

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
Town Hall Council Chambers
May 18, 2022, Monday**

Present: Michael Molisse, Chairman
Christopher Heffernan, Vice Chairman
Pascale Burga, Councilor
Maureen Kiely, Councilor
Greg Shanahan, Councilor

Also Present: Richard McLeod, Town Solicitor
Robert Wargo, Superintendent of Schools
Brian Smith, Asst. Supt., Finance

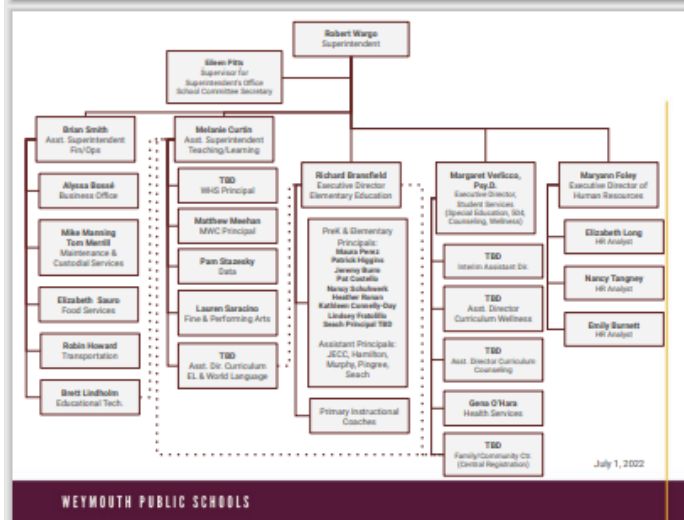
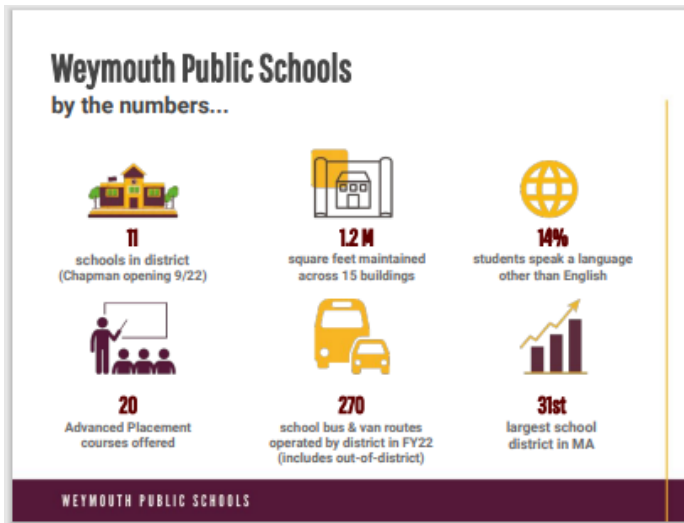
Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chair Molisse called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

22 066 Z-Schools

This measure was referred to the Budget/Management Committee on April 19. Supt. Wargo and Asst. Supt. Smith presented the proposed School Department budget in a series of PowerPoint slides:






Supt. Wargo reported that he started in WPS on July 1st and the budget was considered from a zero-based approach, as a way to examine and justify every penny spent, as responsible stewards focused on meeting the needs of the students. As they heard in the Mayor’s budget presentation, the School Department takes up a large part of the town’s budget. He thanked Asst. Supt. Smith for his work; his experience in the public and private sector was a big factor.

Asst. Supt. Smith went through each of the slides. In size, Weymouth is the 31st district in MA. He reviewed the organizational chart and reorganized and added positions within the operating budget. A number of expiring contracts were moved into new positions at the district level of support. At the building level, principals were added at the primary level, with a goal of potentially adding the remaining ones. The eight new positions were created using reallocated funds.

Councilor Shanahan asked if there are any positions cut? Asst. Supt. Smith responded no, but some of the expiring positions are being moved into new roles. At the school level,

there is a non-renewal process undertaken each year, but is more from an evaluative standpoint. There are no plans to cut any budgetary position. There is a non-renewal phase within the first three years of a teacher contract, after which they are moved into professional status. In any year in any district there are a number of non-renewals. There is no net loss; any attrition is typically filled. Circuit breakage factors in balancing the budget.



ESSER FUNDING

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund

<p>March 27, 2020 - ESSER Coronavirus Aid Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund). Grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) for the purpose of providing local educational agencies (LEAs), with emergency relief funds to address the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the Nation.</p>	\$677,844
<p>January 5, 2021 - ESSER II The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRISA), was signed into law on December 27, 2020 and provides an additional \$54.3 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II Fund).</p>	\$2,911,054
<p>March 11, 2021 - American Rescue Plan (ARP)/ESSER III Funds are provided to State educational agencies and school districts to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the Nation's students.</p>	\$6,771,232
	\$10,360,130

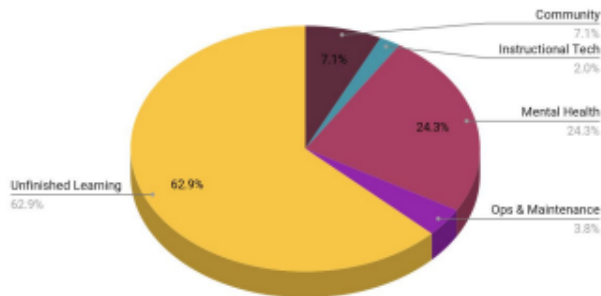
WEYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ESSER I & ESSER II Expenditures

Expended & Encumbered	
Instructional Coaches	Personal Protective Equipment
MTSS Interventionists	Cleaning Supplies
Classroom Teachers	Mental Health Support
Substitutes for LOAs	Food Service Staff
Chromebooks, iPads, Assistive Tech.	Equitable Services

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ESSER III Budget Plan



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Weymouth received \$700,000 when ESSER I went into effect, at the start of COVID. ESSER II followed- just under \$3 Million in January 2021 and ESSER III is \$6.1 Million. Weymouth received just over \$10 Million in one-time funding to respond to coronavirus and address the reopening of schools. ESSER I and II have either been fully encumbered or spent, so the current focus is on supplementing the budget with ESSER III funds for the next 2.25 fiscal years. The community was surveyed and a number of stakeholder and public meetings were held with the administrative team and determined 5 areas of needs; the majority is unfinished learning, mental health, community engagement, instructional technology support and operations and management. The Chromebooks and other initiatives funded with funding from the town helped Weymouth get to 1:1 faster than other districts could. Maintenance helped with repairs to HVAC systems, PPE, masks, and testing. Between ESSER and ARPA, the town was able to adjust that concern.

Chair Molisse asked what is meant by “unfinished learning?” Supt. Wargo responded that it is lost learning as a result of the pandemic when students were unable to be in their accustomed educational setting. The learning process is continual; teachers will go back and cover missed material so that students aren’t left behind. Councilor Burga asked how the additional funding is spent to bring students up to speed? Asst. Supt. Smith responded that specially trained classroom coaches support the teacher in the classroom, to meet the needs of the students. Councilor Burga asked about ARPA funding for private schools-is it in addition to the \$10 Million? Asst. Supt. Smith responded that the formula for ESSER I followed the Title One formula, in which a portion of funding must be directed to students who don’t go to WPS. They worked with the private and parochial schools to make sure they got their allocation. It was excluded from ESSER II and III. The original allocation in ESSER I was around \$770,000. It can be spent at their discretion, but the funding comes through WPS.



PROPOSED FY23 BUDGET

FY23 Budget Drivers



Collective Bargaining Agreements

Salaries, COLA, steps and longevity represent 80% of the budget.



Enrollment

Decreasing enrollment trends:
 ↓ 25 students FY21-FY22
 ↓ 178 students FY20-FY21






State Aid/Chapter 70

\$176,550 increase per Governor's House 1 budget





Budget drivers in this budget include expiring contracts for Unit A teachers, Food Service workers and Traffic Supervisors under AFSCME. Enrollments continue to decrease, Chapter 70 aid was tagged at \$30/student in the House budget. Since then, it has doubled, however, it is net of assessments and it works out to a break-even point for state aid. Transportation costs are increasing with fuel costs, although there are some protections built in to the contract and this year, they have been able to address it within their budget. Unique this year is the infusion of ARPA funding; it cannot be used to create structural deficits. They will keep a close watch to make sure that as ESSER funds are spent, the programs are sustainable in the future.

FY23 Budget Drivers

	Circuit Breaker	State funding to reimburse up to 75% of SpEd out-of-district tuition costs above a threshold equaling 4x state average foundation budget per pupil
	New Position Requests	New Position Requests: 130 FTE Requested Cost: \$7.2M
	Out-of-District Tuition & Transportation	20% Increase in Gas & Driver Hourly Rate

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FY23 Budget Drivers

	Transportation	Increasing costs & needs
	Utilities	Increased costs & Chapman projections
	Grants	FY22: \$13,687,917 (Includes ESSER)
	1-Time ESSER Money	Protect against fiscal cliff

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Budget Approach

- Level Funded: No increase (same budget allocation as previous year)
- Level Service: Maintains existing staff and programs 
(Our Goal Each Year)
- "Needs List": Additional staffing requests
 - Alignment with vision and goals
 - New initiatives

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FY23 Needs List

Total Requests from Cost Centers

\$7.2 Million
130 Positions



Includes: Assistant Principals, Department Heads, Instructional Coaches, Teachers, ESPE, Maintenance, Transportation, and other support positions.



Funding available through ESSER III and Zero-Based Budget approach for \$3.3M of needs list positions in FY23 (37 staff).

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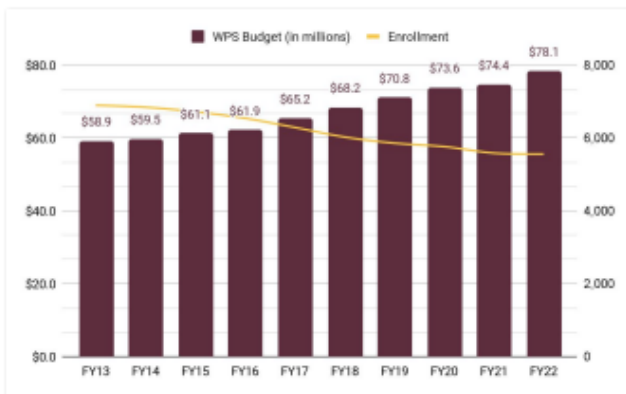
During the pandemic, the approach to the budget was survival mode. The way they should approach it is; plan for the best but anticipate the worst, and that is the approach taken with the needs list. The goal is to always provide the best education possible, in a fiscally responsible and flexible way. Level service is the goal each year- maintaining existing staff and programs, and in addition, a needs list is submitted for additional

staffing requests in alignment with the goals of the department and capturing new initiatives. A needs list of \$7.2 million for 130 positions was compiled and the department was able to fund \$3.3 million of the needs list through ESSER III. 31 positions are funded with the one-time funding source, and 6 positions through the zero-based budget process. The 31 positions can be quickly dispersed across the district and it will be incumbent on the principals over the next few years to determine what's working in their building to build them into their operating budgets with attrition, etc.

Councilor Shanahan asked if there is a concern that within the next few years with all of these positions if they are deemed necessary. How will it be addressed? Asst. Supt. Smith responded that in any given year, the attrition rate is 5-10% of the 1200 staff members, then the question becomes to fill or not fill. The goal is always not to cut staff, and other than the WeyCare staff during the pandemic, they have been able to meet the goal. There hasn't been any layoffs in several years. Councilor Shanahan asked that by spreading it out over the district minimizes the risk. Asst. Supt. Smith responded that they can shift funding around to cover positions. This was an exercise done by the principals to determine what they have, what they need and what they don't.

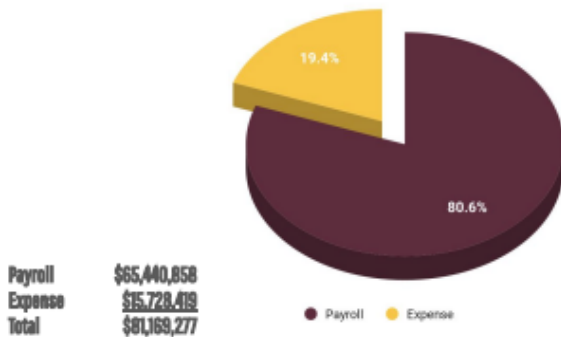
Councilor Heffernan asked if these are 3-year contracted positions? If worst case scenario happens, would the position be deemed nonrenewal? Asst. Supt. Smith responded that within the 3 years, it is a nonrenewal. There are also provisions to protect against a huge financial downturn. All contracts have a nonrenewal provision if there is no funding.

WPS Budget 10-Year History v. Enrollment



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Expense Classification



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The school department reviewed data from the last major economic downturn, in 2008-09. Staffing has increased 20% in the last 10 years, and enrollment has gone down. Less students doesn't mean less costs; their needs change over time and considering the economy of scale. For example, whether there is one or are 50 kids on a bus, there is still the same need for the bus, the driver and the fuel. Taking this approach, they looked at inequities in the classrooms instead of adding classes, and equitably distributed students across the district. This will be worked to smooth over the next few years.

Chair Molisse asked if the decrease is a result of less children in the town, or more in the private schools? Supt. Wargo responded they review the data frequently. Birth rates are not changing; the number of students in the town are not changing, but where they go to school is. They need to educate the public on the value of the education in the public schools.

Councilor Burga asked where the enrollment trends are leaning? Enrollment has gone down 18-20% but the cost per pupil has gone up 50%. It's concerning; there is a new school and Weymouth looks better than ever; they could attract new families. Do they anticipate continuing enrollment decline and what are the rates in surrounding communities?

Supt. Wargo responded there are two factors to consider: how many children live in the district and how many attend school in the district. They aren't seeing a decrease in students living in Weymouth; it's where they go to school-which is where the difference lies. In neighboring communities, some are losing the population. About 275 go to the charter school; the remaining to public and privates. WPS doesn't begrudge them going elsewhere, but they would like the opportunity to have the conversation. Councilor Burga agreed; as one of those families, it needs to take place. They would rather have the stay conversation than the exit interview.

Councilor Heffernan asked if there is a particular age group or factor driving the decrease in enrollment, or is it equally distributed? Supt. Wargo responded that it is fairly equally distributed, so if they can capture at PreK and then at each new level they have a better shot at retaining them. There is a moment in time between Grades 6-8 where they can recapture them.

FY23 Payroll Projection

All Funding Sources

Unit A*	Teachers	\$48,569,125	SEIU-M	Maintenance	\$1,294,614
Unit B	Supervisors/ Directors	\$1,570,940	SEIU-V	Van Drivers	\$896,195
Unit C	BCBAs	\$444,292	AFSCME*	Traffic Supervisors	\$102,274
Unit D	ESPs	\$5,344,655	S-NU*	Non-Union	\$3,292,990
SEIU-C	Custodians	\$1,915,957	S-UX*	Administrators	\$3,754,100
SEIU-F*	Food Service	\$737,116			
					\$67,922,258

* COLA TBD

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COST CENTER	FY 22 BUDGET			FY 23 PROPOSED BUDGET			Change	% Change FY22 to FY23	FY23 Cnt Year
	Payroll	Expenses	Total	Payroll	Expenses	Total			
Academy Ave Primary	2,138,872	89,871	2,228,743	2,393,077	37,915	2,431,001	202,258	13.80%	12.5
Murphy Primary	1,938,717	43,824	1,982,541	2,022,833	30,984	2,053,799	62,558	3.14%	31
Johnson ECC	1,238,896	18,378	1,257,274	946,182	23,145	972,327	(286,947)	-22.42%	24
Heak Primary	1,702,801	25,302	1,727,103	1,923,288	25,120	1,948,408	221,050	12.80%	29.5
Pinney Primary	1,748,854	14,822	1,763,676	1,899,039	30,387	1,929,426	165,750	9.39%	30
Seach Primary	2,509,848	43,688	2,553,536	2,296,547	44,283	2,340,830	(212,706)	-8.33%	32.5
Toddler Primary	1,798,848	30,821	1,829,669	1,689,858	29,978	1,719,836	(109,833)	-7.03%	22.7
Hamilton Primary	1,995,215	38,838	2,034,053	2,433,063	29,574	2,472,637	437,584	21.50%	32.2
Wassagquet Primary	2,124,967	18,412	2,143,379	1,993,589	34,411	2,028,000	(115,379)	-5.38%	30
Adams Middle	8,016,337	161,522	8,177,859	-	-	-	(8,177,859)	-100.00%	-
Chapman	-	-	-	12,186,634	158,966	12,345,600	12,345,600	100.00%	160.7
Weymouth High	20,848,578	844,584	21,693,162	16,136,470	383,749	16,520,219	(4,872,943)	-22.43%	222.9
Health Services	105,000	32,489	137,489	1,434,478	35,000	1,472,478	1,334,989	970.58%	23
Maintenance Services	3,172,804	3,270,390	6,443,194	3,484,014	3,545,000	7,029,014	805,820	12.50%	62
Athletics	507,405	10,000	517,405	548,550	25,000	573,550	56,145	10.85%	3
District Instruction Curr	3,293,870	490,980	3,784,850	3,747,243	642,000	4,389,243	604,393	16.00%	31
Instructional Technology	815,587	632,644	1,448,231	925,792	1,062,968	1,988,760	540,529	37.35%	12
Professional Development	-	286,000	286,000	-	296,000	296,000	10,000	3.50%	0
Transportation	1,033,574	3,554,074	4,587,648	1,233,477	3,821,691	5,055,168	377,520	8.13%	44
District	2,808,480	424,575	3,233,055	3,485,185	478,000	3,973,185	(259,870)	-8.04%	30.5
Special Education	5,264,957	5,733,539	10,998,496	5,471,745	5,055,184	10,526,929	(471,567)	-4.29%	85.3
School Department Total	\$ 62,992,939	\$ 15,347,813	\$ 78,340,752	\$ 65,440,658	\$ 15,728,413	\$ 81,169,071	\$ 3,078,319	3.88%	936.8

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90% of the budget is people; 10% contracted services. The slide shows all funding sources in the projection. A few contracts are up this year and are currently in negotiations. He explained the second slide and how it relates to the budget. In the proposed budget, step and lane changes, COLA are included in the changes. The Chapman budget is being reinstated next year. The 1000% change reflected under Health is a recoding required by DESE reporting. Significant jumps in changes in this slide are a result of recoding, attrition, transfers, hiring, etc.

In preparing the budget, they increased for all level service contractual increases and arrived at just under \$82 Million, and adjusted for potential breakage of \$800,000 for a level \$81,169,277 (3.88% increase over 2022).

Chair Molisse asked if the enrollment change at Hamilton School is from the base? Asst. Supt. Smith responded that Hamilton had several retirements and breakage is a result of bringing in new educators at less money.

The free cash measures were presented:

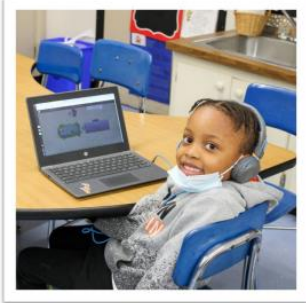
22 082- Free Cash for WPS Curriculum Materials

Asst. Supt. Smith requested that the Town of Weymouth transfer the sum of \$350,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding costs associated with the purchase of English Language Arts curriculum materials for Weymouth Public Schools. This need is #58 on the 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Plan.

FY23 Budget Measure 22_082:
WPS Curriculum: \$350,000

Justification

- PreK-8 ELA materials
- Current program retired by the publisher
- Six year cycle
- Costs staggered with math (3 years)



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The current ELA program is being retired by the publisher. Every six years giant content needs to be replaced (Math and ELA), every three years there will be this jump. Until it can be built into the operating budget it will be a capital ask every three years.

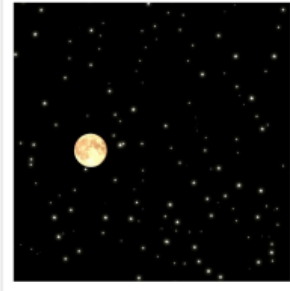
22 083- Free Cash for WHS Planetarium Upgrades

Asst. Supt. Smith requested that the Town of Weymouth transfer the sum of \$250,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding costs associated with upgrades to the planetarium computer program at Weymouth High School.

FY23 Budget Measure 22_083: WHS Planetarium Upgrades: \$250,000

Justification

- Upgrade of computers, program and projection system
- Current system is 18 years old and parts are no longer available
- Potential revenue stream for the Town



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This will upgrade the computer program and projection system. The current system is 18 years old. It's a potential revenue stream for the town. It's unique to the South Shore and is an investment.

22 084- Free Cash for WPS Passenger Vans

Asst. Supt. Smith requested that the Town of Weymouth transfer the sum of \$200,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding costs associated with the purchase (replacement) of four (4) passenger transportation vans for Weymouth Public Schools. This is need #69 and #70 on the 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Plan.

FY23 Budget Measure 22_084: WPS Passenger Vans: \$200,000

Justification

- 2 Special Education vans
- RMV compliance
- 1 wheelchair van
- 10 year replacement cycle
- '2nd life' with maintenance fleet



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A few of the vans have become non-compliant. They are still in use, but can't be used to transport students. The vans are on a 3-year replacement cycle, and the vans are recycled within the school department once they are no longer compliant for transporting students.

22 085- Free Cash for WHS Security Cameras

Asst. Supt. Smith requested that that the Town of Weymouth transfer the sum of \$130,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding costs associated with replacing and upgrading security cameras at Weymouth High School. This need was inadvertently left off the 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Plan.

FY23 Budget Measure 22_085:
WHS Security Cameras: \$130,000

Justification

- Replace security cameras and upgrade system at Weymouth High School
- Additional camera locations for enhanced security

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This will upgrade and add two additional camera locations to enhance security at the high school. It was a recent development as a result of a storm surge, and was not included on the CIP.

22 086- Free Cash for WHS CTE Equipment

Asst. Supt. Smith requested that the Town of Weymouth transfer the sum of \$75,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding costs associated with the purchase of equipment for the Weymouth High School's Career and Technical Education Department. This is need #56 on the 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Plan.

FY23 Budget Measure 22_086: WHS CTE Equipment: **\$75,000**

Justification

- MIG Welder
- Pipe and Tube Rollers
- Table Saw
- Gas Grill
- Tire Changer
- IT Chairs
- IT Desks



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22 087- Free Cash for WPS Music Instruments

Asst. Supt. Smith requested that the Town of Weymouth transfer the sum of \$25,000 from Free Cash for the purpose of funding costs associated with the purchase of music curriculum, equipment and instruments for Weymouth Public Schools. This is need #57 on the 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Plan.

FY23 Budget Measure 22_087: WHS Music Instruments: **\$25,000**

Justification

- Expands program and offerings
- Serves grades 5-12
- Equitable access
- Eliminates financial barrier



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This is to expand the music program. It has been offered to an expanded group, down to the 5th grade.

Councilor Burga noted the thorough detail in the budget presentation. She asked if there is any plan to expand the CTE program; there are a lot of kids interested who are shut out due to limitations. The superintendent agreed it is a problem. They are looking at

undersubscribed programs and working with the state to offer after hours programs. It doesn't address the needs. They are also reviewing their admissions process to make sure it's equitable and there is no implicit bias within the admission requirements. There is also a limit on space and staff in order to run programs. It's a problem they are aware of.

Councilor Burga also asked about van moderators. Is there any talk about cameras on them? Supt. Wargo responded that there are monitors on the vans; not on busses unless the principal sees a need to add one for behavioral issues. There are cameras on the busses, and the First Student contract includes upgrades for the cameras. They currently do not have cameras. One or two of the busses may have monitors, but not regularly, and it's sporadic, as needed. Staffing is an issue. Councilor Burga asked when the department identifies a behavioral issue as an exclusion from riding. Supt. Wargo responded that they don't try to exclude the student; it might be the only means they have to attend school. They do try progressive disciplinary action. Sometimes a principal will ride if there are incidents that he/she may be made aware of. Asst. Supt. Smith added that busses had cameras before the drivers unionized. Van drivers are union, so it would be a matter for negotiations.

Councilor Shanahan asked if the revenue from the Planetarium would go to the town general fund. Asst. Supt. Smith responded that they currently have a high school revolving fund. A retired teacher ran the program, and there have been a few programs conducted for field trips. The revenues barely supported the cost of the instructor; there really wasn't anything going to deferred capital.

Chair Molisse thanked the superintendent and assistant for the presentation. It appears streamlined, but a lot of materials were provided and questions answered in anticipation of the committee's review. All have the same goal in mind.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:44 PM, there being no further business, a motion was made by Vice Chair Heffernan to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Shanahan. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary

Approved by Michael Molisse as Budget/Management Committee Chairman
Voted unanimously on 15 August 2022