

SELECTMEN'S MEETING
February 22, 1997



The Board of Selectmen held a special meeting on Saturday, February 22, 1997 at 4:00 P.M. in room 126 of the Acton Town Hall. A sign was posted on the Town Hall door with instructions for public access to the meeting. Present were: Chairman Nancy Tavernier, F. Dore' Hunter, and Herman Kabakoff. Wayne Friedrichs was absent due to a vacation and Bill Mullin absent due to an extended business trip.

CITIZENS' CONCERNS

None expressed, no one from the public present.

SELECTMEN'S BUSINESS

The purpose for the special meeting was the request by the ALG members to include a joint message in the Annual Town Warrant from the 3 boards informing the citizens to specific actions recommended for FY98 spending and their impact on the future financial outlook of the Town. Supt. Isa Zimmerman had agreed to draft a letter which had been reviewed and revised by members of the Board of Selectmen, the School Committee, and the Finance Committee. The draft in front of the board was the latest version produced by Isa on Friday morning, February 21, 1997.

Nancy reported that both Don Johnson and John Murray had spoken with David Steinhilper, Chairman of the Finance Committee. David had indicated, prior to the Finance Committee meeting on 2/20, that he doubted the FinCom would be able to endorse any letter before the warrant printing because they would not be taking any votes on spending recommendations until mid-March. David confirmed on Friday that the FinCom could not endorse the letter at this time.

DORE' HUNTER moved to adopt the letter as written, NO SECOND. Discussion ensued about what changes to the letter would make it acceptable to all three Selectmen.

Herman was disturbed that the changes he had given to Don and John had not been incorporated into the latest version. Herman proposed the following revisions:

Paragraph 4, line 7: delete the words probably and only; and add a new sentence. Line 7 of Paragraph 4 would then read: "That can occur at the state level through legislative action. In addition, this structural problem can be resolved by cutting costs, therefore reducing services and programs, or by increasing allowable revenues through Proposition 2 1/2 overrides.

Herman further proposed deleting the final sentence in that paragraph.

Further discussion took place in regard to whether the message should be placed in the warrant without the endorsement of the FinCom, with only the BOS and SC signing it. Herman

stated it would be better if all 3 boards signed it since the objective was to communicate to the town. Dore' felt it was still important to place the message in the warrant even if it was just from the 2 boards and in fact if the schools could not endorse our revisions, then it would be a message only from the BOS.

DORE' HUNTER moved to adopt the letter as amended, NANCY TAVERNIER seconded, UNANIMOUS VOTE.

It was agreed that if there were further word changes from the school committee, each member should be notified and if any one member of the Board could not accept those changes the letter would not be endorsed and could then become a message only from the board. The order of the messages was discussed. Nancy indicated her preference was to have the BOS message first (with a reference to the joint letter), the Town Manager message, the Finance Committee message, the Joint Board message.

The Board discussed various miscellaneous topics related to Town Meeting. Comments were made on the order of the warrant which seemed acceptable. Comments were made on the Animal control bylaw that it seemed harmless enough not to attract a large audience.

The Board adjourned the special meeting at 4:30P.M.

Nancy Tavernier
Nancy Tavernier, Chairman & recorder

3/18/97
Date

**TOWN OF ACTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

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**NANCY E. TAVERNIER
CHAIRMAN
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MEMO

TO: Board of Selectmen, School Committees
FROM: Nancy
SUBJECT: Revised Joint Message
DATE: 2/23/97

The Board of Selectmen endorsed the Proposed Joint Message about the FY 98 Budget with the following revisions only to Paragraph 4. The approved paragraph 4 now reads:

Last year the three boards agreed to a checklist they would review each year before possibly using free cash. One checklist item indicates that the desired amount of free cash after Town Meeting would be 5% of the operating budget. To solve the FY '98 budget problem, however, the boards have agreed to retain only 2.3% (or \$1 million) in free cash this year. The meaning of this, combined with the projected financial plan, is clear. Acton's public funding structural problem has not been resolved. That can occur at the state level through legislative action. In addition, this structural problem can be resolved by cutting costs, therefore reducing services and programs, or by increasing allowable revenues through Proposition 2 1/2 overrides. In the meantime the Town of Acton is faced with the prospect of a very large operating override election request next year and perhaps for several years, thereafter, for capital expenses, as well. By then, we are unlikely to have any substantial amount of free cash to cushion the shortfall.