

***Town Council Education Committee
March 19, 2012 @ 6:00 PM
Town Council Chambers***

Present: Chairman Thomas J. Lacey
Councilor Jane Hackett
Councilor Ed Harrington
Councilor Michael Molisse

Not Present: Councilor Victor Pap III

Also Present: Councilor Patrick O'Connor
Council President Arthur Mathews
William McKinney, Chief Financial Officer
James Clarke, Director of Planning and Community Development
Sean Guilfoyle, Chair School Committee
Lisa Belmarsh, School Committee
Gail Sheehan, School Committee
Tracey Nardone, School Committee
Steve Ford, School Committee
Gary Pelletier, Interim Assistant Superintendent
Kevin Mackin, Athletic Director

Recording Secretary: Diane T. Hachey

Chairman Lacey called the Education Committee Meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

2013 School Budget.

Sean Guilfoyle and Lisa Belmarsh approached the committee to discuss the 2013 School Budget. They distributed an amended spreadsheet of the budget inclusive of the school committees' recommendations and noted that revisions were resultant from the committee's March 14th meeting, at which time all revisions were prioritized.

Currently the net school spending requirement is \$67,376,256, of which the schools are spending \$53,703,767 towards that figure, and the town is expending \$13,417,427 towards that figure.

The net school spending deficit (carried over from last year) is \$1,971,506, and the deficiency in total is \$2,367,348 or 3.51%.

Ms. Belmarsh walked the committee through the highlighted items on the spreadsheet, which are comprised of the revised and prioritized issues made by the school committee.

The detail of the amendments were noted as follows:

Support for middle school reconfigurations (\$440,000)

- class sizes would be reduced by 2-3 students, by adding 2 teams (split between 7th and 8th grade)
- 4 (four) teachers are proposed to be added- 2 (two) in total who are considered core teachers (1(one) health and 1 (one) gym teacher).

Comprehensive kindergarten through 6th grade reading and math curriculum materials(\$850,000)

- school materials haven't been replaced in 4 years
- books and professional development materials will last for 10 years
- funding the aforementioned will met common core standards

Chorus/band stipends for after school programs (\$15,000)

- will aid in low enrollment in band programs

Athletics (\$400,000)

- group advocating this would cover expenses

Business teacher at Weymouth High School (\$50,000)

- this need was identified by Matt Ferron as business classes are full to capacity and this opens electives and allows flexibility for students.

IT sustainable replacement costs (\$25,000)

- Dave Cawthorne indicates need for sustaining plus adding computers to the middle high school and administration
- Mayor Kay said Comcast may cover a portion of the costs-- needs at least \$185,000 for level service as the grant was lost and we need to supplement.

Ms. Belmarsh stated that the Mayor is aware of these school budget revisions and has been participating in discussions, but conveyed to the school committee that it will be difficult to arrive at the \$57 million.

Sean Guilfoyle extended his appreciation to the Town Council for charter amendments which allowed for the budget to be crafted more effectively. He spoke of sustainability; items funded in the past then pulled.

Councilor Hackett thanked Ms. Belmarsh and Mr. Guilfoyle and noted that both the budget and most importantly, the budget process were wonderful. She was concerned when the budget first came out so early, but noted that the school committee listened intently. She cautioned that it may be a difficult process going forward.

Chairman Lacey noted the importance of activism from the constituent base, which raised important issues and aided in the overall budget process.

Councilor Harrington voiced his support of this budget, with revisions, but is concerned with sustainability issues. He notes the school system's exceptional MCAS scores (top ½ or 1/3 in all categories) yet noted that Weymouth is one of the lowest in the area for net school spending. He stressed the impact of property values based on the schools. He would be in favor of a proposition 2 ½ override if needed to support this effort.

Councilor O'Connor extended his appreciation to the members who appeared this evening and noted his support of the budget; sustainability is at the forefront of his mind as collective bargaining is currently underway. He supports the school budget but doesn't necessarily agree with a proposition 2 ½ override due to the state of the economy-- he favors cost savings studies for the schools.

Councilor Molisse and Council President Mathews stated their support of the school's budget.

Chairman Lacey noted his disappointment that we are at the bottom tier of net school spending and regrets not coming out more aggressively in the past; but advocates forging forward and not looking back.

Update on Superintendent Search

Chairman Lacey noted that he reported out on this issue at a previous Town Council meeting, but there have been updates since that time.

Mr. Guilfoyle noted that an 11 (eleven) member 'search committee' has been formed with 35-36 applicants. By the first week of April 3-5 names will be submitted to the School Committee (if the candidates meet said qualifications). The School Committee will interview, in conjunction with Human Resources, conduct site visits and perform the necessary reference checks.

He noted a 90-120 day "escape clause" which is included in most superintendent contracts, which necessitates that they give this much notice. The committee's goal is to have an individual in place prior to September 1, hopefully as early as August-in preparation of the start of a new school year.

Councilor Molisse asked how the committee was named. Mr. Guilfoyle responded that it was originally comprised of 9 people but they didn't feel that number represented a sufficient array of members. therefore it was discussed that the committee be comprised of 13 members. Finally, an 11 member committee was agreed upon-- comprised of representation from teachers, administrators, Town Wide parent Council, special education and constituents.

Update on Interim Superintendent

Mr. Guilfoyle updated that the school committee unanimously agreed to extend an offer to to an interim superintendent. Negotiations are currently underway and are being done in executive session. The candidates name is Ed Malvey. Matt Ferron has been handling personnel, operations and administrative issues-- working in excess of 60 hours per week. Mr. Ferron will resume his responsibilities as assistant superintendent, once the interim is officially seated.

Chairman Lacey noted that previously he reported out differently than was actually true, his colleagues called him out at the prior Town Council Meeting, and there was some anxiety from constituents as well.

Ms. Belmarsh noted a few up and coming important dates:

March 20-full school committee meeting commencing at 6:00 PM

March 22-the actual budget number will be voted

With no further business to attend to, Councilor Hackett motioned to adjourn at 7:05 PM- motion seconded by Councilor Molisse and voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by

Diane Hachey
Recording Secretary

Approved by

Chairman Thomas J. Lacey