

School Committee Finance Subcommittee
Thursday, February 18, 2021
5:00 PM-6:20 PM
Remote via Zoom

Finance Subcommittee members present: Mariah Nobrega (Chair), Dimitry Anselme, Susan Wolf Ditkoff, and David Pearlman.

Other School Committee members present: Suzanne Federspiel, Ms. Charlupski, and Andreas Liu.

Staff present: Mary Ellen Normen, Donna Chisholm, and Robin Coyne.

Others present: Advisory Committee members Cliff Brown, Paul Warren, and Carla Benka.

Ms. Nobrega called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

1) Approval of Minutes: January 14, 2021

On a motion of Mr. Anselme and seconded by Mr. Pearlman, the Finance Subcommittee voted unanimously (by roll call) to approve the January 14, 2021 Finance Subcommittee meeting minutes.

2) Discussion of FY 2022 Budget

Ms. Nobrega provided an overview of the information that will be included in OpenGov, including the following: FY 2019, FY 2020, FY 2021, and FY 2022 budget summaries; staffing; budget changes; and objectives. Ms. Nobrega and Ms. Normen have discussed scheduling approximately ten meetings to focus in on specific budget areas. The meetings will include presentation of the information in OpenGov and opportunities for public input. Member Comments: support the concept as a way to increase knowledge and transparency; encouraged the Chair to set guidelines for the meetings and clarify the purpose; noted the volume of meetings and current demands on staff/member time; in general, focus on areas with the larger budgets and where there may be opportunities for modifications; include Revenue and Revolving Funds; and identify which costs are discretionary and which are fixed. Ms. Nobrega will work with Ms. Normen to establish a schedule for meetings, starting the second week in March and going through April.

Members discussed the timing of presentation and deliberation of recommendations to balance the budget. It was noted that revenue/fixed cost projections are likely to change. Ms. Normen commented that the Remote Learning Academy will not be funded in FY 2022, and that this will likely result in lay-offs. The Subcommittee discussed the impact of the School Committee's February 11, 2021 vote to request a Town Meeting Appropriation amount that meets the district's needs, rather than the Town-School Partnership amount.

3) FY 2021 Financial Reports

Ms. Normen provided an update on the FY 2021 Budget. The projected deficit is \$803,666. This figure includes funding for Steps and Lanes, but not for additional salary increases. Ms. Normen will be preparing an FY 2021 2nd Quarter Financial Report.

4) Student Activities Policy and Possible Revision of Public Schools of Brookline Fiscal Policies

Ms. Nobrega and Mr. Pearlman will meet to develop a plan for reviewing these policies.

5) Audit Compliance Update

Ms. Normen is waiting for proposals for the Brookline Adult and Community Education Program audit. She will provide a report at the February 23, 2021 School Committee meeting.

6) New Business

Ms. Normen provided an update on proposed changes to Office of Administration and Finance staffing. The Human Resources Office was restructured; the Office of Administration and Finance Assistant position was upgraded; and a consultant is assisting with payroll. Ms. Normen has requested two additional positions for FY 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM.