

**Town of Brookline  
Advisory Committee Minutes**

**April 5, 2022**

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Access Passcode: =keis#88

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**Present:** C. Scott Ananian, Carla Benka, Ben Birnbaum, Harry Bohrs, Clifford Brown, John Doggett, Dennis Doughty, Katherine Florio, Harry Friedman, David-Marc Goldstein, Neil Gordon, Susan Granoff, Kelly Hardebeck, Anita Johnson, Georgia Johnson, Alisa Jonas, Janice Kahn, Pam Lodish, Linda Olson Pehlke, Donelle O’Neal, David Pollak, Stephen Reeders, Carlos Ridruejo, Lee Selwyn, Christine Westphal

**Absent:** Carol Levin, Alok Somani, Amy Hummel (on sabbatical)

**Also Attending:** Deputy Superintendent for Administration and Finance for the Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) Sam Rippen, Superintendent of PSB Dr. Linus Guillory, School Committee members Mariah Nobrega, Susan Federspiel (Chair) Helen Charlupski; Acting Finance Director Justin Casanova-Davis; Bonnie Bastien, David Gacioch, Regina Frawley, Valerie Frias, Ryan Black, Elizabeth Schafer, and other members of the public.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

**Announcements:** Pursuant to this Board’s Authority under 940 CMR 29.10 (8), all Advisory Committee Members will be participating remotely via telephone or video conferencing due to emergency regulations regarding the Corona virus. The Chair has reviewed the requirements of the regulations. There is a quorum physically present and all votes taken will be recorded by roll call so all above listed Advisory Committee members will be allowed to vote.

The Chair noted that a resolution pertaining to the Brookline Police Department budget and search process for Police Chief has been withdrawn.

**7:00 pm            Public Comment** – No comments were offered.

***Public Meeting***

**7:15 pm            Presentation, Discussion & Possible Vote on Article 3: Compensating Balance Agreements.  
(Treasurer)**

Kelly Hardebeck, Chair of the Admin and Finance Subcommittee offered the subcommittee report for Article 3. This article is filed annually by the Town Treasurer/Collector. Compensating balances are agreements between a depositor and a bank in which the depositor agrees to maintain a specified level of non-interest bearing deposits in exchange for certain bank services. By a VOTE of 4-0-0 the subcommittee recommends favorable action.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded for Favorable Action on WA 3. By a **VOTE** of 19-0-2 the Advisory Committee recommends favorable action on WA 3.

**7:30 pm            Presentation, Discussion & Possible Vote on Article 5: Approval of unpaid bills of a prior fiscal year.**

Kelly Hardebeck noted that this article is inserted in the Warrant for every Town Meeting in case there are any unpaid bills from a prior fiscal year that are deemed to be legal obligations of the Town. Per Massachusetts General Law, unpaid bills from a prior fiscal year can only be paid from current year appropriations with the specific approval of Town Meeting. There are no unpaid bills from a prior fiscal year and, therefore, no financial impact.

Q: If Schools come back and they say they have an unpaid bill, we would reconsider our vote? A: Yes.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded for No Action on WA 53. By a **VOTE** of 21-0-2 the Advisory Committee recommends NO ACTION on WA 5.

**7:40 pm            Presentation, Discussion & Possible Vote Article 6: Acceptance of legislation to increase certain property tax exemptions. (Assessors)**

David-Marc Goldstein gave the Human Services Subcommittee report on WA 6. Article 6 is an annual Warrant Article to increase state-mandated local property tax exemptions for certain classes of qualifying individuals. The Subcommittee unanimously recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on Warrant Article 6 by a vote of 4-0-0. The full report can be found linked and included in these minutes.

**Questions and Comments**

Q: Are these means- tested? A: Only the 41c and surviving spouse. Most of the losses were in the Veteran's category.

Comment: Only about 11 % of participants are seniors.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded for Favorable Action on WA 6. By a **VOTE** of 23-0-0, the Advisory Committee recommends favorable action on WA 6.

**8:00 pm            Final Discussion and Vote on FY 23 Public Schools of Brookline Operating Budget and CIP – final discussion, and vote.**

Superintendent of PSB Dr. Linus Guillory shared a presentation on the School Department which will be linked and attached to these minutes. He introduced new staff and noted that the current budget Version 1.1 is available here <https://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/cms/lib/MA01907509/Centricity/Domain/51/PSBBudgetBook1.1FINAL-min.pdf>

Sam Rippin and Mariah Nobrega presented the School Department CIP requests (See attached presentation, slide 30 onward).

The Superintendent then highlighted some FY 2014 goals/strategic planning and beyond. (Again, see the attached presentation for details linked and shared at the end of these minutes).

**Discussion, Questions and Comments**

Cliff Brown, Chair of the School Subcommittee had no further comments to add.

Q: Relating to steps and lanes, \$5.2M, what does that translate into % increase on salaries? A: For Unit A and Unit B, steps and lanes comprise half that amount clerical, custodial 2.25% and 2.50% is increase of current level of salaries. It represents an amount sufficient to settle Unit A, B, Clerical, Custodial and Nonaligned. It is for all personnel expenses.

Q: Regarding the Baldwin School what are the thoughts about will happen there? A: Mariah replied regarding Baldwin –my understanding of the price is what we heard from Matt Gillis, Facilities Lead in PSB. Rough order of magnitude cost to renew the building. \$75K not funded. Vision would be to have it become a BEEP facility. We need first a feasibility study to do that work. It would allow BEEP classrooms to move from Temple Emeth in South Brookline to a Town-owned building (thereby eliminating annual lease payments, which would be updated and made to be more ADA accessible, etc. than the building is currently.

Q: What actually is involved in pandemic recovery? \$9M in the CIP to improve School playgrounds? A: The playgrounds were not funded in the CIP and this is to get them on the CIP for reconsideration. Regarding pandemic recovery, it recognizes the interruption in education and understanding mental and bookend approach...

Once we get back to what normal is...

A kid that tests positive for COVID is out for 5 days. Then the teacher can test positive. So staff and teachers are impacted.

Q: Immediate need to address mental health needs of kids during this pandemic. Can we share these resources? Is that the plan? A: We are going through the process of studying our staffing and ratios which might get to that.

Question/Comments about the chart of accounts – A: It is a work in progress. At least for personnel, the chart of accounts has become more robust. For non-personnel still some work to be done.

Q: Does the budget include funds for the beginning of the implementation of strategic plan? No – no funds are requested for FY 23 for its implementation. A: The Strategic Plan will begin in July.

Q: Are School revolving funds considered differently from other revolving funds? A: The most comparable fund is our food services revolving fund, athletics, BEEP, transportation are hybrids.

Q: Does the cost remain stable or go up and down? A: It varies.

Comment: Mariah added that the financial forecasting by the department has been undertaken.

Q: Employment vacancies among teaching staff. Are they transferring to different communities? A: Yes we have attrition and this is happening every day. We are at a pivotal moment. We have teachers that leave each year. We have teachers who take leaves of absence. All of these have an impact on our staff.

Q: How difficult is it to fill vacancies? A: We are a desirable district and we have a hold on salaries and hires. We prioritize some positions through the hiring program.

Q: Change in teaching FTEs vs non-Teaching FTEs? Which are considered teaching and which are not teaching? A: Student facing educators shows what you need.

Q: Health care premiums – how determined? A: That is something the Town does. They are incorporated into the Town School Partnership “split” as I understand it.

When the Town went into the GIC as part of the negotiation that is where we got to the percentage level we currently have.

Comment: Seems to be a difference between what people are expecting and what we can deliver.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded to **TABLE** the Vote on the School Operating Budget and CIP until 4/21/22 until after the first round of ARPA decisions are made. (Select Board may be making decisions on the 19<sup>th</sup>.) By a VOTE of 23-0-0 the Motion carries.

**8:45 pm Other Business**

There being no other business, a MOTION was made and seconded to adjourn, and by a unanimous vote the meeting adjourned at 9:25pm.

**Documents Presented (linked):**

- [Human Services Subcommittee Report on WA 6](#)
- [Admin and Finance Subcommittee Report on WA 3](#)
- [Admin and Finance Subcommittee Report on WA 5](#)
- [School Department Presentation](#)
- [School Department CIP Requests](#)

**Votes:**

	Vote 1	Vote 2	Vote 3	Vote 4
# Votes Yes	19	21	23	23
# Votes No	0	0	0	0
# Votes Abstain	2	2	0	0
Vote Description:	MAIN MOTION: FAVORABLE ACTION on Warrant Article 3	MAIN MOTION: NO ACTION on Warrant Article 5	MAIN MOTION: FAVORABLE ACTION on Warrant Article 6	MOTION TO TABLE DISCUSSION OF SCHOOL BUDGET + CIP REQUEST UNTIL 4/21
	<i>Enter Y, N or A</i>	<i>Enter Y, N or A</i>	<i>Enter Y, N or A</i>	<i>Enter Y, N or A</i>
Scott Ananian	A	Y	Y	Y
Carla Benka	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ben Birnbaum	Y	Y	Y	
Harry Bohrs	Y	Y	Y	Y
Cliff Brown	Y	Y	Y	Y
John Doggett	Y	Y	Y	Y
Katherine Florio	Y	Y	Y	Y
Harry Friedman	Y	Y	Y	Y
David-Marc Goldstein	Y	Y	Y	Y
Neil Gordon	Y	Y	Y	Y
Susan Granoff	Y	Y	Y	Y
Kelly Hardebeck	Y	Y	Y	Y
Anita Johnson	Y	Y	Y	Y
Georgia Johnson	Y	Y	Y	Y
Alisa Jonas				Y
Janice Kahn		A	Y	Y
Carol Levin				
Pam Lodish	A	Y	Y	Y
Linda Olson Pehlke	Y	Y	Y	Y
Donelle O'Neal, Sr.		A	Y	Y

David Pollak	Y	Y	Y	Y
Stephen Reeders	Y	Y	Y	Y
Carlos Ridruejo	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lee Selwyn	Y	Y	Y	Y
Alok Somani				
Christine Westphal	Y	Y	Y	Y
Dennis Doughty				