

School Committee Statement on Budget Reduction and Bus Parking

We have received some concerns about temporary parking of the school buses at the old DPW site between March and June of 2019. We would like to clarify how this matter arose and what steps the School Committee has and has not taken. **The School Committee voted last night not to park school buses at 195 Main Street (the Old DPW site) at any time.**

On January 11, 2018, the Finance Committee issued a memorandum to the Town Administrator and the Superintendent of Schools identifying approximately \$900,000 by which it considered the FY19 operating budget to be over its guideline of 3.5% increase over the FY18 appropriation. ([see attached](#)) The Town Administrator and the Superintendent of Schools were asked to review their budgets and collaborate on reductions that would achieve a better balance for the budget.

In connection with that effort, the Town Administrator suggested that as the Rivers Edge project will likely not get underway until after January or February 2019, the school buses could be parked where they are today until that time. Accordingly, the rental expense for bus parking for FY19 of \$140,000 could be cut from the FY19 budget. \$50,000 would remain in the FY19 budget to cover any short term rental expense possibly needed for the months of March through June 2019.

The Town and Schools decided that it would be advisable to also inquire whether the busses could be parked somewhere on Town land from March to June 2019 in the event a temporary rental arrangement could not be reached, or would be too costly. The School Department inquired of the current and potential future holders of 195 Main Street whether the buses could be parked on that site for four or fewer months in Spring of 2019 if there was nowhere else to put them at the time. This was considered a responsible step to take before cancelling the plans for the full year lease for FY19 and cutting the funding for that lease from the budget.

At its meeting on January 29, 2018, the School Committee voted not to park buses at 195 Main Street at any time. The Committee is currently negotiating to begin an off site rental contract for school bus parking in March 2019 instead of July 2018. The Town Administrator and the Superintendent of Schools will likely propose FY19 budget reductions to the Finance Committee that include the \$140,000 for the bus parking lease for FY19, leaving the \$50,000 in the budget to cover bus parking rental from March through June of 2019. However, it is not clear at this time whether that reduction will be made, when the buses must leave the River's Edge site, or whether a rental arrangement will be needed in FY19.