



APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 14, 2019
Selectmen's Meeting Room

7:00 p.m.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: George Brenckle

ALSO PRESENT: John Coderre, Town Administrator
Ernie Houle, Assabet School Superintendent
Kris Luoto, Director of Business Operations
Virginia Simms George, Assabet Regional School Committee
Kelly Burke, Senior Center Director
Adrienne Cost, COA Chair
Christopher Lindquist, Library Director
Michelle Rehill, Library Trustees Chair

APPROVAL OF MARCH 7, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Nieber moved the Committee vote to approve the March 7, 2019 meeting minutes; Mr. D'Amico seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 9, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Nieber moved the Committee vote to approve the March 9, 2019 meeting minutes; Ms. Hight seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

ASSABET VALLEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL FY2020 BUDGET

Superintendent Ernie Houle, Director of Business Operations Kris Luoto and Assabet Regional School Committee Chair Virginia Simms George reviewed the FY2020 Assabet budget, including the following key points:

- An overall 4.25% increase over FY2019, which reflects cost of livings adjustments and required obligations, equating to an increase of \$896,000.
- The budget fulfills a requirement to satisfy a request from the Governor and District Attorney's Office, as well as supported by the Marlborough Police Department, to add a School Resource Officer.
- This will be the fifth year of a five-year school bus transportation contract with a contractual increase of 2.8% for FY2020.

ASSABET VALLEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL FY2020 BUDGET CONT. . .

- Although at this time, health care cost increases are unknown, there is a possible increase of 10% based upon current health care claims trending data. The current responsibility to pay for health care costs is 75% paid by the District and 25% paid by the employee.
- FY2020 will be the first year of the three-year collective bargaining agreement with the American Federation of Teachers. They are currently still in negotiations for successor contracts, but at this time, no settlements have been made.

Superintendent Houle noted that Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School is a vocational school composed of the member communities of Berlin, Hudson, Marlborough, Maynard, Northborough, Southborough and Westborough. Northborough's assessment is based upon the number of students from Town attending the school. The total FY2020 budget is \$21,960,000, which is an increase of \$896,000 or 4.25%.

As of October 1, 2018, 45 Northborough students attend Assabet Valley, which represents 5.38% of the FY2020 overall Assabet budget, or an operating assessment of \$694,822. This is an enrollment increase of 4 from the 41 Northborough students that attended Assabet Valley last year. Northborough's FY2020 share of the debt assessment from the completed building renovation project is \$141,488, which will continue to decline in subsequent years. The net effect of Northborough's combined operating assessment and new debt service is \$836,310, which is an increase of \$78,588, or 10.37%.

In response to a question by Ms. Hight, Ms. Luoto indicated that the per pupil cost for Northborough students attending Assabet is \$15,430.

Following a review of the programs and accomplishments of Northborough students attending Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School, the Committee thanked Superintendent Houle for his presentation.

SENIOR CENTER FY2020 BUDGET

Senior Center Director Kelly Burke stated that overall, the departmental budget is up 1.95%, or \$5,646, which includes a \$3,000 increase in the building maintenance and repairs line to better reflect actual costs. The departmental budget as presented does not include contractual wage increases for Union and Non-Union personnel, as those expenses have been budgeted centrally pending completion of union negotiations. During FY2019 the Friends of the Senior Center donated funds to pay for a second 19 hour per week position to help run the growing lunch and dinner program at the Senior Center known as the Bistro @ 119, which serves lunch Monday through Friday and dinner on Tuesday evenings. The goal is to fund the second position through program fees as the meals program continues to grow. In addition to the appropriated budget supported by tax revenues, the Senior Center receives approximately \$32,000 in additional funds directly from a State Formula Grant which is used primarily to provide exercise programs to seniors. The formula grant (based on the number of seniors in Town) is not subject to Town Meeting appropriation.

Ms. Burke reviewed the programs and initiatives for the past year, including outreach efforts; transportation services; an adult day program for those with dementia called Day Break, as well as many other activities. The Bistro continues to serve lunch Monday through Thursday and Dinner on Tuesday evenings and remains self-sufficient from generated revenues.

LIBRARY FY2019 BUDGET

Library Director Christopher Lindquist stated that overall, the FY2020 Library Budget is up 1.53%, or \$12,825. The departmental budget as presented does not include contractual wage increases for Union and Non-Union personnel, as those expenses have been budget centrally pending completion of union negotiations. The primary increases in the budget are for utility expenses and minor equipment replacement. In FY2020 the Library will also receive an estimated \$23,065 in State Aid that goes directly to the Library and does not require Town Meeting appropriation.

Mr. Lindquist reviewed a handout showing current statistics on usage and the various program initiatives. He noted the prevailing trend in Library buildings is to reduce the print collections by approximately one-third and to repurpose the space for other programmatic uses. The Trustees continue to fundraise and have set up a formal endowment program.

Mr. Lindquist discussed the 150th Anniversary of the Library and the events, past and upcoming, to celebrate. He noted that the Library will be hosting its 150th Jubilee on April 6th at the Haven Country Club in Boylston.

Mr. D'Amico commented that almost all use statistics involving visits to the Library are down. In response, Mr. Lindquist indicated that electronic usage and technology related questions are increasing. The Library is slowly becoming more of a community center with programs.

NEXT MEETING DATES

March 21, 2019 – Cancelled – not needed

March 25, 2019 – Joint Budget Hearing with Board of Selectmen

March 28, 2019 – Finance Department Budget Presentation and Vote on Warrant Articles

April 4, 2019 – Joint Meeting on Fire Station project

April 22, 2019 – Annual Town Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Hight moved the Committee vote to adjourn; Mr. D'Amico seconded the motion; all members in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Coderre
Town Administrator

Documents used during meeting:

1. March 14, 2019 Meeting Agenda
2. March 7, 2019 Meeting Minutes
3. March 9, 2019 Meeting Minutes
4. Assabet High School FY2020 Budget
5. Senior Center FY2020 Budget and Program Materials
6. Library FY2020 Budget and Program Memo