

## Financial Planning Advisory Committee

### Minutes of the Meeting

Monday, October 25, 2021, 7pm

Members Present: Ben Astbury; FPAC Co-Chair, Sedgwick Selectboard, Sally Mills; FPAC Co-Chair, Chair of GSA Board, Kelly Samperi, Sedgwick School Board, Matt Freedman; Brooksville School Board, James Goodman; Penobscot School Board, Jerry Markley; Chair, Penobscot School Board, Kathy MacArthur; Castine School Board, Kathleen Kazmierczak; Brooklin School Board, Stacia Nevin; Brooklin Select Board, Jim Dow, Blue Hill Select Board, Scott Miller, Blue Hill Select Board, , Ben Wooten, Blue Hill Consolidated School Board, Clifton Page, Blue Hill Budget Committee, Betsy Armstrong; Chair; Surry Selectboard, Reg Ruhlin; Union 93 Superintendent of Schools, , Jim Crawford; Chair of GSA Finance Committee, Tyler Knowles, GSA Trustee, Deb Ludlow; GSA Trustee, Seth Brown; GSA CFO, Liffey Thorpe, GSA Communications, Jeffrey Roth; Penobscot Bay Press, Jeff Millikin, Sean Dooley; member of the public

Co-Chair Ben Astbury opened the meeting at 7:00 and welcomed members of the FPAC Committee, members of the public and thanked everyone for attending.

He then invited Jim Goodman to present his budget review proposal. Members of the committee were emailed a copy of the proposal beforehand. Jim described a Budget Review Committee (BRC) that would consist of one member from each of the sending towns. The BRC would sit down with members of GSA's Finance Committee to review GSA's budget on a line-by-line basis. This would provide a window into the budget. Any comments and recommendation would become part of the public record.

Sally M., Chair of GSA's Board of Trustees thanked Jim Goodman for his proposal. Jim Crawford characterized Jim Goodman's proposal has a wonderful idea which has great potential. Trustees are pleased that FPAC members have put forth their own proposal. He expressed a hope that the GSA budget would become part of each community's school budget and could envision a process where the BRC would have an opportunity to review the budget during the summer months, prior to the board's approval of the budget in October.

Sally M, asked what happens if there is a disagreement about the budget. Jim Goodman felt that the two parties could work on a compromise. If there is an inability to come to consensus on an issue, both recommendations would be brought forth before the towns.

One member of FPAC asked if the BRC would also review the revenue side. Jim C. believes we will be able to work out the details. Learning about both the income and expense side allows for a conversation about the Academy's mission; what are we trying to accomplish with the money we spend.

Kelly S. asked if the monthly board meetings would be open to the public. Sally M. responded that GSA is committed to public meetings. The first was held very recently via Zoom and was an opportunity for the public to hear about the Academy's budget and to ask any questions.

Scott M. felt that Jim's proposal was a good one, that GSA would know ahead of the vote what the issues were, and would have time to adjust the budget if necessary. Clifton P. also liked these ideas and felt the process would build trust between the Towns and the Academy. The general feeling is that the BRC and GSA's Finance Committee will be able to work things out during the review process.

Jim D. asked what arrangements were made with Orland, which didn't approve the additional \$1,000 tuition request. Jim C. reported that bills were sent to the families of the 8 students from Orland for that amount. The Academy is looking at ways to provide financial aid to low-income families.

Jim Goodman asked if GSA would be able to access any more Cares Act funding. Jim C. responded that it's possible that the Academy may be able to qualify for another \$300,000, however, that money can only be spent on Covid related expenses.

As the meeting wound down, Sally M. asked the group to think about the future of FPAC and what our tasks would be ongoing.

The Next FPAC meeting will be held Monday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Deborah Ludlow, GSA Trustee