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**Uxbridge Budget Subcommittee**

**October 20, 2014**

**Uxbridge High School Library**

*Committee members present: Sean Dugan, Charlene Miller, Debbie Stark*

**1. Call to Order**

Sean Dugan, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

**2. Public Comment**

None

**3. FY 15 Budget Update**

**4. Student Transportation**

a) Regional Vocational Transportation

Don Sawyer reminded the committee that when students go out of district for programs not offered by BVT the town must pay the full transportation cost for that student/s.

This year we have one student attending Tri-County. Cost to the district is \$24000 in tuition plus \$18,000 for transportation. This student does share transportation with another student from a neighboring town, and the \$18,000 reflects 50% of the total cost to transport both students. Since this was a new enrollment, the school had not budgeted the \$18,000 for transportation. Mrs. Miller asked if there were parameters or flexibility in transportation that would lower this cost and Mr. Sawyer said this was the lowest cost available.

Mr. Sawyer also mentioned that he needed a dollar amount to earmark for school committee orientation training. It is required by law that all new committee members attend this training.

Ms. Taparousky said she had requested dates for November and that any committee member can attend. It is one fee regardless of how many members attend. The meeting will be approximately 3 hours and focus on the roles of school committee members.

b) Bus Contract Bid Specs

Mr. Sawyer provided the survey, previously requested by the budget subcommittee, that shows the transportation fees charged by neighboring districts.

He said we are entering new bus contract negotiations and it is critical to know how many buses the district would like to contract.

Our district currently contracts 12 buses at \$76,000/year. Each bus seats 72 students. This amount includes a forecast for fuel but the charge for fuel itself is a separate entity. We have a contracted volume of fuel for each month, but the price is not fixed, and varies with the market price for fuel each month.

Collecting bids is a 45 day process.

The law requires a school district provide transportation for k-6 graders that live more than 2.0 miles from their school. Our district currently provides transportation to all high school students, to Taft and Whitin students that live more than a mile from the school, and for McCloskey students that live more than 1.5 miles from the school.

Mr. Sawyer believes under our current policy we would still need 12 buses to accommodate students attending the Taft and Whitin schools regardless of what the ridership would be for 7-12 grades. If the district chose not to offer transportation to the upper grades, since it is not required by law, we would still be contracting 12 buses because of the needs of the lower grades.

Ms. Taparauskys said her challenge with charging bus fees to the high school students was that the district has already committed to providing transportation to the high school based on where it was built. She also wanted everyone to be aware that any child eligible for free/reduced lunch would also be eligible for reduced/free bus fares if fees were implemented.

Mr. Dugan mentioned that he believed recommending fees to the full school committee at the next meeting would be rushed.

Mr. Sawyer recommended that the school committee let him know by the December school committee meeting the direction it wanted him to take in the bid process. A standard contract is three years. Any contract for a longer time period has to be approved by a vote at town meeting.

Mrs. Stark asked to get a list of the number of students riding the bus sorted by grade.

Mr. Sawyer did note that the town did charge bus fees before and the process did not roll out successfully.

## **5. School Fees**

a) Parking Fees

Mr. Dugan asked Mr. Sawyer for a list of what other areas schools charge for parking.

b) Athletic Fees

Mr. Sawyer provided a breakdown of athletic expenditures at the high school and middle school levels, according to sport. He also included a list of what amounts area districts charge for athletic fees.

Other things Mr. Sawyer noted...

--Athletic fees that are collected go into an athletic revolving account. It is under the authority of the Athletic Director.

--Athletic stipends have not changed since 2004, however they might change moving forward since teacher contracts are still in negotiation.

--Uxbridge collects approximately \$56,000 in athletic fees.

Ms. Taparauskas said that in the past the fees collected have helped to offset transportation costs that were not covered in the budget as well as referees/umpire fees also not fully covered by the budget.

Mrs. Stark asked when Uxbridge last changed their athletic fees. Mr. Sawyer said they were raised in 2013 from \$50-\$75 with no noticeable decline in participation.

Mrs. Stark asked if the athletic revolving account's balance has been increasing/decreasing/staying neutral. Mr. Sawyer said it is neutral and that one of the reasons for increasing fees in 2013 was because the account was trending negative.

Mrs. Miller listed the fees associated with many town leagues and noted that they exceed, often double, Uxbridge's \$75 athletic fee.

Mr. Sawyer noted that some school districts charge no athletic fee and that BVT charges only \$25/sport.

Mrs. Miller noted that towns close to our district (Douglas, Northbridge, Hopedale, and Mendon/Upton) have fees considerably higher than Uxbridge.

Both Mrs. Miller and Ms. Taparauskas warned that cutting middle school sports could ruin the high school's feeder program and could cause a significant amount of middle school students to have no after school activity options.

Other things Mr. Sawyer noted..

--Middle school sports stipends are ½ of the high school stipends.

--Gate fees collected at high school games are collected by the athletic boosters.

--Admission fees collected at drama productions, concerts, etc. are collected by their respective club/organizations.

--Up until 2003, Uxbridge charged an activity fee similar to an athletic fee.

Mr. Dugan requested that Mr. Sawyer poll surrounding towns to see if/what they charge for extracurricular activities.

Mr. Dugan noted that Leicester charges a lower athletic fee for middle school athletics. Both Mrs. Stark and Mrs. Miller agreed with recommending that Uxbridge do the same.

All committee members agreed to reexamine fees annually.

*Sean Dugan moved that the budget subcommittee make a recommendation of \$150 athletic fee at the high school and \$100 athletic fee at the middle school with a family cap of \$600. Mrs. Miller seconded the motion. Vote passed 3-0.*

## **6. FY 16 Budget Process**

Mr. Sawyer suggested that after the budget subcommittee starts seeing the drafts and numbers related to next year's budget that the subcommittee meet more regularly and potentially invite administrators to the meetings to discuss their operations.

## **7. Old/New Business**

Next subcommittee meeting was scheduled for November 3, 2014 at 7:00 PM

Mr. Sawyer said there needs to be an added agenda item for the next subcommittee meeting on the general administrative assessment from the town to the food service revolving account and the daycare revolving account. He said the school committee needs to vet out the unauthorized expenses to that account.

## **8. Public Comment**

## **9. Adjournment**

*Mrs. Stark moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mrs. Miller seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:35*

Respectfully submitted,



Debbie Stark

Uxbridge Budget Subcommittee Secretary

