

**TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES  
BUDGET/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
Town Hall Council Chambers  
May 21, 2018, Monday**

Present: Michael Molisse, Chairman  
Thomas J. Lacey, Vice Chairman  
Jane Hackett, Councilor  
Christopher Heffernan, Councilor

Absent: Brian McDonald, Councilor

Also Present: Richard Swanson, Town Auditor  
Dr. Jennifer Curtis-Whipple, Supt. of Schools  
Susan Kuska, Asst. Supt. of Schools  
MaryAnn Bryan, Asst. Supt. of Schools  
Micky McGonagle, Interim School Business Manager  
Lisa Belmarsh, Chair, Weymouth School Committee

Recording Secretary: Mary Barker

Chairman Molisse called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**Review and Discuss School Department Budget with School Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents and Senior Staff**

**18 0-60Z-Schools**

This matter was referred to the Budget/Management Committee on April 17, 2018. The superintendent, School Committee chair and various staff reviewed the budget.

Overview

Background and Budget Development Process

- Vision
- Organizing for Improvement- accelerated improvement plan
- Alignment with Strategic
  - Variable impacting budget development
  - Budget drivers
    - Step increases
    - Increase 15 min primary school
    - COLA increases
    - Sped increase in staff
    - CBA

Councilor Hackett asked what the 1% CBA represented. The contract with Unit A and B have not been settled but this is an estimated amount.

- Comparative Budget 2018 vs 2019
  - Expense
  - Personnel
  - Compliance
  - 3.86% increase

The superintendent noted that this is a compliance issue that was on the needs list but is contractual or required

- nursing staff
- tech integration / library cert
- sped teachers primary and Johnson
- middle school math, reading/ELA

Councilor Lacey asked how the needs list was compiled? The superintendent responded that it was a collaboration of school council/school improvement plan/budget sub and pared down to a list with supporting reasons. They took into consideration requests when date reviewed to support student population. Everything on the needs list is from student performance and support of it. Vice Chairman Lacey asked when opportunities arouse to utilize free cash, would this list be the first consideration? Supt. Whipple responded yes. Ms. Belmarsh noted the school committee reviews this every year and it is reviewed by their budget subcommittee and spread out to meet the most important needs.

Superintendent Whipple reviewed the capital budget request process.

- ranked order by School Committee
- examples of items
- some in progress- such as boiler replacement projects

Needs and Impact

- Teacher support
- Technology

Sped – 1194 (18%) students/230 staff/ district placement

Additional school and district needs

- 5 year plan
- full day Kindergarten – prevent loss of students to charter schools if they are able to retain with a full day kindergarten program
- curriculum Leadership
- Administrative support
- Nursing support
- Teaching and interventionist positions
- Technology integration

Councilor Hackett asked how much of a language barrier exists in the schools? The superintendent responded that sometimes a student speaks English but the family does not. They are working on how to reach out to everyone.

Vice Chairman Lacey asked, aside from software and hardware, how satisfied is the department with the network? Mr. McGonagle responded that they have a 5-year plan, but they have outgrown it and are in process of updating it. They've come a long way but have a long way yet to go. They are in discussion to leasing equipment rather than purchasing. Vice Chairman Lacey asked how open they are to consolidating network with the town side. Mr. McGonagle responded that the needs of the schools are different from the town's; they have a different focus. It's not simple from a business standpoint. asked it about consolidating and if they are open to it? Mr. McGonagle replied in the affirmative, but said there are differences in focus. They do share fiber optic, but not so much with some infrastructure. It was noted that it is not simple from business perspective (e-rate reimbursement). They also have different purchasing abilities. The technology changes so rapidly, they continue to talk about it.

Councilor Hackett noted that the committee just received the answers provided in this presentation and will need some time to absorb them. She asked if the department considered flipping start times to see what it would look like across the district? Research shows the high school students should be starting later and the younger ones earlier.

Councilor Heffernan asked about breakage. The superintendent responded that the department develops its budget in November, prior to implementation the following September. They don't know who or how many retirements to expect that soon. Councilor Hackett asked if the department uses breakage to fund items. The superintendent responded yes, but not to cover one-time expenses, as had been previous practice. The spending plan changes over the course of the year as a result of fluctuations in student population and SPED state compliance requirements. Councilor Hackett noted that in past years they authorized the entire bottom line-- this is the first year it is with full cooperation. They can use breakage to fund items during the course of the year. The superintendent responded that the purpose of the budget currently before the town council is one that doesn't rely on breakage. It is level service. If an item is on the needs list and funding becomes available that is what they will do.

Councilor Hackett asked what \$5800 projected by outside agency is based on. The superintendent responded that it's based on the department's own historical data. (NESDEC doesn't include preschool.)

- Increases include copier paper usage and toner-the remainder are utilities
- Per pupil spending – still below average and closing gap.
- School lunch- zero balance / price increased
- Converting some from oil to gas. Transferred utility savings to extraordinary maintenance
- School patrol

Councilor Hackett noted this is a necessary function.

- Hall Rental – Councilor Hackett suggested consideration of adjusting the rates downward for one year to certain user groups and then check the budgetary impact- after a year of review. Mr. McGonagle responded that the impact would be about \$20,000. The superintendent noted that most schools are community-based buildings. Councilor Hackett noted that it doesn't mean it doesn't come at a cost to the budget. Mr. McGonagle noted that the fee pays for the custodian on duty.

Councilor Hackett asked how common is it to establish a stabilization fund to fund SPED. Mr. McGonagle responded that it would depend on how wisely it's used. They use the circuit breaker effectively as a stabilization fund.

- Five year Needs List
- Student population
- Includes all CBA/step/lane changes, longevity and stipends
- Per pupil expenditures

- School lunch revolving
- Gift revolving

The following non-budget items were reviewed:

**18 076-Free Cash for School IT**

\$755,982 for purchase of IT infrastructure improvements and devices

**18 077-Free Cash for School Educational Materials**

\$354,500 to fund online materials, texts for grades K-12 and STEM, Arts and Robotics materials and textbooks.

Councilor Hackett noted the committee would like another update on the Chapman School project. Councilor Smart would like to add it to the Council agenda as a regular item.

Vice Chairman Lacey noted they don't see the value of the partnership with administration that is done before it gets to this point. Not having a controversial and adversarial situation is understated. The partnership is helping and this takes leadership, cooperation and courage. Councilor Hackett agreed and noted that mutual respect allows for more candid conversations.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 7:23PM, there being no further business, a MOTION was made by Councilor Hackett to adjourn and was seconded by Councilor Lacey . UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Barker as Recording Secretary.

Approved by Michael Molisse as Budget/Management Committee Chairman  
Voted unanimously on 30 July 2018