

## **Notes from Tri-Board Committee on Finance Consolidation**

**March 9, 2016**

Present: Lynne Ide, John French and Kevin Donohue (committee members) –  
Jeff Smith, Karen Williams (+ two finance department staff) and Neida Rosado

Jeff Smith, former finance director in Mansfield, explained the multi-year process that Mansfield went through to consolidate. It was a long, hard process, but in the end it makes a lot of sense. He likened it to a merger and acquisition in private industry. Ideally, the unified department is organized according to functions (accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, budget, financial reporting, etc.). The staff work for both the Town and Board of Ed with a few people trained to perform each function in order to have the appropriate checks and balances. Ultimately, resources are reorganized to put more resources into front line functions, rather than the back office operations. He ran through state statutes that apply to the relationship between the Town and Board of Ed. He explained that Mansfield created an IT Dept. to service both the Town and Board of Ed. He believes that ideally, the Superintendent should not have to be in the business of running a finance dept.

He pointed out that Windham is already ahead of the game, in that we have adopted MUNIS and re-done our chart of accounts. MOU's are a key to guide the implementation of consolidation. He can share Mansfield's Cooperation Agreement with us.

Kevin Donohue pointed out that have partial completion of 4 phases of consolidation: organizational alignment, staff reorganization and unification, cross-training and functional consolidation.

It was agreed that a key to our continued progress must be regular, cooperative meetings between the Town Manager, the Superintendent and Finance Director. The committee decided to invite Jeff Ziplow from Blum Shapiro to its next meeting.