

**JOINT MEETING
PROVINCETOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
PROVINCETOWN BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Meeting date: December 8, 2003
Meeting held at Judge Welsh Hearing Room, Town Hall**

School Committee Present: Terese Nelson (Chair), Peter Grosso (Vice-Chair), Molly Perdue and Debra Trovato

Members Absent: Frank Wills (Secretary); excused absence.

Others Present: Dr. Colette Traylor (Superintendent) and Sheila Colburn (Recording Secretary).

Selectmen Present: Sarah Peake, Dr. Cheryl Andrews, Mary-Jo Avellar (Chair), Michelle Couture, Richard Olsen.

Others Present: Keith Bergman (Town Manager), Michelle Jarusiewicz (Acting Assistant Town Manager) and Vernon Porter (Recording Secretary).

Selectman Chair, Mary-Jo Avellar, called the Selectmen's meeting (regularly scheduled meeting) to order at 6:05 PM. School Committee Chair, Terese Nelson, called the School Committee's meeting (not regularly scheduled meeting) to order at 6:05 PM.

Keith Bergman (Town Manager) stated that the purpose of the meeting was for the two elected policy boards to have the opportunity to discuss an overview of fiscal situation of the town. The goal of the Selectmen is to have no more than a 2.5% increase in property taxes. Level funding would still leave a deficit of \$230,000 that would need to be cut to keep to that goal. Both committees go before the same finance committee and bring their budgets onto the town hall floor for voting.

Terese Nelson (School Committee Chair) informed the Selectmen that no budget has been done at this time and that only preliminary budget meetings have been held.

Dr. Traylor (Superintendent of Schools) reminded the Selectmen that the School Committee has been very conservative with their budgets with only minimal increases as follows: 2001-2002, 2.4% increase, 2003-2003, .8% increase and 2003-2004, 1.2% increase. Staffing arrangements have been changed when dictated by enrollment and other factors and resulted in: six teaching and five paraprofessionals positions being cut. Teachers, school site councils, and principals give their input to the Superintendent, who in turn brings the budget to the Committee for review and approval.

Michelle Couture (Selectmen) had questions for the Committee on per pupil costs. She questioned school choice monies and whether the district should cap the amount of students allowed to enter; whether this would cut any costs. Dr. Traylor assured her that any school choice monies only improve the economic situation because we have enough room for these students.

Sarah Peake (Selectmen) stated that taxpayers are concerned about the rate of tax increases. It is very difficult for families to afford to live in the town. She would like a commitment from the School Committee to help to keep taxes down.

Terese Nelson let the Selectmen know that the School Committee is not their enemy. She stressed quality of education as well as social activities, such as sports, music, the Academy Program, etc., for our students. The Building Project, which is nearly complete, was a long term project which showed the town's commitment to educate the children of the district.

Dr. Cheryl Andrews (Selectmen) reiterated that the town did vote for the renovation project because the town is committed to the school. She feels that the schools need to be able to answer the questions that will be brought forth by voters.

Dr. Traylor informed the Selectmen that the needs and responsibilities of the school district vary from year to year by federal and state mandated programs. There are many more requirements with the No Child Left Behind Act. If the budget does not meet these economical needs, where does the School Committee go when extra funds are needed?

Terese Nelson gave the Selectmen an overview of what is now housed in the annex building and the Committee's plans to rent and/or lease space in the building.

Peter Grosso (School Committee Vice-Chair) informed the Selectmen that 82% of the school budget is for fixed salaries; the remaining 18% is for programs for students. He stated that the youth of the town need sports, music, and art. Members of the community have been raising money for a skate park; youths need more to do, not less.

Also discussed was the fact that the school does not come to the town voters for many projects that are funded in other ways. Motta Field, the tennis courts, and the two elementary school playgrounds were all privately funded with help from local organizations. The money earned by renting/leasing the annex would be used to reduce the debt service. The School Building Association's approved rate for the Building Project is 60%.

A Celebration of Schools is being planned for January 21, 2004.

The Joint Meeting was adjourned by both Chairs at 7:30 PM.