

HOPKINTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, December 18, 2014
Regular Meeting 7:00 PM
Middle School Library
MINUTES

School Committee Chair Jonathan Graziano opened the regular meeting at 7:00 PM with the following present:

Members:

Mr. Jonathan Graziano, Chair
Ms. Ellen Scordino, Vice Chair (absent)
Ms. Jean Bertschmann, Member
Ms. Kelly Knight, Member
Ms. Lori Nickerson, Member

Also Present:

Dr. Cathy MacLeod, Superintendent
Mr. Robert Berlo, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Ralph Dumas, Director of Finance

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Public Comments: None at this meeting

III. Presentation: Preliminary FY16 Joint Budget Discussion with Appropriation Committee - Dr. MacLeod welcomed Appropriation Committee Chair Mike Manning and Town Director of Finance Chris Howell. Dr. MacLeod opened the presentation by explaining that the focus of the FY16 school department budget is on maintaining and improving the educational program of Hopkinton Schools. The challenges that face the district are higher enrollment due to new housing developments, changing demographics, minimum available capacity at each school building, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) Level 2 accountability determination for 4 Hopkinton schools. Unfunded state and federal mandates are impacting many school districts by diverting funding from general education and expenses to mandated programs. Dr. MacLeod stated that in order for Hopkinton Schools to continue to offer a high quality education to all students, changes must be made. The FY16 proposed budget supports the programs that will enable the focus to change to prevention rather than focusing on remediation, and supports Strategic Plan Initiatives. These Strategic Plan Initiatives were identified during the formation of the new Strategic Plan with input from the greater community. The slides for the presentation are available on the district website.

In the Metro-West Comparison of the cost of education per pupil, Hopkinton ranks close to the bottom. Dr. MacLeod noted that this may change as student diversity increases in Hopkinton.

Dr. MacLeod noted that the Town of Hopkinton will receive an increase in Chapter 70 revenue because of the availability of tuition-free Full Day Kindergarten for all. The district no longer receives tuition for kindergarten students but must continue to fund the program.

The FY 16 proposed budget includes an increase of 5.13% over FY15. Payroll continues to be 83% of the total budget and expenses 17%. Fixed costs will increase 3.54% and discretionary costs increase by 1.59%.

Members of the School Committee, Appropriation Committee and the Finance Director asked clarifying questions and offered suggestions for the presentation to provide greater clarity. The timeline for the budget process dictates that the school department budget number is presented prior to budget information from the state and town becoming available. School Committee members noted that without these numbers it is impossible to completely understand the overall budget picture. The largest, 28%, of the increase in the FY16 budget is attributable to the Special Education Department; Dr. MacLeod stressed that funding for Special Education will continue to increase unless changes are made to increase support for prevention.

Dr. MacLeod presented four budget options that would result in less of an increase in the school department budget, and explained the impacts to classrooms, faculty, students, and programs. Dr. MacLeod was commended for the process used to build this budget, for identifying the Strategic Plan Initiatives supported in the budget, and for the explanation of educational programs supported in the budget. By general consensus the School Committee supported the budget presentation given at tonight's meeting as the one to be presented at the Public Hearing scheduled for January 8, 2015.

Mr. Manning and Mr. Howell exited the meeting.

IV. Reports to the School Committee

A. High School Student Advisory Council Representative: None at this meeting

(Voted to accept 2/12/15)

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- B. Superintendent's Report: Dr. MacLeod explained that recognitions were given prior to the start of this meeting and other topics will be covered under V. New Business.
- C. School Committee Chair Report: On January 22, 2015 Dr. MacLeod will present a mid-cycle progress update as part of the Superintendent's Evaluation process. Dr. MacLeod has collected and shared evidence of progress with the Committee. Mr. Graziano encouraged School Committee members to review this information and add any evidence they may have collected. The Committee will provide feedback to the Superintendent on the progress made to date during the meeting scheduled for the 22nd.
- D. ESBC: A Public Forum is scheduled for Saturday morning, January 24, 2015. One of the next steps in the building process is site selection and the criteria for site selection will be shared with the community during this Public Forum. Ms. Bertschmann stressed the importance of town committees and departments working together to present a clear picture to the voters of the number, timing, and cost of building projects under consideration within the Town of Hopkinton.

V. New Business

- A. Elementary School Building Capacity Requirements: Since enrollment was certified in February 2014 the tuition free Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) program began; Dr. MacLeod reviewed the impacts the FDK program has had on enrollment and the number of classrooms needed to run the program. The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) has determined that the design of the building will include 18 classrooms for kindergarten and first grade. This determination is based on the certified enrollment number of 355 from February 2014. However, there was an increase of 36 students for the 2014-2015 school year and the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) projects that over the next ten years Hopkinton kindergarten/ first grade will average an enrollment of 430 students. This will require 22 classrooms. These updated enrollment figures were provided to the MSBA. The MSBA is considering this information but has not indicated that the enrollment number will be changed.

Mr. Graziano explained that the funding reimbursement for a building project is based on the MSBA's enrollment forecast. In Hopkinton's case this could result in a building that will quickly become too small to handle the projected increase in enrollment. Drummey Rosane Anderson, Inc., the design firm for the building project, is seeking direction from the School Committee as to the size of the building to be designed. Mr. Graziano also explained that the K/1st grade model is a unique idea to the MSBA, and the MSBA is very interested to see the educational vision for that model.

Dr. MacLeod explained that the number of classrooms drives the educational plan. The educational plan will be created by the Administration and is required to be submitted to the MSBA in the near future.

The Committee noted that historically the enrollment projections for Hopkinton have been lower than actual enrollment numbers. The number of housing developments under consideration in the town has the potential to substantially increase enrollment. This first design of the elementary school building can be adjusted as more information on enrollment numbers becomes available. It is important to articulate to the community a secondary use for areas of the building, if in fact future enrollment does not turn out as projected. General consensus of the School Committee supported increasing the enrollment number in kindergarten/1st grade to at least the current enrollment of 444, as opposed to the 355 certified by the MSBA.

Based on the discussion, Dr. MacLeod recommended the School Committee provide guidance to Drummey Rosane Anderson, Inc., for the design of a building with the capacity for 460 kindergarten and first grade students.

On a motion made by Ms. Nickerson, seconded by Ms. Knight, the School Committee voted to provide support to Drummey Rosane Anderson, Inc., for the design of a building with the capacity for 460 kindergarten and first grade students.

Vote: Favor: 4 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1(Scordino)

- B. Special Education FTE Increase: An increase of 0.08 FTE learning specialist is requested to assist with Hopkins School students. Dr. MacLeod reported that the current schedules of Special Education faculty were reviewed to determine if this request could be covered without an increase. After review, it was determined that with a slight increase in time and with travel between the 2 schools, a learning specialist at Elmwood would have time for these students. The cost for the 0.08 FTE increase is \$2759.28 and is needed only for the remainder of the current school year. The funding source was identified as the Hopkins Staff Payroll.

On a motion made by Ms. Knight, seconded by Ms. Nickerson, the School Committee voted to approve the increase of the learning specialist position at Elmwood School from .5 FTE to .58 FTE as presented.

Vote: Favor: 4 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Scordino)

- C. Capital Article Warrant Payments in the amount of \$83,640.28 – Dr. MacLeod recommended payment of the invoices totaling \$83,640.28.

On a motion made by Ms. Knight, seconded by Ms. Nickerson, the School Committee voted to approve the capital project warrant payments as indicated in the agenda materials.

Vote: Favor: 4 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Scordino)

VI. Old Business

- A. FY16 Capital Plan: The prioritized list of proposed Capital Articles was reviewed and Mr. Graziano noted that Capital Articles must be submitted to the town by December 31, 2014. Ms. Bertschmann noted that the purchase of land for a school building is not the responsibility of the school department, making sure it appears as a place holder somewhere is crucial. Mr. Dumas reported that Gale Associates lowered the estimate for the repairs needed on the Hopkins and High School roofs. The need for roof repair is an even priority for both roofs. Mr. Graziano requested the roofs be submitted individually and combined at a later time, if necessary. Mr. Dumas suggested flipping the order of roof repair and upgrading the fire alarm system as the upgrades address trouble shooting but do not provide a higher level of safety.

Dr. MacLeod reported that the town recreation department requested use of the basketball and tennis courts for a trial ice rink this year. Since the resurfacing of these areas is one of the Capital Articles, Dr. MacLeod approved the ice rink for this year only with instructions that students cannot bring ice skates to school and will not use the rink during school time. The question of which organization holds liability in the event of an accident was discussed.

Dr. MacLeod recommended the order of the Capital Articles be changed per Mr. Dumas' suggestion as: 1) Joint Security Upgrades, 2) School Safety & Security, 3) Joint Technology, 4a) Roof Repairs at Hopkins School, 4b) Roof Repairs at the High School, 5) Upgrade Fire Alarm System/Horns & Strobes at the Middle School, and 6) Resurface Basketball & Tennis Courts at the High School.

On a motion made by Ms. Knight, seconded by Ms. Nickerson, the School Committee voted to approve the 7 Capital Articles be moved forward to the Town Manager as indicated in the agenda materials with the revised priority as recommended by Dr. MacLeod and with the revised amount of the combined cost of the roof repairs as \$700,000.

Vote: Favor: 4 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Scordino)

- B. School Committee Policy: Transportation Policy *EEA* Amendment – A listserv notice was sent out to alert the community that the policy was amended and posted for comment. Dr. MacLeod and the Policy Working Group reviewed the comments which were received and determined that no changes to the policy were needed.

On a motion made by Ms. Knight, seconded by Ms. Nickerson, the School Committee voted to approve the amended Transportation Policy *EEA* as presented.

Vote: Favor: 4 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Scordino)

- C. School Committee Policy: Public's Right to Know *KDB* - A listserv notice was sent out to notify the community that the policy was amended and posted for comment. No comments were received and Dr. MacLeod recommended School Committee approval of the amended policy.

On a motion made by Ms. Nickerson, seconded by Ms. Knight, the School Committee voted to approve the amended Public's Right to Know Policy *KDB* as presented.

Vote: Favor: 4 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Scordino)

VII. Public Comments: None at this meeting

VIII. Items by Consensus:

- A. The Superintendent recommends the School Committee vote to approve the Operating Budget & Other Funds Warrant #15-032 in the amount of \$94,469.21.

- B. The Superintendent recommends the School Committee vote to approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting of September 4, 2014 as indicated in the agenda materials.
- C. The Superintendent recommends the School Committee vote to approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting of September 18, 2014 as indicated in the agenda materials.
- D. The Superintendent recommends the School Committee vote to approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting of October 2, 2014 as indicated in the agenda materials.
- E. The Superintendent recommends the School Committee vote to approve \$1,750 from the “The Sky’s the Limit” fundraiser be placed in the Middle School Gift Account as indicated in the agenda materials.

On a motion made by Ms. Bertschmann, seconded by Ms. Nickerson, the School Committee voted to approve items VIII. A – E.

Vote: Favor: 4 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Scordino)

IX. Adjournment

On a motion made by Ms. Nickerson, seconded by Ms. Bertschmann, the School Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: Favor: 4 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Scordino)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Graziano, Chair
Ellen Scordino, Vice Chair