

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
22 Mar 2005
Town Building

The meeting is brought to order at 7:05 p.m. In attendance are Brian Burke, Steve Dungan, Pam Glauner, Henry Hagopian, Patti Heron, Charles Kern, and Jason Robart

Nashoba Valley Regional School District Budget

Superintendent Michael Wood, Assistant Superintendent John Antonucci, and Stow School Committee members Nancy Fleming, Chris Way, and Ellen Sturgis are present to discuss the Nashoba Regional School District budget. Pam Glauner led a lively discussion on the budget and related topics. The key points are:

- The school budget will go up less than originally requested because of a reduction of expenses and drawing more out of the E and D account.
- The E and D account is currently 840k after FY04 certification.
- The FAB's target for E and D is 700k but FAB knows the target may not be met
- The budget includes 148k for capital expenditures, but does not include ADA improvements at the high school.
- One of the goal of the budget is to add programs to reduce class size to about 25 at the high school
- Grades 3-8 have the same class size; other classes should improve
- The budget reflects less than 100% state reimbursement for transportation

David Walrath and Tom Ryan arrived at 7:15

- Tom Ryan stated that ADA related expenditures should go to the voters.
- Tom Ryan questioned the need for 75k for a feasibility study for an administration wing.
- Michael Wood noted the Administration wing would provide office space for 25 people.
- Steve Dungan asked if the school is still restoring cuts from 2002. Michael Wood stated that the school planned to restore the cuts over three years.
- Steve Dungan asked how the increase in budget compared to other schools. Michael Wood offered a comparison to Northborough, the school with the highest increase, and asserted that NRSD is at the low end of the range of comparable schools.
- Michael Wood stated that of the increase of 16.5 FTEs most were for current operations and 6 were for new or restored programs. Enrollment is up 1.6% and staff is up 3.6% to reduce class size and add/restore programs.
- Steve Dungan asked why the per pupil expenditures exceeded the foundation budget. Michael Wood stated that the foundation budget is a misnomer and is not adequate for NRSD.
- Steve Dungan asks several questions relating to information on DOE website. Nancy Fleming stated that it is unfortunate that this information is available because this information tells you nothing without a broader context.
- David Walrath asked if high SPED costs were a legacy of an era when anyone could sign a SPED contract. Michael Wood agreed and noted that he had tried to increase the SPED done in house.
- Pam Glauner asked why transportation costs were so high when elementary and middle schools are local and high school is local for Bolton students.

- Jason Robart asked about the teacher's contract. Michael Wood stated that he hoped (but did not expect) labor negotiations would be complete by ATM but was confident that labor negotiations would be in the range of the current budget numbers regarding staff.
- Tom Ryan noted the increase in site based funds. Michael Wood stated that new teachers imply new classroom expenses.
- David Walrath stated that the budget should include all known grants and revolving accounts

Reserve Fund Transfer Request

Jason Robart politely requested that the Building Inspector should complete the required paperwork before we consider his Reserve Fund transfer.

Patti Heron discussed a request by the Veteran's Agent to provide a housing benefit. The need was not know at the time of the last budget and will be included in the next budget. David Walrath moves that \$6,000 be transferred to the Veteran's Agent. Steve Dungan seconds. The motion was approved unanimously.

Correspondence

Jason Robart briefly discussed various correspondence.

Schedule of Meeting

Jason Robart proposed a preliminary schedule of meetings to discuss the budgets

Web Site

Brian Burke asked the committee to visit the FinCom page of the web site. Pam Glauner suggested that the email subscription service should include the agenda but not the minutes. The committee decided to post agenda, minutes, special presentations and annual reports on the FinCom page. David Walrath will prepare these materials for Susan Hosier.

Salary Review

Henry Hagopian stated that the salary review should be complete by the fall town meeting

Minutes

Jason Robart asked that we postpone approval of minutes.

Adjournment

Steve Dungan moves that the meeting be adjourned. David Walrath seconds the motion. The motion to adjourn passes unanimously. The meeting was adjourned 9:40.

Action Items

David Walrath to make copies of the budget for the public hearing

Respectfully Submitted,
Charlie Kern