

**Town Council Minutes
Town Council/Budget/Management Committee
Council Chambers Town Hall
June 6, 2012 - Wednesday**

Present: Kenneth DiFazio, Chairman
Patrick O'Connor, Vice Chairman
Arthur Mathews, Councilor
Michael Molisse, Councilor
Michael Smart, Councilor

Also Present: Jane Hackett, Councilor
Richard Swanson, Town Auditor
William McKinney, Chief Financial Officer
Mayor Sue Kay
Dr. Edward Malvey, Acting School Superintendent
Lisa Belmarsh, Budget Sub-Committee Chair
Tracey Nardone-School Committee
Matt Ferron, Assistant Superintendent

Recording Secretary: Ann Flynn Dickinson

Chairman DiFazio called the Budget/Management Committee Meeting to order at 6:45 pm.

12-042Z - Schools

Chairman DiFazio announced that the School Committee will make a presentation. There will be questions and answers upon completion of the presentation.

Interim Superintendent Dr. Malvey, was invited to the table. He announced that Assistant Superintendent Matt Ferron would handle the presentation.

Dr. Malvey came up to speed very quickly on the budget and has participated at the meetings. Lisa Belmarsh is a task master and constantly follows up. He defers to Ms. Belmarsh and Mr. Ferron for the presentation. Tracey Nardone was invited to participate.

Assistant Superintendent Matt Ferron commented that they are still awaiting the details of Chapter 70's reimbursements such as Circuit Breaker and others, the Commonwealth may provide. Auditor Swanson made it clear that everyone was going to look at why the school budget is increasing. Any federal grant money that is no longer available, and is being used for staff-those people are now put into the general budget in order to get the town back to where it needs to be. The town received over \$500,000 to fund special

education and technology for our neediest students. There are numerous younger individuals with needs such as maternity and family medical leave which made the numbers much higher than remembered. It is very appreciated that the Mayor put forth this budget for FY13, as is the support from the Council.

Assistant Superintendent Ferron referred to page three which is the Budget Evolution Document. They started with a base line in February for the budget by determining their needs compared to what is being done at present. Following the public hearing, quite a bit of feedback was received. Energy costs are expected to increase by a certain percentage. Getting to level service \$57,199,132 was established as a baseline. It did not take long before parents, students stated that these are not things they need. They vocalized that the budget should include the figures to meet the net school spending target. The committee conferred with the leadership team and key school staff and identified \$2.3 million in recovery items after many years of cuts. On March 14th the School Committee identified their six top priorities. The budget went from \$2.3 million to \$1.78 million-- the budget the School Committee voted and presented tonight is \$58,860,632 which will be referred to as \$58.8 through the rest of the evening.

Ms. Belmarsh added that the middle school is the reason this doesn't need to be prioritized. The committee investigated the reasoning behind these priorities-per pupil cost and athletics. Staffing support for the middle schools is the committee's number one priority

Data performance for Math and English was analyzed and it was determined that it is not where they need to be. They took a look at qualitative things, such as the quality of the building and what parents and citizens are expressing.

Comprehensive reading and Math K-6 are needs which were identified and need improvement-- as the state switches the curriculum for the lower grades. Music education in the middle schools, athletics, music and arts are all important.

Athletics at the high school has been on the backs of the parents and it needs to be supported. A business teacher is needed at the high school to make sure students are adequately prepared for college or the workforce.

Weymouth High School is now nine years old and the computers need to be replaced. A few of these items are being directly funded through the Special Articles at the Mayor's office.

The Mayor submitted an operating budget of \$57 million, in addition to \$1.3 million in additional articles. Benefits from Johnson School all the way to 6th grade to provide consistent training and contemporary reading and math curriculum and technology. Mr. Hawthorne has identified lab replacements, software license and needed internet connections.

It was stated that in terms of special education tuition, even after the \$58.14 million, their request for \$58,860-- there is still a differential of \$719,000 which gets the schools into the reconciliation process and how these priorities are funded.

The variables that go into the budget planning process are challenging considering all of the funding that can impact their actions. The process was that the committee stated their priorities and required funding, the entire budget was then scrutinized and calculated risks were taken. We said these top priorities need your attention and need to get funded. The committee has taken some calculated risks or educated approaches towards funding choices and there is no guarantee on sustainability. The biggest outstanding issue is the CBA open contracts with teachers and a few other unions.

Councilor Smart asked why on the priority list, there are two that dropped off. He was sure the original list was 23 items, which included the gifted talent and advanced placement as priorities.

Assistant Superintendent Ferron said it was something they would love to do but it did not make it to the top six. There are additional AP offerings within a 50 mile radius. He will provide a list of all AP offerings.

Councilor Smart, believes that AP courses are outstanding to be able to test out early, graduate early and go on to college is tremendous. He asked if virtual high school is a possibility. There are no teachers necessary as it is done entirely done on- line.

Acting Superintendent Ferron said that Mrs. Stevenson is present and she will elaborate.

Ms. Belmarsh continued that there is a long list and stated that they attempted to focus on those items with the highest impact.

Councilor Hackett wanted to clarify the appropriation for special education out- of - district tuition.

Assistant Superintendent Ferron said that was strategic reduction-the money was applied towards special education and the funding will be increased, the amount to be determined. The \$350k for special education is money they were not expecting and they will use utilize it for special education, which frees up money for other items.

Councilor Hackett commented that it would be one of the only areas that we would be funding recurring costs through free cash appropriation.

Assistant Superintendent Ferron questions keep coming up in relation to supplementing some of the revolving accounts. The schools will be \$1.3 million less through the federal jobs grant(\$2.9 or \$3 million). One of the grants, used on a regular basis, has been level funded and pays for school nurses, and the salary for the Director of Health. Another of the federal grants allows the schools to purchase certain items for training, and workshops. The funding is used to support tuition reimbursement for teachers in order that they stay current working towards masters and advanced degrees. Every year

(until this year) grant money was utilized to fund graduate level tuition reimbursement for teachers at \$200,000--this year there is not enough money to fund.

Chairman DiFazio questioned how many individuals salaries are dependent on the federal or state grant money?

Ms. Belmarsh replied that approximately 208 positions are from grants and revolving accounts.

Mr. Ferron noted that Weycare is a self-sufficient program. Kindergarten enrollment was higher than expected with \$35,000 on full day kindergarten-it was also confirmed that the pay rider program fees will remain the same.

Chairman DiFazio asked how many individual salaries use revolving accounts?

Assistant Superintendent Ferron stated that out of the 208 there are 130/140.

Assistant Superintendent Ferron spoke about net school spending --\$67.3 million is the requirement-the contribution is \$40.3 million for Chapter 70, presently projected at \$23 million. For fiscal year 2013 the total looks to be \$67 million (\$53m for schools and \$14m for the town)—collectively exceeding by approximately \$16,000. There continues to be a deficit, it does not approach the 5% threshold to receive penalties. Weymouth cannot change that based on the opinion of the department of education. At the time Weymouth did not include retiring in the net school spending formula. There are about 100 communities that are allowed to account against their net school spending and Weymouth is not one of them.

Vice Chairman O'Connor said this process has been enlightening. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education should go back and have to recalculate in order to add that deficit in.

Chairman DiFazio asked what the number was that we would have been able to utilize for retirees.

CFO McKinney responded \$3.5 million.

Mayor Kay commented that this section in the budget will only allow for a certain number of communities. Interesting to note that quite a few of the 100 communities would not be making their net school spending.

Councilor Hackett asked about the \$158,000 in any other non-employee insurance costs in net school spending? What makes up that figure?

CFO McKinney responded that insurance for some of the buildings.

Vice Chairman O'Connor inquired about the per pupil expenditure and if the town is close or above those communities.

Assistant Superintendent Ferron responded over the last five years these other communities are increasing their net school spending. We are in better shape than some of our surrounding communities and he is optimistic that next year the schools will fair well.

Ms. Belmarsh feels the average doesn't matter it is really the percentage. Weymouth is no where near that if you look at a community that is consistently putting money towards its schools. When looking at the numbers Weymouth falls behind percentage wise.

Councilor Matthews asked if the retired teachers health insurance costs are included?

CFO McKinney responded that they are included.

Chairman DiFazio asked about if they are contemplating raiser user fees to support the athletic funding.

Assistant Superintendent Ferron responded at this point there is no plan to raise fees and are evaluating through the AD's office—they are looking at things such as a family cap to look at relief for certain people. The \$300,000 that would pay for the Coachs and Transportation we are going to continue supplemental funding to maintain the current configurations.

Chairman DiFazio asked if this is that how you will meet the other \$100,000.

Assistant Superintendent Ferron responded yes, we believe the community strongly agrees and supports athletics and they will continue fund raisers, and boosters.

Councilor Smart asked who has cell phones.

Assistant Superintendent Ferron replied that Principals, Dept Heads, Spec Ed, Maintenance Director, in total about 40 people.

Auditor Swanson questioned if there is a fiscal 2013 compensation increase in the CBA and will allow new funding required to cover the impacts?

Ms. Belmarsh responded there is not money on hold for negotiations at this time.

Councilor Mathews asked if she would please give Mr. Swanson a breakdown of 1% increase.

Chairman DiFazio said it is not uncommon practice to not budget for pay increases. Somehow we have to come up with a number.

Ms. Belmarsh believes it has to be an ongoing discussion. She noted that Ms. Livingstone was very adamant about that.

Mr. Guilfoyle responded by saying just to make it clean, if they set aside monies for CBA's—it would expose what the negotiations entail, and legal ramifications could result.

Chairman DiFazio turned it over to Auditor Swanson for Questions and Answers.

Auditor Swanson stated that the schools have not had a Business Manager-- what was the determining factor for hiring one now.

Sean Guilfoyle replied that Ms. Livingstone assumed the role of Business Manager and continued to do it while Superintendent because it was easy for her to do that. After her loss we realized there is a need as she worked 80-85 hours a week.

Auditor Swanson asked what the Supervisory Information Manager position does.

Assistant Superintendent Ferron responded the Supervisor of Information management position handles all the data requirements for the student information management-- state reports, SIMS reports --anything to do with the Commonwealth.

Auditor Swanson asked about the Johnson School payroll increase-- when the headcount decreases?

Assistant Superintendent Ferron replied that some of that is related to step increases and contractual obligations. We have a current teacher that is going to be rolled into the operating budget.

Auditor Swanson asked why the Pingree School has salary increases but the head count decreases?

Assistant Superintendent Ferron responded without looking at every staff member, it probably is based on the step increases. The 17% increase is attributed to steps and longevity.

Councilor Hackett asked what was the parity between class sizes in primary schools?

Assistant Superintendent Ferron replied it is pretty equal between 20 –25 students and confirmed that they look at all of the primary schools- evaluate where class size might be an issue. Teachers will be shifted around if need be, with a goal of 25 pupils per class, with the younger grades on the 20 pupil end.

Councilor Mathews asked if Mr. Slattery could explain \$25,000 skilled labor, maintenance seasonal.

Mr. Slattery responded that it is for mowing lawns, weed whacking, summer time polishing floors and moving furniture.

Chairman DiFazio thanked Lisa Belmarsh, Matt Ferron and said that they have worked very well together with the Council. The Chairman invited them to stay for the three measures.

12 046 Free Cash-Reading and Math Curriculum

A motion was made by Councilor O'Connor for favorable action to the Town Council for \$850,000 from free cash to purchase Comprehending Reading and Math materials, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

12 047 Free Cash-Information Technology for Schools

A motion was made by Councilor O'Connor for favorable action to the Town Council for \$150,000 from free cash for the funding of information technology, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

Assistant Superintendent Ferron said they will replace many of their computer labs for the high school and middle schools, in addition to infrastructure for internet. They have a very detailed plan that we would be happy to provide to the council.

Chairman DiFazio request he please provide the plan.

12 048 Free Cash SPED Out of District Tuition

A motion was made by Councilor O'Connor for favorable action to the Town Council for \$350,000 from free cash to fund out of district tuition for special education, motion seconded by Councilor Mathews and voted unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:15 there being no further business, Vice Chairman O'Connor made a MOTION to ADJOURN the meeting and was seconded by Councilor Mathews. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted by Ann Flynn Dickinson as Recording Secretary

Approved by Kenneth DiFazio, Chairman of Budget/Management