



APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE **MEETING MINUTES**

Saturday, February 25, 2017
Selectmen's Meeting Room

Present: Chairman, Elaine Kelly
Janice Hight
Rick Nieber
Tony Poteete
Bob D'Amico

Also present: John Coderre, Town Administrator
Christine Johnson, Superintendent of Schools
Greg Martineau, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Cheryl Levesque, Business Manager
Marie Alan, Dir. of Special Education/Student Support Services
Rhoda Webb, District ELL Lead
Tom Mead, Principal, Algonquin Regional High School
Lynn Winters, Regional School Committee – arrived at 11:10am
Jack Kane, Chair, K-8 School Committee
Patricia Kress, K-8 School Committee and Regional School Committee
Joan Frank, K-8 School Committee and Regional School Committee
Leo Brehm, Director of Instructional Technology and Digital Learning
Jason Perreault, Selectmen – arrived at 11:45am

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Nieber moved the Committee vote to approve the February 16, 2017 meeting minutes as submitted, Ms. Hight seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

FY2018 Budget Update

Mr. Coderre presented the proposed Health Insurance Opt-out program whereby the Town incentivizes employees to leave their health insurance to go to another source (typically a spouse's coverage). Northborough is one of the few area communities not to implement such an incentive program. The Group Insurance Commission (GIS), which covers all state employees, has an opt-out program as does Westborough and Southborough. Mr. Coderre shared his concern that we are becoming increasingly more attractive as the preferred source of health insurance coverage, adding that we recently picked up a new subscriber from Southborough because of their implementation of an opt-out program.

Mr. Coderre reminded the Committee the Town successfully negotiated plan design changes with all Unions in FY17, holding down Health Insurance Budget increases to 3%. This opt-out program is the next logical move for FY18. He added that Town staff recommends implementation of this program.

Mr. Coderre indicated that most organizations try to keep the incentives at about 25% of the savings. The Town family plans average \$15,547. With an incentive offering of \$3,750, average savings for

FY2018 Budget Update Cont. . .

Town employees would be \$11,797. The School family plans average \$17,043. With the same incentive offering, average savings for School employees would be \$13,293.

If approved by the Board of Selectmen at their February 27th Meeting, the goal is to implement this program effective July 1, 2017 (FY2018).

K-8 Northborough Public Schools

The Superintendent distributed an information packet to the Committee and proceeded to review a power point presentation, which was distributed to the Committee in paper form. The presentation represents the operational budget subcommittee's recommendation. This final version must still be formally approved by the K-8 School Committee at their March 1st meeting, but it is anticipated that the budget will be supported.

Superintendent Johnson reviewed the K-8 School Committee FY2018 Budget goals:

- Maintain and support high quality staff and instructional programs and support class student/teacher ratios in accordance with Policy I-240 Class Size Policy
- Meet the needs of all learners with a classroom model of differentiated instruction and standards-based education
- Provide programs and staffing to meet the social and emotional health of all children.
- Maintain the District's capital assets with a special emphasis on safety and up-to-date energy efficiencies
- Ensure all students an educational program consistent with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and prepare all students for success in district-based and state assessments
- Meet State Benchmarks for educational technology and the funding goals identified in the Vision 2020 and Technology Implementation Plan

Overall, the K-8 School Budget is proposed to increase \$725,174 or 3.19% to \$23,445,017.

Superintendent Johnson reviewed the success of the new Class Size I-240 Policy, which has allowed the School Department to maintain class size by moving new students to the elementary school where space is available for the initial year of enrollment. The policy has allowed the school administration to be confident about staffing ratios at the start of each school year. Following the initial year, students can move back to their neighborhood school as openings occur.

Superintendent Johnson reviewed the FY2018 recommended staffing shifts as follows:

Staff – Reductions

4.0 FTE	Class Size Reductions
<u>.6 FTE</u>	Instructional Technology
4.6 FTE	Recommended Staff Reductions

Staff – Proposed

.5 FTE	Mathematics Coordinator
<u>1.0 FTE</u>	Clinical Licensed Social Worker
1.5 FTE	Recommended Staff Proposed for FY2018

Overall Reduction

3.1 FTE	(Full-time Equivalent)
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K-8 Northborough Public Schools Cont. . .

Superintendent Johnson noted that overall enrollment is decreasing from 1748 in FY2017 to 1627 in FY2018 – a projected reduction of 121 students. Staffing and budget recommendations have taken the enrollment data into consideration. The Committee commended the Superintendent and her staff for the successful implementation of the I-240 Policy.

Superintendent Johnson noted that she recently settled the Teachers Association contract for 2% in FY2018.

Committee members requested further breakdown of benefit eligible employees. Superintendent Johnson indicated that she will email this information to the Town Administrator.

K-8 Budget Presentation concluded at 11:15 a.m.

Break for Lunch

Algonquin Regional High School (ARHS) FY2018 Budget

Superintendent Johnson reviewed the power point presentation and supplemental handouts. Overall, the ARHS Budget is proposed to increase by 3.8% to \$22,304,466 – an increase of \$816,541.

Northborough’s operating assessment is proposed to increase by 3.41% to \$10,414,869 – an increase of \$343,218. By contrast, Southborough’s operating assessment is proposed to increase by 4.86% to \$7,426,181 – an increase of \$344,185. Northborough’s share of the debt service expense in FY2018 is \$660,574 – a reduction of \$631 from FY2017.

In total, Northborough’s FY2018 combined operating and debt assessments is \$11,075,443 – an increase of \$342,587 or 3.19%.

Superintendent Johnson reviewed the Regional School Committees’ FY2018 priorities, which include:

- Maintain high quality staff, instructional programming and instructional resources
- Strive to achieve class sizes according to School Committee Policy
- Prepare all students for high levels of success in various high-stakes assessments
- Fund the initiatives of the School Improvement Plan
- Meet the goals set forth for educational technology in the District Technology Plan
- Create and fund a short and long-term Capital Plan for the high school

Superintendent Johnson reviewed the handouts detailing enrollments, teacher/pupil ratios, per pupil costs and transportation costs. Overall, enrollment is projected to increase from 1,447 to 1,464 with 58.26% from Northborough and 41.74% from Southborough. The Health Insurance Budget is projected to increase 8.6%.

The Committee members expressed their appreciation with the high level of collaboration between the Town and Schools and thanked the Superintendent for bringing in a fiscally and educationally sound FY2018 budget proposal.

Next Meeting Date and Committee Meeting Schedule

The Committee meets next on March 2, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. to review the Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School and DPW Budgets, as well as the Water & Sewer Enterprise Funds.

Any other business to come before the Committee

The Town Administrator briefly reviewed the Legislative Priorities letter and invited the committee members to attend the March 13th Board of Selectmen meeting with our legislative delegates.

The Town Administrator also briefly reviewed the draft list of potential Town Meeting warrant articles.

Adjournment

Ms. Hight moved the Committee vote to adjourn; Mr. Nieber seconded; motion was unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Coderre

John W. Coderre, Town Administrator

Documents used during meeting:

1. February 25, 2017 Meeting Agenda
2. February 16, 2017 Meeting Minutes
3. Legislative Priorities Letter
4. Preliminary Draft Town Meeting Warrant
5. FY2018 Budget Update
6. Northborough K-8 School FY2018 Budget Presentation packet
7. ARHS FY2018 Budget Presentation packet