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Date: January 29, 2016
To: School Committee
From: Everett V. Olsen, Jr.
RE: FY2017 Budget - Recommended Reductions from 2.78% to 2.5%

At our last school committee meeting you requested, via a motion, that I provide you with recommendations for reducing our Fiscal 2017 budget request to meet the Town Manager's recommended FY2017 appropriation. The FY17 budget request I submitted to you in November represented a 2.78% increase to our FY16 general fund appropriation. Town Manger Jodi Ross has requested that our FY17 appropriation request increase not exceed 2.5% so that she may submit a balanced budget at the Annual Town Meeting on April 1, 2016. The difference between the FY17 budget that you have supported and Jodi's school system suggested FY17 appropriation increase is \$151,687.

Kathy, Kerry and I have reviewed the FY17 budget and have identified reductions that we feel will not negatively impact the programs and services offered to our students. Provided below is the rational for each reduction. I appreciate your review of these suggestions, and I hope that you will approve them.

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Reduction</u> | <u>Rationale</u> |
|--|-------------------------|--|
| Teacher Course Reimbursement | \$20,000 | We have analyzed the expenditure trend in this account over the last three years and feel that this is a reasonable reduction. It will allow us to continue to meet our contractual obligation to our teachers |
| School Transportation Fuel Adjustment | \$10,000 | School bus contract specifications are required to include the fuel price upon which a contract is to be estimated and a fuel adjustment clause. Each year we budget a relatively small amount of funds as a hedge against significantly increasing fuel costs. With the lower price of fuel this year, we do not anticipate the need for the fuel adjustment funds. |

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Reduction</u> | <u>Rationale</u> |
|--|------------------|--|
| MCAS Tutoring | \$25,000 | Over the past several years we have budgeted funds for MCAS related remedial instruction for the high school and middle school students who have not passed the MCAS exam. The data provided this year lacks specificity which would make it difficult to identify student needs and place them accordingly. Additionally, our high performance does not indicate an urgent need to run this program. |
| 504 Accommodations | \$10,000 | Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The law requires school districts with students with disabilities to be provided reasonable accommodations to allow access to educational programs and associated activities to the same extent as students without disabilities. A student may be eligible to receive Section 504 accommodations if he/she has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment substantially limits one or more major life activities. Over the past 15 years we have made a number of accommodations for our students (ramps, audio systems, etc.). We have approximately \$36,000 budgeted in this account and, based on the expenditures trend for accommodations over the last several years, we feel comfortable reducing this appropriation by \$10,000. We will still have approximately \$26,000 remaining in the budget to meet any accommodation needs. |
| Professional Development Funds | \$10,000 | Our school system receives federal Title IIA grant funds for professional development. For next year we can reallocate \$10,000 of our professional development expenditures to this federal grant. |
| Reduction in Elementary Art Staff | \$61,687 | Kerry has been meeting with our K-12 Fine & Performing Arts Coordinator Andrea Mejia to review the staffing requirements (based on enrollment) of our specialist teachers (art, music, physical education). Based on our elementary enrollment projections we will be able to make a reduction of 1.0 art teachers. |
| Task Team Substitutes | \$15,000 | We have decided to move our Curriculum Task Committees from working during the school day to after school hours. This has two benefits. First, it reduces the cost of substitutes and second, it very importantly improves the consistency of instruction. |