

TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Zoom #869 1641 7957
March 1, 2021, Monday

Present: Michael Molisse, Chairman
Jane Hackett, Vice Chairman
Pascale Burga, Councilor
Christopher Heffernan, Councilor
Maureen Kiely, Councilor

Also Present: Ted Langill, Chief of Staff
Richard Swanson, Town Auditor
Joseph Callanan, Town Solicitor
Brian Smith, Asst. Supt. WPS
Keith Stark, Chief, WFD

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair Molisse called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM.

21 008-Request to Enter into 5-Year School Bus Transportation Contract

This measure was referred to the Budget/Management Committee on February 16, 2021. Brian Smith, the Assistant Superintendent of Weymouth Public Schools was invited to present the request; that the Town Council authorize the town to enter into a contract for school bus transportation for a term of 5 years, beginning with the school year commencing in September 2021, and pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30B, Section 12. The department's current contract with First Student, which is the big yellow bus transportation, expires on June 30, 2021. In an effort to increase competition and possibly potentially lowering the contract amount, the town will again use a 5-year approach to a contract.

During this discussion, Councilor Burga arrived at 6:48 PM.

Auditor Swanson requested further explanation from Asst. Superintendent Smith ahead of the meeting, and the Q&A follows:

Please elaborate for the B/M Committee and me as to "How does a Five-Year Contract encourage competition for School Busses"? "

- *The consolidation of the student transportation services has left very few providers for regular day transportation, therefore reducing competition. This consolidation is what resulted in the decisions to enter into a 5-year contract back in 2016. This contract expires June 30, 2021.*

Does the School Board expect to receive more bids/quotes at better prices than a three-year contract would?

- *Yes, a five-year contract makes the revenue stream over time for a company more predictable. A five-year contract may make an Invitation for bid attractive to more potential bidders. I've spoken to a number of districts that agree that transportation has become 'regionalized' and vendors are reluctant to encroach on another vendor's territory. A five-year contract may increase competition, possibly bringing new competitors to the market and increasing the number of bidders, and therefore result in a lower annual cost versus a three-year contract.*

The measure states that “Potential contractors will benefit by amortizing their costs over 5 years and reduce their costs”. Thus, this measure is for the benefit of Contractors! What benefits will the School Administration receive? How about lower costs to Schools for this contract if we give them five years.

- The benefit of a longer contract is mutual. I'm not interested in the benefit to the vendor. I am interested in the benefit to the Town of Weymouth. If a vendor is able to amortize their costs for the fleet over a longer period, the annual price per bus would decrease for the district.*

Chair Molisse asked if the amount is a large increase from the last contract. Auditor Smith responded that the 3-5% could potentially bring it to \$2.3 million.

Vice Chair Hackett pointed out that a 5-year contract is an industry standard. The chair added that he likes that First Student employs many Weymouth residents; the residents they serve.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 21 008 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Heffernan.

A roll call vote was taken:

Councilor Burga-Yes, Councilor Heffernan-Yes, Councilor Kiely-Yes, Vice Chair Hackett- Yes, Chair Molisse- Yes.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

21 009-Reserve Fund Transfer-Weymouth Fire Fighters Collective Bargaining Agreement

This measure was referred to the Budget/Management Committee on February 16, 2021. Chief of Staff Langill was invited to present the request; that the Town of Weymouth transfer the following amounts from the Fiscal Year 2021 Reserve Fund for the purpose of funding costs associated with the FY20-FY22 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the Town of Weymouth and the Weymouth Fire Fighters, Local 1616 of the International Association of Fire Fighters:

\$161,191.52	FY20 Fire Department Salaries
\$10,396.53	FY20 Fire Department Overtime
\$104,569.72	FY21 Fire Department Salaries

The remaining CBA salary and overtime expenses for FY21 will be covered by anticipated year-end balances in salary and overtime line items.

They were halfway through the terms of this contract (due to COVID) and had to put negotiations on hold. He appreciated the level of patience the union showed. Recently they came to an agreement that includes a 2% base salary increase in each of 3 years,, beginning with FY20. A 1.5 longevity step was added at 20 years. Sick leave utilization incentive was increased and the sick leave buyback cap increased from prior 25%-\$4000 to 40% - \$6000 and elimination of the salary augmentation plan, which is a cash-out if certain requirements are met, as of July 1st of this year, other than grandfathered members. A copy of the agreement was provided to the committee. Mr. Langill provided the breakdown with amended FY20 salary numbers. He’s reduced the request to \$148,061 for FY20 after reviewing the numbers. The request for fiscal FY21 is only 65% because year-to-date projecting with overtime savings and retirements, will leave enough to cover the balance within this year’s budget. FY20 is to be paid retroactively. Mr. Swanson pointed out that the measure does not have a total and is changed now as amended. The calculation was calculated to \$263,027.25, as amended. The auditor noted he checked MUNIS and confirmed the balance available.

Vice Chair Hackett asked if this reserve fund is the larger one set up this year. Mr. Langill responded that only this reserve fund exists this year.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to forward measure 21 009 to the full Town Council with a recommendation for favorable action and was seconded by Councilor Burga.

A roll call vote was taken:

Councilor Burga-Yes, Councilor Heffernan-Yes, Councilor Kiely-Yes, Vice Chair Hackett- Yes, Chair Molisse- Yes.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:00 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Vice Chair Hackett to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Burga.

A roll call vote was taken:

Councilor Burga-Yes, Councilor Heffernan-Yes, Councilor Kiely-Yes, Vice Chair Hackett- Yes, Chair Molisse- Yes.

UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Michael Molisse as Budget/Management Committee Chairman
Voted unanimously on 5 April 2021