Ricci commented on the insinuation that the school committee was not doing its homework and he wanted to let the Council know that they agonized over the budget, as they do not want to place a burden on taxpayers either. They have a dual responsibility to run an efficient operation and provide a high quality education, so he did not want the Council to minimize the efforts they have put into it. Councilor Capalbo indicated her concern is if it's voted down once, the second time, the cuts will be devastating, so someone has to step up because the buck stops with the school board.

Councilor Husband felt Councilor Capalbo was a hard act to follow. He noted he was proud to live with the Chariho educational system we have here; he commended the school department, school committee and superintendent for providing a system with two elementary schools in the district ranked top ten in the State: Hope Valley and Richmond. That being said, with everybody's budget,

you purchase the things you need with what you have and if there is anything left over you purchase the things you want and if you don't have the money you don't buy it. He gave an analogy/parable about a young couple, a hard-working blue collar couple who want to buy a car and are talked into buying a Mercedes vs. a Ford by a salesman and when they went back a few years later to purchase another car, the salesman tries to push them to purchase a Porsche, but they pushed back because their earlier purchase had been difficult and it cost them dearly, so they bought the Ford. Councilor Husband feels this may happen with voters this year. He stated he appreciates the educational system we have here but he lives in Hope Valley not Silicon Valley; we are not rich people. He stated the School Committee needed to deal with what they need and back off on the things they want. He felt we have a wonderful school system, but it is supported by blue-collar workers. He commented that at the Omnibus Meeting, there were several mothers from Richmond who didn't want them to mess with the budget, he felt this to be shortsighted, because the school system, also includes tax rate and there were elderly residents on fixed income, who are not getting raises.

Councilor Buck felt Councilor Capalbo nailed it on the head. He reviewed the surplus data for the past five years that was provided by their Finance Director; the unassigned fund balance in 2013 was over \$3 million, in 2014 there was over \$4 million, in 2015 over \$3.5 million and June 2016 over \$2.8 million. He noted each time this goes up, the School Committee can retain 2% of the surplus each year; from last years' budget to this years' budget that is over \$40,000.00; two percent of our budget is much different than theirs and this figure was constantly going up and student enrollment is down. He agreed with Councilor Husband relative to the things we need and the things we want; the Town has needs and wants too and we go through our own budget as submitted to them by the Town Manager. He felt there are places that can still be cut and not affect the students or the education; we have a great school system and that's not the issue. He noted we just went through a revaluation and housing prices are up, which means people are going to have to pay more in taxes so it's going to be a tough year.

Superintendent Ricci noted the fund balance was actually coming down but that it

includes the two to four percent that was kept from the previous year and that number will go into the next budget. Councilor Husband gave a simple example of their budgeting practices and felt that this regular over-budgeting/over-estimating expenses cause these large unassigned surpluses which increase the maintenance of effort number and then this is used against the next budget which is a backwards practice. He questioned why we can't get down to a solid budget number. Superintendent Ricci noted he would take some responsibility for that; he explains that he budgets for what they need with the intention of saving whenever he can and that creates a surplus. He noted he used to work for a principal in Coventry and every year he would tell them to spend. He stated he looks at it a different way, he budgets today for what he thinks, and he knows what is spent because he initials every purchase order for the district. He operates the district with the intent to save wherever he can and apologized if that sometimes creates a surplus but his thinking is that it is not his money. This budget was based on what he feels is needed for July 1, 2017; there is no built in amount of excess. Councilor Husband stated it seemed that every year there millions of dollars in excess and there has been only one year in Hopkinton where we had any excess but in years previous and years since, the Town Council runs a pretty tight ship and it comes in pretty darn close to what we ask for.

Superintendent Ricci noted he could spend what is budgeted but didn't think that's what they want him to do; so they spend 97-98% of what we budget.

Councilor Capalbo commented about the \$4 million in unassigned surplus; really the \$2 million or 2.4%, is necessary as their savings account that can be used to build the RYSE building or rebuild the Richmond Elementary School Roof or to use in an emergency. The other \$1.5 million often comes back and is rotated back into the budget again. She is concerned about tomorrow night because they are waiting to hear from the public before cutting the budget. She noted the public that will come to tomorrows' hearing want you to keep the budget as it stands. The people that want you to cut the budget will not be there because they don't want people to be angry with them or yell at them; so they won't be there, but they will show up at the polls on April 4. Superintendent Ricci stated the date was April 11 and this date was further confirmed with Mr. McGarry when he asked.

Councilor Capalbo felt the school board needs to realize that they need to be thinking about the Town in full, not just the kids, but the kids' parents. These children have families that either can or cannot afford it. Some kids' parents can't afford anything and those kids count too; those taxes are difficult for them. She is concerned that the school board will hear from the public at the hearing to keep the budget as it stands and then people will come out to vote and will surprise them. She felt surprises were really bad where budgets are concerned and they were running out of time. Superintendent Ricci noted the school committee can change the budget on March 14, 2017. Councilor Capalbo indicated the school board could give Mr. Ricci a generic number to cut from the budget and then he would have to figure it out as they done previously but she wanted to deal with this now before the first vote and not the second vote as then it would be too late. Council President Landolfi referred to the capital improvement, a five year plan that seems to him to not be the best way to have a maintenance program because it was such a large amount of money. Mr. Ricci explained the capital program as approved was \$6 million so they must spend \$3 million over the five year period to get State Housing Aid in the next round. He recalled when he first came here he would worry about whether the boilers would be on in the morning and was his and the school committee's responsibility to take care of the public buildings and they were not in good shape at one time, but they are in better shape now. He stated yes, they could choose not spend this year and do that again year after year but it puts you in a place that is not a comfortable position. Council President Landolfi indicated that he was not saying to defer indefinitely. He noted the Town has a Capital Improvement Plan where the Town sets aside money over the course of a few years for larger projects, we don't have matching funding from the State, we save it ourselves. Because of the school budget, we are unable to save for the Town Hall, or purchase other items outright, like a dump truck without incurring interest.

Georgia Ure, School Committee Member, was present and expressed her agreement with Councilor Capalbo's comments. She noted she has lived in Town a long time and knows what people are going through. She indicated she has

advocated for more cuts as she felt the budget is too high this year. She noted that anyone in their right mind supports education, as she does. She feels education is the most important thing for our country and in our towns, but the budget is too high and it needs to be cut; people are hurting. She mentioned that approximately 80% of the Town budget goes to the school for education and when it's too high the roads suffer, the police suffer, the parents suffer, the kids suffer in other ways; they need more than education, they need shoes too; we need to find more cuts.

Catherine Giusti, School Committee Member, was present. Councilor Capalbo recognized her efforts in proposing the \$50,000.00 fuel cut. Mrs. Giusti pointed out they have held several budget meetings, open to the public that the Council could have attended to give feedback and she appreciated the attendance of those who had attended one or several. In regards to the stipend, she reported they had voted to get rid of it. She noted when she was the liaison she did a whole lot of work and didn't get paid for it as it was a volunteer position so she is not missing the stipend. She stated it was a gesture because they understand it is a big budget. She noted that we are all taxpayers too. She indicated that she and Mrs. Ure both know that their first responsibility is the education and welfare of the public school children; that is their first priority. She feels the cuts they made supports the education and welfare of the students; she would not advocate cutting TA hours, she would not advocate cutting the Tri Town Task Force because they are dealing with children who have drug and alcohol issues in a lot of cases and need all the support they can get and they are already seeing cuts at the State level. She noted the Council mentioned that we had already reduced fuel, reduced health care, but you must be careful with health care as they could have a couple of big claims and that can throw everything out of whack. She asked the Council if they were raising taxes this year. Council President Landolfi stated the Town was just under the 4% cap increase. She felt the School Committee is in a different position and yes, they are listening to the people who are giving them their opinions; she hasn't heard from anyone else and their opinions, which is why she was here to listen to what the Council has to say. She felt there would be a big crowd tomorrow and they see what they have to say but they are doing their work

and those of us who had made recommendations about cuts, she is interested in what they have to say – that is their job. She noted there are two sides to the coin; she understands that we are all taxpayers and no one wants to see big increases, but they need to do their due diligence for the kids and school isn't what it used to be. We are educating everyone, the Council cannot dictate who comes into town and buys a house, so the school committee cannot dictate who can be educated; the State and Government tells them that. The cornerstone of democracy is a good education. She felt it is interesting to hear their points of view and is not surprised them, but appreciates it because they are working together. She noted it has been contentious and has heard comments about being brainwashed and that is not the case; they are doing their due diligence and are listening to everyone. Councilor Landolfi commented relative to taking away the stipend; that it made no difference in the Town's budget. He stated it's a \$128,000.00 reduction after the categorical aid revenue was reduced and the \$128,000.00 reduction is nothing and did not feel it was an effort. He acknowledged they worked hard at it but it was nothing at all and like it or not, we are intertwined, and the decisions they make or don't make affects the town at the council level and then it is passed along to the taxpayers. He felt the Town Council has to be involved; he has made recommendations as has Councilor Capalbo but nothing has been taken into consideration. His CIP reductions have not been considered; it was mentioned at the Omnibus Meeting and he has mentioned it to Mr. Ricci but it is the School Committee who needs to realize what they do or don't do affects the Town's residents. Mrs. Giusti felt that his comments were unfair relative to their need to listen to concerns. Council President Landolfi indicated he cannot support the budget unless it is cut further, \$128,000.00 will not do it. This budget doesn't take the taxpayer into consideration whatsoever and it didn't work for him. Councilor Husband felt we have a wonderful school system in a community that is blue collar so you must decide what we can and can't afford. He was at the Omnibus meeting where several mothers from Richmond, said they don't want them to mess with the budget and one said she moved here because of the school system. He felt that was short sighted, it's beyond the school system and the nice area, it also includes the tax rate and when she gets her Richmond tax bill this summer,

she is going to say they can't afford to live here. You must realize that there are people out there, elderly on fixed income, retired on fixed income and who are not getting raises and its driving people out of Town. He commented that when people who have a \$300,000.00 house and they sell and move out of State, then a family moves in, it costs \$16,000.00 per child for education and the Town will only receive about \$3,700.00 in taxes and this is hurting a lot of people in Town. Mrs. Giusti recognizes this, she has three children, she works and pays taxes and she doesn't drive a Mercedes. She stated the school committee is doing their due diligence; that mother from Richmond's voice doesn't matter less than any others. That there were two opposing sides and they need to come to some sort of compromise. Councilor Capalbo noted it was one thing to increase \$900,000.00 but it's another matter when it is \$1.6 million/\$1.7 million, the increase is too massive.

Scott Bill Hirst of 20 Maple Court noted he would be serving as Moderator for the Chariho Budget Financial Meeting tomorrow night. He hoped attendees would come and be respected, encouraged people to speak. He appreciates the research Councilor Capalbo had done and he too, was concerned about eliminating the school committee stipend. He noted it was tough enough to get candidates to run for school committee and town council but without compensation would be more difficult. Often school committee members are voted in with write in votes.

Nell Carpenter, a Richmond resident, commented on this Town Council and School Committee forum and thanked the Town Council, Superintendent and School Committee for holding the forum. She noted she had asked for the same forum in Richmond but was denied.

Amanda Blau, Diamond Hill Road, former School Committee member, noted it seemed we have this same fight year after year. She noted the Town Council's position carries a lot of weight. She felt funding education on the backs of the property owners as unsustainable as a three legged stool and that there was enough blame to be spread as well as responsibility to be spread. She agreed the

School Committee should review the budget line by line. She felt there were people who serve on the School Committee who take the work and financial issues head on, but some don't make a single motion. The Town Council is in charge of the Town so it was their responsibility to offset some of the property tax of the homeowners with other revenue generating streams. She referred to the fact that there were no legislators here tonight and that money is lost year after year from the State and it slips away; we are severely out-numbered in the northern part of the State and not enough were advocating for the Town. She also did not feel this was a Mercedes or a Porsche level school district because she has been in a wide variety of school systems; but it has come a long way, it was not a top level high school when she went to school there. Councilor Husband indicated it was now and a lot of money had been spent to get there. Ms. Blau asked for the Town, School Committee, and our State Representatives to work together, look at the bigger picture and stop this line by line fight year after year. She did not feel there was any financial incentive for a consolidated district any longer but that is not a fight for individually, but at a higher level. Ms. Blau asked what the Council had in mind for reductions that would get them to publicly support this budget. Councilor Capalbo stated she could support a budget \$924,000.00 to \$936,000.00, it was at \$1.8 million now, they'd have to lower by almost \$900,000.00. Council President Landolfi indicated he asked for a lot less, but would be amenable to the amount posed by Councilor Capalbo. He noted \$170,000.00, our percentage of that would make our Capital Improvement Plan level funded and Councilor Capalbo added that it would not do anything for the Town's needs. Councilor Buck gave the number of \$600,000.00 and Councilor Capalbo commented as long as the \$185,000.00 is brought back. Councilor Buck stated he had once been very involved in the school budget, attending all the meetings but at this point he does not have the time to do so and he is also not elected to the School Committee, the budget is their job. He also mentioned he had initially been opposed to the RYSE program from day one. He was not in favor of it until they came forward with a request to build a building and then he knew it was permanent program and he did publicly support it. He is waiting for the name of the RYSE school to be disclosed. He confirmed he would be looking for a \$600,000.00 cut from where

they are now. Councilor Husband doesn't want to cut anything the district needs; if a teacher is needed, include that, but he wants them to take a hard look at what might be nice to have and make a list of those things, then in future years perhaps when it can be afforded they can be considered. There Council agreement with Ms. Blau's statement that that long term this is an unsustainable financial system but there will always be a back and forth about the budget between the Town and School District.

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS:

Zoning Board of Review Resignation

A letter of resignation from the Zoning Board of Review had been received from William Kazounis.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR CAPALBO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HUSBAND TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF WILLIAM KAZOUNIS FROM THE ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW WITH REGRET.

IN FAVOR: Landolfi, Buck, Capalbo, Husband

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Conservation Commission Resignation

A letter of resignation from the Conservation Commission had been received from Maryanne McNamara.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR CAPALBO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HUSBAND TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF MARYANNE MCNAMARA FROM THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION.

IN FAVOR: Landolfi, Buck, Capalbo, Husband

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Animal Control Commission Resignation

A letter of resignation from the Animal Control Commission had been received from Nancy Meissner.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR CAPALBO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HUSBAND TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF NANCY MEISSNER FROM THE ANIMAL CONTROL COMMISSION WITH DEEP REGRET.

IN FAVOR: Landolfi, Buck, Capalbo, Husband

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

Conservation Commission Appointment

An application for the Conservation Commission had been filed by Lydia Lanphear and she had been interviewed in September 2016.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR CAPALBO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HUSBAND TO APPOINT LYDIA LANPHEAR TO THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION.

IN FAVOR: Landolfi, Buck, Capalbo, Husband

OPPOSED: None

SO VOTED

PUBLIC FORUM

Scott Bill Hirst requested the Town Council to adjourn their meeting in honor of E. Robert Corrigan, Jr., who served on the Town Council including serving as Town Council President. Mr. Hirst had served on the Council with Mr. Corrigan when they hired the first Town Manager. He added Mr. Corrigan had once run for State Senate. Council President Landolfi noted he had attended his wake.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILOR CAPALBO AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR HUSBAND TO ADJOURN IN MEMORY OF E. ROBERT CORRIGAN, JR.

SO VOTED

Elizabeth J. Cook-Martin

Town Clerk