

Minutes of the Longmeadow Appropriations Committee
Wednesday, March 10, 2004 – Community House – Room A

Members Present: Steven Marantz – Chairperson, William Engelberger, James Nittoli,
Judd Peskin and Paul Santaniello

The Appropriations Committee (AC) met again with the School Committee (SC) regarding the FY05 School operating budget. Stephen Nembirkow, Director of School Business Services presented the first draft (2/27/04) of the FY05 Fee Budget for the Schools. This budget presentation incorporated the total School budget less applicable revenues to equate to the requested appropriation. This budget presentation was \$70,916 over a true level funded budget and included nearly \$900K in cuts from a level service budget. The SC also supplied other funding level scenarios and the related impact of such levels.

Members of the AC cautioned the School Dept to be mindful that what is being presented in the press is accurate. It was noted that a recent article had some misleading/questionable information.

The SC pressed the AC for relief on the FY05 budget. The potential additional State Aid (level funded vs 10% reduction), use of Free Cash, use of the Operating Stabilization Fund and a potential override were all possible ways to help.

SC member Hoff noted the School FY05 budget is roughly 9% greater than the FY01 budget while accommodating a 5% increase in enrollment. Mr. Hoff defended the collective bargaining agreements signed by the SC last year and acknowledged that is a driving force in the need for additional School funding. AC member Peskin felt it was irresponsible for the SC to sign such collective bargaining agreements in the face of fiscal troubles over the foreseeable future.

After a short recess the AC deliberated amongst themselves over FY05 School budget request and the possibility of some type of fiscal relief. No conclusions were determined.

The AC voted to adjourn at 9:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul J. Pasterczyk
Town Accountant