

**ARTICLE 37**

Submitted by Lee Selwyn

To see if the Town will adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, M.G.L. c. 71, Section 34 states, in part, that: “Every city and town shall annually provide an amount of money sufficient for the support of the public schools as required by this chapter, *provided however, that no city or town shall be required to provide more money for the support of the public schools than is appropriated by vote of the legislative body of the city or town.* In acting on appropriations for educational costs, *the city or town appropriating body shall vote on the total amount of the appropriations requested and shall not allocate appropriations among accounts or place any restriction on such appropriations. ... The vote of the legislative body of a city or town shall establish the total appropriation for the support of the public schools, but may not limit the authority of the school committee to determine expenditures within the total appropriation.* (emphasis supplied); and

WHEREAS, the Town Administrator Act, Chapter 270, Acts of 1985 Section 2(f) (as amended), states that the Town Administrator is responsible for the "formulation of the annual financial plan, including detailed projections of all revenues and expenditures;" and

WHEREAS, Article 2.2, Section 2.2.5 of the Town’s General Bylaws states that “The Advisory Committee shall submit a budget at the annual town meeting. It may examine the books and records of any board, committee or officer of the town so far as permitted by law;” and

WHEREAS, the annual operating budget of the Brookline School Department has since FY15 been increasing at an annual rate that is nearly double that of all other Town departments combined; and

WHEREAS, Town Meeting has a responsibility to assure that this pattern of School Department budget growth is justified and, even more important, that the forced limitations and reductions in other departmental budgets do not unduly impair their ability to meet their service obligations to the Town; and

WHEREAS, It is critical that decisions as to the prioritization of Town resources across all Town Departments and functions be subject to review and approval by Town Meeting, and not be effectively preempted by the largely unchecked budget demands put forth by the School Department.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

That Town Meeting requests the Advisory Committee, acting in its capacity as the Town’s Finance Committee, to develop a detailed scope of a Budget Review of the School Department to be undertaken by an outside consultant subject to oversight by the Advisory Committee, and that in doing so, the Advisory Committee shall:

- (1) develop a scope of work for the consultant;
- (2) prepare and submit to Town Meeting a proposed budget for the School Department Budget Review that will be presented to and considered by Town Meeting in May 2023 for inclusion in the FY24 budget;
- (3) prepare an RFP for the School Department Budget Review;
- (4) based upon responses to the RFP, select a consultant for this assignment; and
- (5) oversee the Budget Review with the objective of applying the consultant's recommendations in time for the development of the FY25 School Department budget.

Or act on anything relative thereto.