

At a meeting of the Town Council holden in and for the Town of Gloucester on February 18, 2016:

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: Walter M. O. Steere, III, President; George O. (Buster) Steere, Vice-President; William E. Reichert; and Steven A. Sette.

Member Absent: Edward C. Burlingame

Also present: Jean Fecteau, Town Clerk; Tim Kane, Town Solicitor; Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police; Diane Brennan, Finance Director; Ken Johnson, Building/Zoning Official; Gary Treml, Director of Public Works; and Dr. Michael Barnes, School Superintendent.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

IV. Open Forum - For Agenda Items

None.

V. Resolution

A. Request for Legislation

Re: Regional School District as a Taxing authority - Discussion and/or action

Councilor Sette read the following Resolution into the record:

**Resolution #2016-02**

**Proposing the Creation of the Foster/Glocester Regional School Tax District**

**WHEREAS:** the Foster/Glocester Regional School District was established in 1958; with the intention of providing Secondary Education to 6<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> Grade students in the Towns of Foster and Gloucester, and

**WHEREAS:** the financial support for the Regional School District was to be the responsibility of the two member towns, in a manner that was affordable to its residents; and

**WHEREAS:** In 2006, the Senate passed Senate Bill #3050 which limits the amount a Town can apply a levy of tax over its prior year assessment to no more than an increase of 4% per annum; this levy is to cover both municipal and school budget operational and capital expenses in a given fiscal year; and

**WHEREAS:** this law put an ever increasing burden on Towns to stay within their levy limit, and

**WHEREAS:** the Foster/Glocester Regional School District has decided, that although they are a pass through for funds from the two member Towns, that the needs of the Regional School District supersede the ability for the member Towns to continue to provide necessary services such as Public Safety, Public Works and General Town Administration; and

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Glocester Town Council, through its elected Representatives and Senators in the Rhode Island General Assembly, hereby request that legislation be drafted and considered by the entire body of both the House and Senate; that the Foster/Glocester Regional School District become its own taxing district, not unlike similar districts in other states across the United States, for the purpose of raising, appropriating and collecting taxes of their own for operating and capital expenses; subject to the laws of the State of Rhode Island and that the Towns of Foster and Glocester will no longer have an appropriation made through their municipal taxes for the purpose of funding the Regional School District.

**Walter M.O. Steere, III, Council President  
On Behalf of the Glocester Town Council**

**Jean M. Fecteau, CMC,  
Town Clerk**

Adopted by Glocester Town Council - February 18, 2016  
(end)

Seconded by Councilor G. Steere.

Discussion: Councilor Sette stated that this is unusual but the State has other towns with regional districts that will look at this with interest and may support it. Councilor Sette commented that we are approaching the time where the Town can no longer afford our portion of the Regional School Budget. Councilor Sette stated that it troubles him that School Committee members have said that they will find ways around the budgeting process, such as putting Capital expenses in the Operating Budget, which would build their maintenance of effort. Councilor Sette stated that if the Region was their own taxing authority, the taxpayers who cannot afford it will come to them for an explanation. Councilor Sette also pointed out that this legislation would include, as noted in resolution, that the Region as their own taxing authority would be “subject to the laws of the State of Rhode Island”. Councilor Sette stated that means that the region’s taxation would be subject to the same approx. one million dollars in elderly tax exemptions as the Town. Councilor Sette stated that we must realize that necessities are important, but luxuries are something that at some point we will have to do without. Councilor Sette stated that he believes that we have the support of our local legislators to bring this forward and when the time comes to testify, he and other Council members will do so.

Councilor Sette referred to a report which stated that the safest Rhode Island towns to live in are Glocester at #1 and Foster at #2. Councilor Sette pointed out that if these budget amounts keep getting passed down to us and the municipalities have to make cuts, it will affect the Police Department and the Public Works Department, adding that the #1 and #2 rankings will not be there anymore.

Councilor Sette stated that we are at a crossroads and it is time that everybody realizes that. Councilor Sette commented that we cannot even meet with the other Town Council, within the Regional School District, with the Regional School District because it is not allowed.

Councilor W. Steere stated that it is important to note that we are pro-education and want to make sure that we have the money to make our local schools function the way they need to.

Councilors G. Steere and Reichert expressed agreement with Councilor Sette's comments.

VOTE:           AYES:           W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert and Sette.  
                  NAYS:           0

MOTION PASSED

VI. Consent Items - Discussion and/or action

- A. Approval of Town Council Reg. meeting minutes of February 4, 2016
- B. Tax Assessor's Additions & Abatements - January, 2016
- C. Finance Director's Monthly Report - January, 2016

MOTION was made by Councilor G. Steere to TABLE the approval of the minutes of February 4, 2016 to the Council meeting of March 3, 2016; to APPROVE the Tax Assessor's January Additions to the 2015 Tax Roll in the amount of \$889.58, No Abatements for January 2016; and to ACCEPT the Finance Director's Monthly Report for January 2016; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None

VOTE:           AYES:           W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert and Sette.  
                  NAYS:           0

MOTION PASSED

VII. Unfinished Business

- A. Boards & Commissions
  - 1. Conservation Commission - Discussion and/or action
    - a. One alternate 1-year term to expire 2/2017

Councilor W. Steere stated that the Chairman of this committee asked that his recommendation for this position be considered, however, we do not have that recommendation yet.

MOTION was made by Councilor G. Steere to TABLE the appointment of One Alternate member to the Conservation Commission; seconded by Councilor Sette.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:           AYES:           W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert and Sette.  
                  NAYS:           0

MOTION PASSED

## VIII. New Business

### A. Community Resource Commission - Solar Fields proposal - Discussion and/or action

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere stated, several months back, that the Community Resource Commission had done some research regarding Town or Land Trust owned property as potential sites for solar energy projects. Councilor W. Steere stated that his presence has been requested at the Community Resource Commission meeting on Monday to relay the Council's thoughts on the subject.

Councilor Sette stated the Commission had asked the Council not to take any action on any individual solar projects that come before the town. Councilor Sette commented that he does not believe we can do that. Councilor Sette stated that at some point, the Council must make a decision whether to grant a PILOT agreement to somebody who has invested money in a project. Councilor Sette noted that there is only certain land where these projects could be located and we could make sure the areas are appropriate.

Councilor Reichert stated that many of these projects have fallen apart due to restrictions.

Councilor G. Steere stated that the Commission is looking for Council's opinion on doing a Town project. Tim Kane, Town Solicitor, stated that they are also interested in getting the Region involved in a project on their property.

Councilor W. Steere noted that the Commission has put in a lot of work into their research and needs the Council's guidance as to where to go from there. Councilor Sette pointed out that whatever decision is made it must be made at the Council level.

Councilor G. Steere stated that his brother put one in and he does not know if the Commission knows how much money it takes to have one of these projects. Councilor W. Steere spoke regarding a Revolving Fund that the State has for this type of thing. Councilor G. Steere replied that it is still a loan which has to be paid back.

### B. Regional Coalition - Funding of Transportation Categorical Aid - Discussion and/or action

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere stated that the Council has received correspondence from Michael Barnes, Superintendent, regarding meetings which have taken place with the State and the other regional districts in the State. Councilor W. Steere asked the Council members for their feedback regarding how involved we want to be. Councilor W. Steere stated that there should be discussion because we want to make sure that the State upholds their obligations that they promised the regional school districts, noting that the Region will come to the Town for more funds if these obligations are not met.

Councilor Sette stated that we received a Resolution of Support that other communities are doing and stated that we should do the same.

Walter Steere, Jr., School Committee member, stated that the coalition will meet on Feb. 29<sup>th</sup> at the State House. W. Steere, Jr. explained that the State gives the Region funds for transportation and since the town of Glocester provides transportation for the Region, the money is passed to us. W. Steere, Jr. stated that the amount was supposed to increase a little each year, but now they are level-funding it. W. Steere, Jr. stated that this is money we do not want to lose and it would be wise for us to show support.

Dr. Michael Barnes, School Superintendent, expressed agreement with School Committee member Steere, adding that any increase in that money would be directly benefitting the Town and not the Region. Dr. Barnes stated that it would be in the best interest of the Town Council to advocate for it.

MOTION was made by Councilor G. Steere to AUTHORIZE Town Council president Walter Steere to sign a Resolution in support of Funding of Transportation Categorical Aid for Regional Districts mirroring other Resolutions presented tonight; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:       AYES:       W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert and Sette.  
              NAYS:       0

MOTION PASSED

C.     Boards & Commissions

1.     Board of Canvassers

One 6 year term to expire 3/2022 - Discussion and/or action

Councilor W. Steere stated that this is for the expired term of David Calderara. David wishes to be reappointed and the Chair is in favor of the reappointment.

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to REAPPOINT David Calderara to the Board of Canvassers for a six year term to expire 3/2022; seconded by Councilor G. Steere.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:       AYES:       W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert and Sette.  
              NAYS:       0

MOTION PASSED

2.     Planning Board

Two 5 year terms to expire 3/2021 - Discussion and/or action

Councilor W. Steere stated that this is for the expired terms of David Calderara and Lynn Furney. Both David and Lynn wish to be reappointed to the Planning Board. The Chair has recommended both reappointments.

MOTION was made by Councilor G. Steere to REAPPOINT David Calderara to the Planning Board

for a 5 year term to expire 3/2021; seconded by Councilor Sette.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:           AYES:           W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert and Sette.  
                  NAYS:           0

MOTION PASSED

MOTION was made by Councilor G. Steere to REAPPOINT Lynn Furney to the Planning Board for a 5 year term to expire 3/2021; seconded by Councilor Sette.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:           AYES:           W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert and Sette.  
                  NAYS:           0

MOTION PASSED

D.     Building/Zoning Official: Proposal to Full time position - Discussion and/or action  
Discussion: Councilor W. Steere stated that Ken Johnson, Building Official, has done a lot of extra work due to increased building activity in Town. Councilor W. Steere stated that it may be time to look at increasing the hours for this position. Councilor W. Steere further stated his opinion that in the future, the Council may want to do the same with the Town Planner position.

Councilor G. Steere stated that the hours were cut during the recession, back to three days. Councilor G. Steere stated we went up to four days and, he believes, now may be the time to bring the position back to five (5) days a week. Councilor G. Steere noted that K. Johnson has been going out on weekends to do inspections. Councilor G. Steere stated there may be a lot of comp time accumulated that Ken will not be able to use. Councilor G. Steere further stated that there are many projects coming up and now is the time to make the position full-time.

Councilor Sette pointed out that with the increase in work, there has been an increase in fees collected, which would support the extra hours and make the change revenue neutral. Councilor Sette stated he would support this change.

Councilor W. Steere asked if this would start with the new fiscal year, noting that we did not budget for it. Councilor Sette asked Diane Brennan, Finance Director, to calculate the cost for one more day per week to the end of the year and if it is agreeable, the change could be effective March 1<sup>st</sup>. Councilor Sette stated that the Council meets on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and the change could be retroactive to March 1<sup>st</sup>. Councilor Sette asked the Finance Director to have that number for the next meeting.

It was stated that a motion is not necessary at time.

E.     Kent Property Oversight Committee - Update & plan going forward  
Discussion and/or action

George Charette, Chair of the Kent Property Oversight Committee, presented the Town Council with costing information for the proposed pavilion (he proposes calling Gloucester Commons). G. Charette stated that there is a list of 21 different proposed uses for the 40' by 60' pavilion, noting that numbers 15 and 16 pertain to an administrative building, which is no longer part of this package. G. Charette stated that there are two (2) separate charts showing the cost for an all-wood construction and one made of composite material. G. Charette noted the total cost of the wood construction would be \$104,165.14 and the quote from Scituate Lumber for composite is \$114,026.11, for a difference of \$9,860.37. G. Charette noted that from that figure, \$6,075.00 could be deducted because composite has a pre-baked finish color and does not need to be painted.

G. Charette stated that he has spoken with Janine Pitocco, of FM Global, who stated that they will not move forward on this project unless there is a commitment by the Town Council. G. Charette stated that with the grant in the amount of \$90,000.00, we would need approximately an additional \$28,000.00 to complete the project. G. Charette stated that we could receive donations from the general public in the form of money, labor or materials. G. Charette suggested that a brochure, with a description of what is proposed, be printed to encourage donations.

G. Charette stated that instead of white, the building could be tri-color, taking the colors of Ponaganset and the new "Welcome to Gloucester" signs.

Councilor G. Steere commended G. Charette for his work on getting the quotes for the project. Councilor W. Steere also expressed appreciation to G. Charette and the Committee, but stated that he has several questions. Councilor W. Steere stated that the Council has been hard on the Region regarding their projects which are nice to have, but are not needed. Councilor W. Steere also expressed concern about the \$25,000.00 shortfall. G. Charette replied that there has always been talk of going out and soliciting donations. Councilor W. Steere suggested asking FM Global what they can do to close up the shortfall. G. Charette again stated that unless there is a firm proposal by the Town Council, FM Global will not commit. Councilor W. Steere also stated his concerns regarding maintenance costs which will have to be figured into the Budget. G. Charette noted that if the Council goes with the composite material, maintenance will be minimal, unless the pavilion is abused by the public.

Councilor G. Steere stated that he disagrees that there is a \$25,000 shortfall, stating that any donations of money, services or materials will go towards the Town's \$10,000 in-kind services, which is a requirement of the grant. Councilor G. Steere stated that if the Council gets behind this and supports the idea that we would like the pavilion constructed, G. Charette can approach FM Global to see what they are willing to do.

Gary Treml, Director of Public Works, stated that if the \$90,000 grant is used for labor, prevailing rate will have to be paid. Councilor G. Steere asked about donated labor. G. Treml voiced his opinion that the only way to build it would be for the Town to do it, using the grant for materials.

Councilor W. Steere noted that the \$90,000.00 would have to be spent up front and then the Town would be reimbursed. Councilor G. Steere stated that he thinks we have \$50,000.00 in the matching

grant account, which could be used to kickstart the project. Councilor W. Steere stated that he is in support of the project, but does not want the taxpayers stuck with the \$25,000.

There was Council consensus to express their support and find out what FM Global can do for us.

Councilor Sette asked why this is not a Capital project, since it qualifies as a building. Councilor W. Steere replied that he does not want to spend Capital money on something that is “nice to have”, and he hopes that with FM Global’s involvement, we won’t have to worry about the \$25,000. Councilor Sette stated that he also feels that there will be numerous donations. Councilor G. Steere stated that he is confident that we can get the project done with the grant money, donations and FM Global’s good faith.

MOTION was made by Councilor G. Steere to endorse the construction of a pavilion on the Kent Property, in accordance with the plans submitted by the Kent Property Committee, at a projected cost of approximately \$114,000.00 using composite material. The source of funding shall be in the form of a \$90,000.00 D.E.M. grant with a \$10,000.00 in-kind contribution by the Town. The remainder of funds shall come from donations and contributions from third parties. Supplies shall only be ordered and construction commenced when adequate funds and contributions are secured from said third parties; seconded by Councilor Reichert.

Discussion: Councilor W. Steere stated that any discussions with FM Global regarding this project should include a Council member. Councilor G. Steere volunteered to attend any such meetings.

VOTE:           AYES:           W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert and Sette.  
                  NAYS:           0

MOTION PASSED

George Charette stated that he will call a meeting of the Kent Property Commission to let them know what took place tonight. G. Charette stated that he will then contact Janine Pitocco of FM Global.

IX. Council Correspondence/Discussion

- A. Councilor W. Steere stated that correspondence was received from the town of Charlestown concerning the Resolution of Support for Transportation Categorical Aid.
- B. Councilor W. Steere stated that the Council received the meeting notes from the Department Head meeting.
- C. Councilor W. Steere stated that correspondence was received from the Trust regarding a change to the deductible billing process.
- D. Councilor W. Steere stated that a survey was received from the US Department of Commerce concerning the 2017 Census.



- E. Councilor W. Steere spoke regarding the legislative process for the tolling proposal. Councilor W. Steere noted that two (2) of our Representatives voted against the proposal and our Senator voted in favor.

X. Department Head Report/Discussion

- A. Joseph DelPrete, Chief of Police, stated that a mock accreditation was conducted and his department did very well. Chief DelPrete noted that they have been working on this for 2 ½ years, adding that only 14 or 15 departments in the State have achieved it. Chief DelPrete stated that this will make a very good Police Department a lot better.

Chief DelPrete requested that, at the next Town Council meeting, an Executive Session be held to discuss personnel issues. Chief DelPrete stated that he would like to move forward with the hiring process in anticipation of the loss of at least one officer due to retirement and medical reasons. Chief DelPrete noted that the Police Academy will begin in July and he would like to start the process by advertising this week. There was Council consensus to authorize J. DelPrete to place the advertisement.

XI. Bds. and Commissions/Discussion

- A. Walter Steere, Jr., School Committee member, stated that he attended a meeting earlier this evening with the School Building Renovation Committee. W. Steere, Jr. stated that they are almost ready for their Stage 2 submission which is due on March 15<sup>th</sup>. W. Steere, Jr. noted that some of the prices have come down, however the Department of Education has mandated that a Commissioning Agent be hired.

W. Steere, Jr. stated that the Regional Financial Meeting is scheduled for March 15<sup>th</sup> and urged residents to attend and voice their opinions. W. Steere, Jr. commented that once that money is approved, it will be in the Town Budget and it will be too late to do anything about it.

XII. Open Forum

- A. Tom Sanzi stated that the pavilion will be a nice addition to the Town.
- B. Dr. Michael Barnes, School Superintendent, stated that he wished to share some thoughts regarding the Regional Budget. Dr. Barnes stated that the Regional budgeting practices have not changed and he disagrees with the language in the Resolution stating that they are putting the schools' needs before the Town's. Dr. Barnes gave a little history of the schools budgeting in past years. Dr. Barnes stated that the Region has a five-year Capital Plan which does not include any artificial surfaces, and they have generated a list of possible items for years 6 through 10 with future possibilities. Regarding lights at the athletic field, Dr. Barnes noted that there are only two (2) school systems in the entire State that do not have lighted fields, and Ponaganset is one of them. Dr. Barnes stated that is one of their plans.

Dr. Barnes stated that they are not building 2% into their base to get around maintenance of effort. Dr. Barnes stated that they have looked at the practices of the towns of Foster and Glocester, both of which build their budget by setting a budget and then having a 2% Capital set-aside on top of that, to preserve and enhance the Town's facilities. Dr. Barnes commented that the reason the Regional Schools got into such a poor state is that money was not being invested into the upgrade and maintenance of the facilities. Dr. Barnes stated that they are trying to correct the errors that occurred prior to their administration.

Councilor W. Steere stated that we spent 60 million dollars on those buildings and since then have put new roofs on, and now the five-year plan includes new windows. Councilor W. Steere expressed his opinion that the reason they are not putting in lights this year is that people caught wind of it. Councilor W. Steere stated the minutes from the last F/G Reg. do not appear to be at all a reflection of what happened at that meeting. Councilor W. Steere stated that we have the same arguments every year. Councilor W. Steere asked if we vote on a separate Operating Budget and Capital Budget, or is it all one. Dr. Barnes replied that it is all one Budget. Councilor W. Steere asked how we can tell what is in Capital and what is in Operating. Dr. Barnes stated that the Budget specifically spells out what is in Capital, adding that at last year's financial meeting, it was stated that the Capital project for this Fiscal Year was to replace the 20-year old tennis courts and make it a six (6) court system.

Regarding Capital, Dr. Barnes stated that they are increasing the 1% capital in the Budget by \$78,000, of which Glocester's portion is approximately \$53,000. Dr. Barnes stated that the remainder of the increase in the Budget is for salaries, programs and technology to support the educational programs for the schools. (General Operations)

Councilor W. Steere stated that the Schools want to have a 2% increase for Capital every year, which is all the more reason for the Region to be their own taxing authority because you are not a town.

Councilor G. Steere stated that when the Region paid off their Capital Lease several years ago, instead of removing that payment from the Budget, you substituted that amount for technology and called it a level-funded budget. Councilor G. Steere stated that was just your way to get around legislation and further that he stated this at the meeting and you said there with that \*\*\*-eating grin on your face that you have now and that was it, but you actually increased the budget by that amount.

Dr. Barnes responded that the building project had gone over by \$1,000,000 and the school system absorbed that cost without passing it on to the taxpayers. Councilor W. Steere asked Dr. Barnes if he was publicly acknowledging that the Building Committee spend \$1,000,000 more than they were legally able to do. Dr. Barnes

replied that it was well established that the project was going to run over by \$1,000,000 and they were going to take out a Capital Lease to pay for it.

Dr. Barnes noted that when Capital is used for enhancements such as fields or other items, barring getting grants, we bear 100% of the cost. Dr. Barnes further stated that when repairs are done to the elementary schools, there is the opportunity to apply for Housing Aid reimbursement from the State. Dr. Barnes stated that Regional School Districts receive a bonus from the State for each grade that is regionalized, so when the District moves forward on a Capital project, they have the opportunity to apply to the State, but the State has the right to deny it. Dr. Barnes stated that when a project does receive funding, the State reimburses the Regional District at 54%, with the remainder to be borne by the towns of Foster and Glocester. It was stated that there has to be money set aside in the Budget for these projects up front. Dr. Barnes explained that this Fiscal Year, because there was money allocated for Capital, when the School Building Authority funds were released by the Governor, we received authorization for \$668,000 worth of projects that the State will be reimbursing at 54%.

Dr. Barnes commented that each year, they will continue to try to provide a solid education for the students while minimizing cost to local taxpayers. Dr. Barnes stated that they are actively trying to take advantage of the rules and regulations regarding tuitioning students in, which helps to offset the cost to local taxpayers. Dr. Barnes stated that the Budget will specifically show the amount of income from out-of-district tuition for the next Fiscal year.

Dr. Barnes stated that because the amount the Region is passing on to the local voters is \$332,000.00, the Council, if they wished, could raise taxes by a half-million dollars and still remain under the 4% cap. Councilor G. Steere questioned "What if we don't want to raise taxes?". Dr. Barnes replied that he is not saying that they have to, but his point is that it has been said that if the Region's budget passes, the Council will have to lay off Town employees. Councilor W. Steere commented that there is a fundamental flaw in that argument, stating that Glocester has an all-day referendum, which he recommends that the Region should also have, Councilor W. Steere stated whatever we present to the voters they could reject the Budget, but we are still obligated to pay the Region whatever was voted at the Regional Financial Meeting. Councilor W. Steere stated we will then have to find that money and the only places left are non-school. Councilor W. Steere stated he was all for education but he can't afford "nice to haves" and a 4% increase.

Councilor Sette spoke about debt service, asking if there will be a 2% increase on that as well as the Operating Budget. Dr. Barnes replied in the negative, stating that the Debt Service is paid separately and they are looking to build the 2% only on the Operating Budget. Councilor Sette asked if the Region intends to increase their surplus this year. Dr. Barnes replied in the negative. Councilor Sette stated that the

Debt Service for the ESCO was to be paid with the energy savings from the project. Councilor Sette asked what are the energy savings and where are they in the Budget. Dr. Barnes pointed out that this was during the previous administration, and stated that it is net neutral until the ESCO is paid off, which is in six (6) or seven (7) years.

Councilor Sette stated that he has additional questions which he plans to ask at the Budget meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Dr. Barnes stated that he wished to emphasize that he is not advocating raising taxes, noting that for five (5) years they have brought zero or less than zero. Dr. Barnes stated that when they looked at their projected overall expenses and it was over 4%, they made cuts and brought it to under 3%. Dr. Barnes pointed out that there are multiple sources for funds, such as FM Global payments and Fund Balance.

Councilor Sette stated that the Government Financial Officer's Association just published a statement which he passed on to Cindy Joyce, School Committee member. Councilor Sette stated that Gloucester's surplus is appropriate according to the GFOA's guidelines for municipalities. Councilor Sette further stated that we have \$1,000,000.00 in tax exemptions for those over 65 of age and veterans, but that money must be made up somewhere.

Councilor W. Steere stated that these conversations should take place with the Town of Foster and the Regional District to avoid any misunderstandings. Councilor W. Steere reiterated that he is not against education and he believes what the School Committee has done overall in the last five (5) years is good, however he feels that there is a lack of trust in certain things. Councilor W. Steere stated that he appreciates Dr. Barnes taking the time to address the Council tonight.

Councilor G. Steere stated that Dr. Barnes had urged everyone to attend the regional meeting at the State, and asked Dr. Barnes what he is afraid of regarding having a meeting with Foster and Gloucester in the same room. Dr. Barnes stated that he disagrees with Councilor G. Steere's characterization. Councilor W. Steere stated that if he is still on the Council next year, he would like to have meetings with all three (3) groups in attendance. Councilor Sette noted that in other regional districts, the Town Councils and School Committees meet to discuss budget matters, and he feels it is time that we do the same.

- C. Walter Steere, Jr., School Committee member, stated that of all the superintendents in the State, Dr. Barnes is one of the best. W. Steere, Jr. commented that he does not always agree with Dr. Barnes, but feels that he does a great job. W. Steere, Jr. noted that the School Committee has voted to have an 8% surplus, however they are not yet at that figure. W. Steere, Jr. further stated that it is not the School Committee's policy to have a 2% set-aside for Capital projects. Regarding a joint meeting with the Foster Town Council, W. Steere, Jr. stated that he was not asked if he wished to

have the joint meeting.

- D. George Charette recommended that the paperwork that is handed out at the Regional Financial Meeting be made easier for the taxpayers to read and follow.
- E. Jim Houghton, of Jackson Schoolhouse Road, stated that he has lived here less than a year but objects to frivolous spending by the School Department. Councilor W. Steere noted that there are two (2) opportunities to voice an opinion on the School Budget; the Public Hearing on March 1<sup>st</sup> and the Regional Financial Meeting on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

J. Houghton asked what the pavilion in Town will be used for. Councilor W. Steere noted that there is a list of possible uses. J. Houghton volunteered to help build the pavilion.

- F. W. Steere, Jr. stated that he read in the paper that the Town is due for its 3-year revaluation and expressed hope that a different firm will be hired. W. Steere, Jr. stated that the company that did the last revaluation did a lousy job. W. Steere, Jr. stated that a Public Hearing should be held before the Town hires a firm.

XIII. Motion was made by Councilor Sette to Convene to Executive Session Pursuant to R.I.G.L. 42-46-5(a)(5) Land Acquisition; seconded by Councilor G. Steere.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:       AYES:       W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert and Sette.  
              NAYS:        0

MOTION PASSED

XIV. Reconvene Open Session

Disclose votes taken in Executive Session

MOTION was made by Councilor Sette to SEAL the minutes of Closed Executive Session and to disclose that one (1) vote was taken; seconded by Councilor G. Steere.

Discussion: None.

VOTE:       AYES:       W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert and Sette.  
              NAYS:        0

MOTION PASSED

XV. Adjourn

MOTION was made by Councilor Reichert to ADJOURN at 9:53 p.m.; seconded by Councilor G. Steere.

VOTE:           AYES:           W. Steere, G. Steere, Reichert and Sette.  
                  NAYS:           0  
MOTION PASSED