



Town of Swampscott
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday April 7th, 2021 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Dorsey (Chair), Mary Ellen Fletcher (Vice-chair), Eric Hartmann, Joan Hilario, Matthew Kirschner, Cinder McNerney, Gail Rosenberg, Jill Sullivan

SCHOOL OFFICIALS PRESENT

Amy O'Connor, Chair, School Committee; Ted Delano, School Committee; Pam Angelakis, Superintendent; Martha Sybert, Director of Finance

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Michael McClung, Town Moderator; Peter Spellios, Chair, Select Board; Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator; Amy Sarro, Town Accountant; Ron Mendes, Asst. Town Administrator Admin & Finance; Patrick Luddy, Asst. Town Accountant

Meeting called to order 7:11 PM

Approval of Minutes

None.

Public Comments

None.

FY 2022 Budget Review

Review of Budget Proposal with Martha Sybert, Director of Finance, SPS

Martha Sybert, Director of Finance for Swampscott Public Schools recapped her budget presentation that was made to the School Committee:

- Remote summer offerings are going to be required by DESE.
- Enrollment has declined; need to assume in-person learning for the fall.
- The % of the student population that qualifies as ELL and economically disadvantaged is increasing year over year, which positively impacts Chapter 90 Aid
- Facilities transfer for FY 2022 - \$100,000 in town budget dedicated for school facilities expenses. Accounting treatment is changing; all the school's facilities budget will be reflected in the school appropriation.
- Next year's revenue from Nahant for Special Education will be reduced by \$50K, reflecting a reduction in enrollment.

- There is ongoing discussion regarding extended day programs for FY 2022; there will be a survey for families going out soon, and the dept will subsequently go out to bid.
 - o \$67,500 of funds from the extended day fund offsets facilities costs in the school operating budget.
- Facilities maintenance expenditures for the school department have been approximately \$409,000; FY 2021 budget is \$385,000, same for FY 2022.

Cinder McNerney asked Director of Finance, SPS Martha Sybert to provide insight into whether information is available to breakdown the figure for general education expense into more specific expenses allocated to special populations. Ms. Sybert responded that there is some visibility into the costs associated with special populations; it is not included in this presentation but for example staff who work with ELL students are coded as such and those expenses could be isolated.

Amy O'Connor commented that the school committee has looked at the growth of the budget vs. the growth of certain fixed or required costs. Martha Raymond added that the state has demonstrated an understanding of the costs associated with certain education requirements in order to minimize the impact on the budget overall via the circuit breaker. She also clarified that most students with disabilities are in general education classes (full-inclusion programs).

Martha Sybert also commented regarding the foundation commission review of the Chapter 70 formula, and the need for change on that front to address costs that school districts and municipalities are grappling with, particularly relative to health care and special education.

Ms. Sybert walked through certain payroll expenditure reclassifications between the operating budget and grants. She cited administrative burden associated with charging payroll to grants as the driving force for the reallocation. Ms. Sybert also briefly walked through circuit breaker funds and the district's historical utilization.

Ms. Sybert highlighted the funding and deployment of chrome books and other devices in the district to achieve 1:1 status. She also went over the department's strategy to fund technology in the operating budget and develop a replacement schedule for these devices.

Chairman Dorsey asked about the CARES Act funds that were administered by the Town Accountant and allocated to the school dept. Director of Finance Martha Sybert deferred to the Town Accountant on the exact amount of those funds.

The funds the school dept expects from the most recent funds made available by the federal gov't (ESSER III) should be appx. 2.2x the ESSER II award. That award will be available over a two-year period.

There is risk that the state will not fund the circuit breaker at historical levels, due to reduction of revenues at the state level and the visibility that exists around the expected ESSER III awards.

There was some discussion surrounding the risk that structural costs will be offset with the influx of federal grants and create a budget concern in future years.

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked Martha Sybert to identify the amount of grant funds that are used to fund operations and how that will impact the general fund budget. Ms. Sybert responded stating that federal entitlement grants are used to supplement the operating budget for specific programs. Martha Raymond echoed Ms. Sybert, and also added that the dept. is aware that one-time funding related to the pandemic is one-time funding and cannot be relied on as a recurring funding source.

Superintendent Angelakis also commented on her commitment to building a \$100,000 line in future budgets for technology replacement to fund the district's technology replacement plan as outlined.

Amy O'Connor commented that the pandemic has provided some opportunities for the district to identify areas for potential cost-savings in the future relative to operations.

Marth Sybert briefly provided an overview of the district's revolving funds, highlighting challenges in the Pre-K and School Lunch funds.

There was some discussion surround FTE analysis; the school dept. is projecting a +.75FTE increase for FY 2022.

Jill Sullivan asked for clarification surrounding the Diversity and Inclusion coordinator position that is proposed in the FY 2022 town budget, and whether the cost of the position is going to be shared. Superintendent Angelakis stated that she is delaying funding the DEI Coordinator position until the district has had an opportunity to go through a couple grant-funded trainings and develop clear goals for this position before assembling a job description and hiring someone for the role.

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked Superintendent Angelakis to clarify the funding source for the trainings. Superintendent Angelakis clarified that a \$5,500 grant was made available through Metco.

Amy O'Connor discussed the opportunities for equity and inclusion that could be afforded by a new school, including an increased capacity that could allow for additional Metco enrollment.

Reports on Committees

Capital Improvement Committee

- Finalize a couple of line items
- Line item added - \$40,000 for Windsor Park
- \$400,000 for elementary school deferred maintenance (misc/emergency capital) There will be further discussion about that with the finance committee and town staff regarding structure for the appropriate use of the funds
- Approved \$100,000 for the pier

- Further discussion about the kitchen proposed for the senior center; will be brought up at the finance committee meeting

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School Building Committee

- Nothing to report

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Hadley Re-Use Committee

- Round of survey results; 789 responses were received
- Majority preferred public re-use; there was attachment to Hadley but not the annex
- 76% wanted to maintain or add open space to the site
- Results did not indicate that the site would be best suited for affordable housing
- Report will be made to Select Board in August on committee's findings

Old and New Business

None.

On **MOTION** (Jill Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Gail Rosenberg) it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 PM. **ROLL CALL:** Eric Hartmann (YES), Joan Hilario (YES), Matthew Kirschner (YES), Cinder McNerney (YES), Gail Rosenberg (YES), Jill Sullivan (YES), Mary Ellen Fletcher (YES), Tim Dorsey (YES).

True Attest,

Patrick Luddy

Patrick Luddy, Assistant Town Accountant

Minutes APPROVED by vote of the Finance Committee 6/28/2021