

TOWN OF ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS
HOOSAC VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY
125 SAVOY ROAD, CHESHIRE MA 01225

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FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES 02/28/2018 18 APR -4 AM 9: 32

TOWN CLERK

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Burdick at 6:00 p.m. Members Demastrie, Corrigan, Smigel, Foster, Parrott, Lefebvre, Kleiner, Tomkowicz, and Cowie were present. Also in attendance were members of the Adams Board of Selectmen, Cheshire Board of Selectmen, Cheshire Finance Committee, the Adams-Cheshire Regional School District (ACRSD) School Committee, and facilitator Bernard Lynch.

UPDATE ON THE FY19 SCHOOL BUDGET: *ACRSD Superintendent Dr. Putnam* gave a brief budget overview of the budget. He explained the strategy from last year and gave a summary of the steps taken to maximize resources including closing Cheshire Elementary School and adding personnel. He noted that the FY2019 Budget is a refinement of the same vision. He explained what positions were maintained from last year's additions and proposed to add a School Psychologist. Reallocated funds from grants would put together a position. A STEM position has been added, to add more course offerings and expand the Project Lead the Way programming.

At 6:17 p.m. Adams Finance Committee Member Cowie entered the meeting.

ACRSD Business Manager Erika Snyder advised the School Committee will be voting on the budget on March 12th. She reviewed the budget and explained the line items. It was noted that the March 5th School Committee meeting was potentially going to conflict with the Special Town Meeting in Adams. Three parts of the budget were reviewed. The foundation of the budget showed an increase over last year. The Cherry Sheet and the Governor's proposal were reviewed. Chapter 70, Regional School Transportation, Charter tuition reimbursements and School Choice receiving tuition were explained. A brief clarification was made about School Choice, students outgoing to other schools and the impact this has on the budget. School transportation numbers were reviewed. Ms. Snyder highlighted that there was no increase for health insurance premiums, but it was still under discussion for a possibility of changes in the retiree insurance split. Building and maintenance showed a projected reduction in utilities due to net metering credits. One building will be repurposed and there will be added personnel. Four positions were added for FY2018, including a STEM, School Psychologist and two Middle School Paraprofessionals. The School Psychologist will be a full position at \$65,000 salary to be available to all buildings and also perform the duties of School Adjustment Counselor, School Psychologist and Guidance Counselor. It was explained that the money for the positions was being repurposed from grants, revolving funds, School Choice and tuition. It was noted that the Title I Grant was reduced and is based on census data, which is unpredictable. Increases were explained as being contractual union agreements, Charter School Assessments, School Choice assessments, and the Hoosac Valley High School roof repairs. Roof repairs were discussed more in depth, and the warranties on the portions of the roof were explained. It was mentioned that the roof should be under warranty until 2024, and an attorney and the insurance company have been consulted. \$40,000 is intended to be put on account in case something needs to be done. No funds were put into Capital Repair from FY2018, but there is \$60,000 left. \$16,000 was used on the cost overrun for the Boiler Room project, and the back stairs are being done for under \$10,000. The Chimney Project, which will either repair or remove the chimney on the McDonald's side of the building, will cost \$16,000. The Portico was discussed, and it was noted there was a need for interior preparation for a safety system. The Fire Chief and Building Commissioner have been consulted to evaluate sensors and a removal of sensors in the crawlspace is necessary. Superintendent Putnam is working with the Interim Town Administrator and Chairman of the Board of Selectmen to be sure the Town is aware of the project coordination. Capital funds will be carried

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forward if not used and the Town of Adams budget Capital Plan will include C.T. Plunkett projects. Items still in flux are negotiations with custodians and paraprofessionals, Special Education needs for out-of-district placements, and the Education and Development FY2018 Year End Fund Balance. The formula calculation wording from the Commonwealth was read, and it is based on demographics. The calculation of the Foundation Budget was reviewed. She noted there was a small increase in the Foundation Budget, creating a change for the Town of Adams. Transportation expenditures and reimbursements were calculated and the distribution to each town was explained as being based by enrollment per the Regional Agreement. Loss of enrollment was discussed, and it was noted that a number of the lost students went to McCann Technical School. Capital Assessments were reviewed. It was noted that the Hoosac Valley Elementary School Bond and the Cheshire Elementary School Bond were both up in 2023. The change was noted as being a 3.993% increase to the Town of Adams. Total assessments were reviewed, both outside and inside the Levy Limits. Capital Assessments of the boiler bonds, building project bonds, the bond premium amortization and the roof repairs were outlined and are split for Adams and Cheshire. The total assessments both outside and inside the levy limit were announced and the numbers were compared over the last couple years. It was explained that the foundation minimum local contribution is the reason for the change. Brief discussion took place regarding the review of safety and security in the schools and whether an increase in safety would impact this and future budgets. The State Police and Adams Police Department meet with the Superintendent regularly and local law enforcement was praised for a recent summit that took place regarding safety precautions. Safety at evening meetings and athletic events were briefly discussed. The grant program for *Breakfast in the Classroom* could be a possible federal cut in the future. Building maintenance, sustainability and repair preplanning was touched on. A Statement of Interest will be submitted toward building an Elementary School on the Hoosac Valley High School campus. It was noted by the Superintendent that the solution to serving both Adams and Cheshire is to have a single campus. If it goes forward an approval would happen by January 2019, and it would be a two to three year process including Town agreement to share in the process.

DISCUSSION ON COST SAVING IDEAS RELATED TO THE COLLINS REPORT: It was noted that the Collins Report suggested closing the second Elementary School in five to seven years and moving all students to the Hoosac Valley High School, not adding an additional building. An explanation was given that the School District is planning for contingencies with multiple options. It was pointed out that the roof on the Elementary School is over 25 years old, the slate roof is leaking, brick repointing is a significant job, and a great deal of work needs to happen on the building in the near future. It was stated that the maintenance of the building has been neglected. The Adams Board of Selectmen Members advised that Adams is making the commitment to make sure the maintenance is being done going forward. School Committee Members advised they would make sure the repairs are being taken care of.

At 7:13 p.m. Adams Finance Committee Member Tomkowicz departed the meeting.

Superintendent Putnam advised he met with Monica Lamboy to evaluate programs and to show how well the District was implementing trainings. Mr. Lynch advised that a dialogue was taking place to look at closing the current Elementary School. There is an increase in the number of hands-on programs such as Forestry Management will be added and high school staffing was noted as being very tight. A request

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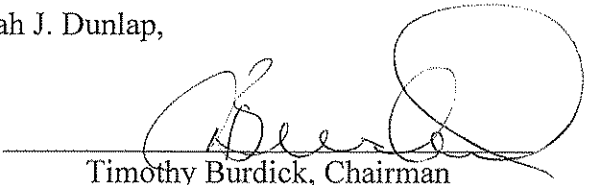
was made for the School District to provide the absentee dates for the teachers to assess the number of study hall days for students due to teacher absences that was noted in the Collins Report.

At 7:24 p.m. Adams Finance Committee Member Kleiner departed the meeting.

DISCUSSION OF IDEAS FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION AND FORMALIZATION OF REGIONAL GROUP MEETINGS: *Mr. Lynch* advised that a review will be done by the Chair of the Adams and Cheshire Boards of Selectmen, Finance Committees and the School Committee to talk about shared issues. He suggested quarterly meetings to take place. Discussion took place about the viability of quarterly meetings with the challenge of the budget meetings taking place in the first quarter and the summer having very little activity. *Mr. Lynch* will provide a written document of his thoughts and recommended meeting March, September and December. He gave an example of the collaboration of Lee and Lenox working together and now sharing staff. A suggestion was made to share services with North Adams, and for the meetings on shared services to happen two times a year instead. It was pointed out that all of the meetings held by the individual groups are public meetings and all participants have the opportunity to attend. Discussion took place about the concept of sharing a Superintendent with North Adams and whether adding 1,100 students to a Superintendent would be advised in the short term. School Committee Members advised an investigatory process is in place. A \$100,000 grant was received to assist in shared services and it must be spent by December of 2018. Superintendent candidates are currently scheduled to be interviewed. The process of the investigation of a shared Superintendent was outlined and it was noted a report was due by April 16th. The Superintendent Search Committee will make a selection by May 2nd after the investigatory results are reported. It was noted a two year trial could take place to determine whether it works, and could be reversed to return to the current structure. The current population decline was noted and a shared Superintendent is one option. A District Management Group is being successfully used all over the country. School Districts and governance would not be shared, just the Superintendent. Shared communities would pay a fee. Pittsfield has a single Superintendent and an Assistant Superintendent for 5,000 students. A consultant will identify similarly sized communities for comparison. The role and responsibility of the Town Administrator in coordinating collaboration of Towns was expressed as being important. The importance of reviewing the Town Charters regarding sharing a Town Administrator was also touched on. Past meetings between the Board of Selectmen Chairs and Town Administrators of Cheshire and Adams eased due to a noted personality conflict. Additional discussion took place regarding funds that would be put into creating a new building versus refurbishing existing buildings. It was pointed out that more funds are spent on buildings than operations in recent years and Towns cannot afford to do both. The School Committee explained they are looking at a potential addition to the Hoosac Valley High School building to make plans for the future. A request was made to receive an updated Collins Report.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by Member Lefebvre to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Cowie, Vote: Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary



Timothy Burdick, Chairman
Finance Committee