



# TOWN OF ADAMS

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

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WEDNESDAY, March 23, 2016 – 6:00 PM

ADAMS VISITORS CENTER, 3 Hoosac Street, 1st FLOOR, ADAMS, MA 01220

On the above date the *Finance Committee* held a joint workshop with the *Board of Selectmen* at the Adams Visitors Center at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Timothy Burdick presided the *Finance Committee* meeting. Present were Vice Chairman Leon Parrott and Members Jeffrey Lefebvre, John Cowie, Sandra Kleiner, Paul Demastrie, Charles Foster, Joan Smigel, Mark Chittenden, Rachel Tomkowicz, Matthew Pitoniak, Craig Corrigan, Brian Johnson, and David Allen. Member Amy Giroux was absent.

Chairman Richard Blanchard presided the *Board of Selectmen* meeting. Present were Vice Chairman Jeffrey Snoonian, Members Joseph Nowak, Arthur Harrington and John Duval. Also in attendance were Town Administrator, Tony Mazzucco, McCann Superintendent James Brosnan, and Adams-Cheshire Regional School District Representatives David Hinkell, Paul Butler and Darlene Rodowicz. Superintendent Kristen Gordon was absent.

*The Finance Committee Workshop was called to order by Chairman Burdick at 6:00 p.m.*

*The Select Board Workshop was called to order by Chairman Blanchard at 6:00 p.m.*

### OFFICIAL BUSINESS DISCUSSION

#### McCann Technical School Budget Presentation

Town Administrator Mazzucco introduced Superintendent James Brosnan of McCann Technical School. Superintendent Brosnan and the Chairman of the McCann School Committee explained the budget and gave a paper presentation. They explained that the state funding formula was disappointing. There are three person shops that are now two person shops due to major cuts and changes to the programs. They noted that they try to be conservative and maintain the budget as much as possible with a number of grants. The students make the school easy to run.

#### **Metal Fabrication**

\$120,000 was received for Metal Fab updating in a grant.

#### **Skills USA**

One of the students involved with Skills USA is in a National position and is represented on the front page of a national magazine. It was recognized that there are a lack of skills in Berkshire County and not enough qualified people to provide skills to match the workforce. Cooperative programs provide great interviewing skills and many students get hired and stay with the companies.

#### **Insurance and Salary**

\$1.5 Million is in the budget for insurance costs, and there is an expected \$60,000 salary increase. Grants and other funding sources are utilized to manage and absorb other increases and costs.



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### **Total Budget**

The percentage asked for is one of the lowest in the state. It was noted that the “wealthy community formula” was confusing. Superintendent Brosnan went over the charts and tables. Transportation Chapter 71 was level-funded. The municipal assessment included Chapter 70 by formula and the municipal minimum by formula. Having a proportionate amount of student population is the key driver. Adams has 130 students amounting to \$46,000 for transportation. The roof was put on in 1997 and is being patched. Superintendent Brosnan reviewed how the calculations were made. He categorized the budget as a “vanilla” budget, being much the same as last year.

### **Personnel Budget**

The only significant change was that in the Business and Finance line a person was added to meet the requirement for meeting the needs of the Affordable Care Act and associated required reports. Payroll is being brought back in-house. There are \$60,000 in changes reflecting vertical and lateral movement, step changes and additional salary for added education and trainings. Special Education Contract Services, including testing the Speech Therapist and Specialized Augmented Services have contracts with variable length and must be provided. Superintendent Brosnan briefly reviewed the hierarchy of the top administration. Four paraprofessionals are now required. Health Insurance was reviewed and it was disclosed that all plans are at a 75/25 split.

### **Textbooks, Software and Library Services**

Software has two to four year licenses, and cyclic accounts due to changing curriculum to require common core, MCAS and PARCC testing. The Library provides laptops, digital and paper books. There are no more encyclopedias so students are required to go online to do research. The Librarian position holds a Master’s Degree in Library Science, and is one of the hardest positions to fill.

### **Structural Technology**

CAD, Machine Technology, Computer Labs were reviewed briefly. Superintendent Brosnan advised for Fiscal Year 2017 each of these departments was in good shape.

### **School Nurse**

There is a nursing shortage, and the nurse is for students only, not staff and provides no curriculum. The nurse will do in-house CPR training and medical screenings, as well as serving as attendance officer. It was noted by audience member Bruce Shepley that as a substitute nurse on staff he observed an average of thirty-five to forty kids come into the Nurse’s Office. It was pointed out that being a technical school, safety is taught heavily to the students. There are staff EMTs in case of serious injury.

### **Food Service**

For Fiscal Year 2017 the Food Service is back into the budget. The food quantity and change in nutrition specifications changed dramatically, measuring calculation of ounces. There are anticipated reimbursements to pick up some of the cost.



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### Utilities

McCann is looking at renewables and are currently as efficient as they can be electrically. National Grid did rewiring and motion detectors were installed. LED research has started and the school is waiting for the right offer. It was noted that the windows are not energy efficient and solar could be researched.

**Superintendent Brosnan** fielded light questions from the audience and concluded his presentation.

A five minute break took place between presentations.

### Adams-Cheshire Regional School District Presentation

**School Committee Chairman Paul Butler** gave an overview of the evening's presentation and noted that it was David Hinkell's last year. The Adams assessment went down by .6% and there was an increase for Cheshire due to a change in the state formula. The total budget increase for the district was \$188,000.

### State Formula

**School Committee Member Darlene Rodowicz** explained that the Cheshire increase was driven by the state and had two indicators; property valuations and median income. Cheshire is considered "wealthier" than Adams, and creates lopsided issues. Student enrollment is another factor. The district used the cherry sheet from DESE rather than enrollment in the formula. What drove the reduction was the need for the district to build a budget that both communities could afford, and to keep the ratios and formulas in sync.

### Health Insurance

She noted the Health Insurance will be a 70/30 split in the HMO plans and 60/40 split for the PPO plans. She noted it is currently a 75/25 split on the HMO and the district will renegotiate it in two years. Last year by conscious decision to create a 60/40 split on the PPO it drove people from the PPO to HMOs to pay less for coverage as there are more constraints and gatekeeping on the PPOs. Retiree contributions to MEDEX are the same split as the active employees at a 75/25 split. The split is contractual with the Teachers' Union.

### Grants

It is estimated in 2017 that Federal Grants will provide \$770,000, and Ms. Rodowicz noted when the economy was good the district used to receive \$2 Million in grant funds. The majority of these funds are used for SPED and Title I, Early Childhood and School Choice. She said the Adams-Cheshire School District does not have access to grants because they go to the Charter and Technical Schools instead.

### Increased Costs

**Ms. Rodowicz** outlined that a lack of state funding caused a larger assessment to the town, and the state is paying a smaller portion of the budget than it did ten years ago. There is \$35,000 more in transportation costs and there is a \$200,000 Health Insurance increase. She pointed out there is also an increase in maintenance costs and the state is only giving a fraction of the cost.



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### **Chapter 70 Funds**

Business Manager David Hinkell advised there is a decrease of \$110,000 in the total budget, due to a decrease in Chapter 70 Funds. He explained the reason being that the district tried a different reporting technique and was “being creative” instead of counting the eligible and ineligible students. The State did not accept the report with this technique. He pointed out that the State had promised 100% funding and the true reimbursement amount was at 60%, with no funding for SPED. The reimbursement is subject to appropriation by the Governor’s administration.

### **Additional Unexpected Enrollment**

**Ms. Rodowicz** noted that with the closure of the Eagleton School the district may be taking in unexpected enrollment through foster families in the area that may take in children. She noted last year the district lost only four children in enrollment. She reviewed how the money follows the child from school to school, making it difficult to pin down.

### **Expenditures**

Decreases in expenditures were reviewed and it was noted that there is a decrease in the interest on the High School.

### **Reductions**

An original figure of \$80,000 in repairs to the schools was reduced. It was explained that staff reductions in the amount of \$800,000, or 12.5 positions was to take place. Additional reductions will take place

**Finance Committee Members** pointed out that one of the positions was reduced by two retirements, and that cuts impact classroom size. Administration positions going back to the teacher level go back on the teacher salary scale. The Technology Director that was just hired is being eliminated, as is the Curriculum Coordinator, who is moving back to the classroom. Last year the district advised the Curriculum Director was a necessity per DESE and this year the position is eliminated.

### **Capital Projects**

Capital needs were reviewed and it was noted that the boiler room roof at C.T. Plunkett is in a critical state. The school went out to bid and got specifications to patch it but it couldn’t be done because it is spongy. It has a slate roof, which is problematic and was put on in 1992.

**Town Administrator Mazzucco** reviewed his recommendation on the roof repairs and advised estimates should be gotten by the end of summer. A study done by an architectural firm will need to be reviewed. The ceiling on the inside is saturated and falling down so it must be rebuilt.

### **Financial Management**

The School has a certified treasurer that comes in once every couple weeks for \$1,000 per month to review the budget. This person is a retired CPA and is required to review the expenditures. The Treasurer is separate from the Business Manager, and is a mandated position. The treasurer checks the math, does an annual audit, provides second signatures and works with bank accounts.



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### **Building Consolidation**

Reducing one building in the district was discussed and pros and cons of eliminating either C.T. Plunkett School or the Cheshire Elementary School were considered. It is important to start discussions on consolidation as soon as possible and to consider the safety of the students and viability of each building. A suggestion was made to perhaps have one Northern Berkshire High School. UMASS Donohue can give unbiased input and an objective analysis of which building should close.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

*The Finance Committee adjourned their meeting.*

*Motion made to adjourn by Member Johnson*

*Second by Vice Chairman Parrott*

*Unanimous Vote*

*Motion passed*

*The Finance Committee Meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.*

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,  
Recording Secretary

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Timothy Burdick, Chairman