

TOWN/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP MEETING

MINUTES

February 11, 2022 at 10:00am

Via Zoom

Attendees: Advisory Committee members: Cliff Brown, Dennis Doughty, Carla Benka, School Committee members: Mariah Nobrega, Helen Charlupski, Suzanne Federspiel, Select Board members, Bernard Greene, Miriam Aschkenasy Staff: Linus Guillory Mel Kleckner, Melissa Goff, Sam Rippin, Justin Casanova-Davis, Devon Fields, Kate MacGillivray

1. Approval of minutes

On motion it was,

Voted to approve the meeting minutes from January 3, 2022

Aye: Bernard Greene, Cliff Brown, Denis Doughty, Mariah Nobrega

Abstained: Suzanne Federspiel

Absent: Miriam Aschkenasy

2. FY23 budget update and presentation of revenue Allocation Sheet

- Town Administrator Kleckner announced that the final budget would be presented on February 15th before the Select Board and Advisory Committee. The bottom line is the overall revenue expenditures show a huge short fall, both for the town and schools sides, but particularly the school side with a \$6 million deficit. This is a larger challenge as previously seen, and not as many options to fund that. Some difficult decisions will have to be made on allocating American Recovery Plan funds.

Deputy Town Administrator Melissa Goff summarized the town/school formula. The State Aid funds are not looking that great and this years' MBTA assessment wipes out any growth in receipts.

Mr. Kleckner added that the bottom line is the Town Administrator has the responsibility to prepare the initial budget of the town. The formula acknowledges that the budgeting we have is incremental. The share of the budget for one year is a reasonable approach to start with the next year, and move off that. It is not mandated in any bylaw or under the town administrator act, it serves as a as a legitimate and objective starting point. In the past, it got complicated when issues of high student school enrollment and special education costs increased.

It was requested to sort out the formula for review from the committee.

Mr. Kleckner spoke briefly on the MBTA assessment increase. Mariah Nobrega asked if any kind of hold harmless provision could apply here, or at least ask for relief from the free-shared MBTA busing. More information is required.

3. Town/School Partnership Agreement

MOA

Building maintenance

MOA: Mr. Kleckner reviewed that the MOA is out of date and is being redrafted. They did not include the formula into the MOA because it gets outdated quickly, but will revise the framework.

- It was indicated that the proposed revision has just been circulated and he would like time to review.
- It was requested to have better documentation, perhaps some kind of manual that lays out the Town/School partnership formula and how things are allocated.

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Mr. Kleckner responded that there is a description of the ideals of the formula within the MOA for example, shared expenses and unallocated expenses, but it does not get into the actual numbers.

The committee discussed setting up regular meetings and more frequently in efforts to share information between the Select Board, School Committee and Advisory Committee.

Building maintenance: Mr. Kleckner began by reviewing the town provides the school department with various services, however, items like heating and systems are provided by the town, but funded out of the school department's budget, as one of the offsets every year. The building department makes a proposal of what they will need for the year.

Sam Rippen, Deputy Superintendent of Administration and Finance added that the school facilities budget for FY22 is approximately \$6.5 million, which is not in dispute; there are three major moving parts to it. Staffing, utilities, repair, and maintenance, all roughly \$2 million in each category. He added that the building department provided a proposal that they needed about \$800k for school repair and maintenance and the budget now reflects an increase for that. The understanding, based on the structure is any dollar above that would be taken out dollar for dollar of the split and so that creates a lot of stress. School facilities square footage also went up quite a bit. The CIP committee is requesting projections and past budget allocations relating to repair and maintenance.

It was requested that the overall formula and an outline on what is going on within the building maintenance budget be clarified for a better understanding.

On motion it was,

Voted to form a larger working group with Town/School Partnership members, staff and others deemed appropriate to delve down into the funding requirements around the building department's budget.

Aye: Bernard Greene, Miriam Aschkenasy, Suzanne Federspiel, Mariah Nobrega, Cliff Brown, Denis Doughty

Mariah will work with Cliff to come up with a proposal on the committee structure.

Mariah left at 1:00

4. Continued discussion on the American Rescue Plan process

Mr. Kleckner reviewed that the Select Board has received a presentation from the Brookline Community Foundation. This presentation and preliminary report was well done. The next step is to start putting some parameters around this fund. This is a two-year program and not just a first come first serve process. Then they will try to narrow down categories and areas of expenditures. Some funds have already been appropriated that are directly Covid related. At this time, nothing else has been allocated. We will now facilitate a process to select the projects.

Revenue replacement: The Town's revenue rebound has been gradual and already in the budget process, this is not new money for the town.

Melissa Goff reviewed the formula.

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Cliff Brown: the big risk using revenue replacement is when the revenue runs we need to replace it. We may be able to do some scenario planning. How much revenue replacement funds are available? What level are we comfortable doing that; we need real financial model.

5. School Building Projects

BHS: Tappan Street opened. Still working on the main building

Model at the OLS will be relocated to the new school

Driscoll: on track, there is good communication there

Pierce: good meeting with the MSBA, they were happy with what was presented. Now into schematic design. Possible override in the fall. Issue is School Street and traffic management at Pierce.

Fires station is coming in around \$50 million that would be on the ballot for debt exclusion

There being no further business the Chair ended the meeting at 1:00 pm.