

School Committee Finance Subcommittee

Friday, February 12, 2016

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM

4th Floor Conference Room, Town Hall

Finance Subcommittee members present: Ms. Stram (Chairman), Mr. Chang, and Mr. Pollak.

Finance Subcommittee members absent: Ms. Charlupski,

Other School Committee members present: Ms. Ditekoff, Ms. Scotto, and Ms. Stone.

Staff present: Dr. Connelly, Ms. Dunn, Mr. Lummis, and Ms. Coyne.

Others present: Advisory Committee members Michael Sandman (by phone) and Bobbie Knable and Mark Gray.

1) Approve Minutes of the January 11, 2016 Finance Subcommittee Meeting

On a motion of Mr. Pollak and seconded by Mr. Chang, the Finance Subcommittee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2016 Finance Subcommittee meeting.

2) Update on Budget Development and Calendar, including Items for Discussion at the Town-School Partnership Meeting

Ms. Dunn provided an update on FY 2017 Budget Development. Issues include Devotion and special education transportation costs (\$700,000-\$800,000 not projected in the override budget). Next year there will be only one Devotion late bus, which will reduce costs. She has made the decision to release some of the reserves. Ms. Dunn explained how the budget will show the budgetary impact of personnel churn. She is in the process of reconciling what we expected to receive from the override and the projected figure (\$500,000-\$900,000 difference). The difference may be due to health insurance costs.

The Subcommittee reviewed the FY 2017 Budget Development Calendar (Attachment A). Changes include distribution of the Superintendent's Budget on March 1, 2016; additional Finance Subcommittee meeting on March 7, 2016; Budget Presentation to the School Committee on March 10, 2016; and the Public Hearing on March 22, 2016. We will not have final state budget figures until after Town Meeting. Members suggested that Ms. Dunn provide the Advisory Committee with an orientation to the revised budget format.

The February 25, 2016 School Committee meeting will include a proposed vote to approve the revised FY 2017 Budget Development Calendar and a preview of the Interim Superintendent's FY 2017 Budget. Members suggested that the presentation not just focus on numbers, but also include the following: identify any major strategic shifts to programs; identify changes that will enhance student achievement; explain trade-offs; note any programmatic changes that would need School Committee approval; and show how the budget tracks with the override (e.g., support staff, technology, growth due to enrollment). We need to be transparent and make sure that the numbers match up with

our priorities. Ms. Coyne will provide Ms. Dunn with materials from last year's Budget Preview and Budget Message presentations.

3) Review Draft FY 2017 Financial Plan School Submission

The Subcommittee reviewed the draft FY 2017 Financial Plan School submission (Attachment B). In the past, the Schools included a budget number without narrative. The draft includes a Program Description (Educational Goals and Policies, Hiring authority for particular positions, Levels of compensation, Collective bargaining, Selection and purchase of textbooks and educational materials, and School Councils-School-Based Decision-Making) and a Budget Statement (Budget Guidelines, Budget Development Principles, and Budget Development Current Conditions and Priorities). School Committee members applauded the effort to make this more informative, but suggested that we give additional consideration to what gets included and why. Ms. Dunn will include the summary statement and Budget Guidelines in the FY 2017 submission and add additional sections in future years. Members noted that the revenue allocation between the Town and Schools is not typically a 50/50 split. The agreement represents a set of assumptions, not a formula. Members recommended that Ms. Dunn look at how the split was done a couple of years ago and contact Mr. Rowe and Mr. Cronin for additional background information. The next Town-School Partnership will be on either February 22, 2016 or February 23, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.