

January 19, 2011

A meeting of the Wareham School Committee was held on Wednesday, January 19, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the Wareham Middle School Auditorium. Members in attendance were Dr. Cliff Sylvia, Mr. Ken Fontes, Mr. Geoff Swett, Ms. Rachel Gillette, Mrs. Rhonda Veugen and student representative, Miss Jessica Hanson as well as Superintendent Dr. Rabinovitch and recording secretary, Mrs. Ruiz.

Invited guests included members of the Board of Selectmen - Walter Cruz, Steve Holmes, Cara Winslow, and Brenda Eckstrom – the Town Administrator, Mark Andrews, the Town Accountant, Elizabeth Zaleski, and members of the Finance Committee - Frank Heath, Bob White, Dave Trudell, Donna Bronk, and Dick Paulsen.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Sylvia.

PUBLIC HEARING – FY'12 Budget

Dr. Sylvia explained the format he would be using this evening for the public hearing. Dr. Rabinovitch would make a presentation followed by a presentation from the Town Administrator, Mr. Andrews, and then limited discussion, comments, and questions from each committee and the public.

Dr. Sylvia announced that on February 15th at 7PM in the Wareham Middle School there will be parent training regarding the new Bullying Law.

Dr. Sylvia asked for a moment of silence in memory of long time employee Claire Sylvia and former student, Courtney Vieira.

Dr. Sylvia opened the Public Hearing.

Dr. Rabinovitch's FY'12 budget presentation included the following:

- Budget Timetable
- Requests for a level service budget adding items to close the achievement gap in ELA and Math scores
- Three new programs – Response to Intervention (RTI); enhanced supervision and instructional leadership evaluation; MA Core Curriculum at WHS
- Graphs and charts showing Wareham vs. State FY93 through FY10 Net School Spending above or below minimum - Wareham is 2% above minimum over the last three years.
- The dollars Wareham would have had if it spent at state average
- Net School Spending categories indicating that the majority of funds are spent on instructional services and payments to other districts
- The reasons for the increase in this budget – stimulus money \$745,000 positions; instructional leaders for supervision \$367,000; contractual obligations, increase text, sped tuitions
- The major budget categories Administration 1000; Instructional Leadership 2000; Instruction 2000; Student Services 3000; Maintenance 4000; Retirement Student Insurance 5000; Leases 5300; Tuition 9000
- Non Net School Spending categories Transportation & Replacement of Motor Vehicles with a 1.5% increase – average increase over 6 years \$0
- To decrease the achievement gap we must decrease the spending gap.

The FY'12 Budget is: Net School Spending \$27,091,423; Non Net School \$1,490,268: Total \$28,581,681 or 7.8% increase

Town Administrator, Mark Andrews made the following budget presentation:

- Budget challenges - revenues down by 2%; expenditures up 3% to reflect union contracts settled; funding pension and OPEB costs; and overdue collective bargaining contracts
- Created a Financial Management Action Plan
- Added staff, laborers and maintained Lifeguard Program

- Gaining fiscal stability including an increase in the stabilization fund
- Capital Improvements – need equipment; infrastructure; renovations
- FY2012 estimated revenue and estimated expenditures 46% goes to local education – 11% for all employee benefits

Dr. Sylvia invited members of the Finance Committee to make comments or ask questions.

Chair Bronk thanked the boards for coming together for the budget process. Topics of concern from the Finance Committee included:

- how to set and measure goals
- transient population in Wareham
- salary schedule for teachers
- teacher standards
- unfunded mandates from the state and to what extent is there a push from this community
- what are we going to get for an 8% budget increase
- facing reality and setting long-term goals

Dr. Sylvia invited members of the Board of Selectmen to make comments or ask questions.

Vice-Chair Cruz of the Board of Selectmen addressed the need to work together and step up as a team to do what's right for our children. Topics of concern from the Board of Selectmen included:

- Wareham ranks 43 from the bottom in socio-economic in state
- foundation formula not updated 10-15 years and the need to change that formula
- \$4,000,000 increase in what we can afford and what at the town level do you propose to cut?
- RTI in theory is a good idea but not adding a layer of management
- private sped tuition increases up 39% and state increase up 7%
- the need to understand the fiscal challenges of our town
- developing a strategic plan over time to meet the town's needs

Dr. Sylvia invited members of the School Committee to make comments or ask questions.

Topics of concern from the School Committee included:

- \$4 million dollar difference in Town Administrator's recommended budget and the School Committee's requested budget
- budget process was to lower the achievement gap
- suggestion to immediately establish a committee with the Town Administrator, Town Accountant, 2 School Committee members, 2 Finance Committee members, 2 Board of Selectmen and the Superintendent to look at cuts
- focus on the teaching, the learning and the assessment
- budget subcommittee welcomed further public input through calls or emails before next week when it will recommend to the full board a budget

Dr. Sylvia opened the meeting for Public Participation.

Topics of concern included:

- involvement in the schools
- MA students ranking in the national assessment was #1 in both Math and English but the gap is because Wareham is not a wealthy community
- AdHoc committee to deal with issues
- Wareham students accepted to prestigious colleges and succeeding
- all sources of revenue not just from the state and town to make good decisions
- why the tax rate in this town has not been classified
- rainy day fund - stabilization fund which helps the town improve its fiscal stability for rating agencies when borrowing money

Chair Sylvia closed the public hearing. The School Committee thanked the public for coming out and the board members for working together on this budget process.

(Selectwoman Winslow left the meeting.)

Statement of Interest – Massachusetts School Building Assistance – Minot Forest School

Ms. Miranda reported that in November 2009 the School Committee and Board of Selectmen had endorsed this application for the Minot Forest School. The MSBA intentionally chose not to process any applications up until this time due to the state election and the economy. Now the district needs to refresh the application. The only item added was additional concerns over the electrical system. A vote of School Committee and a vote of the Board of Selectmen with signatures are required. The submittal date deadline is January 26, 2011.

Proposed motion read by Ms. Miranda as follows: Having convened in an open meeting on January 19, 2011, the School Committee of the Town of Wareham, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated January, 2011 for the Minot Forest Elementary School located at 63 Minot Avenue, Wareham, MA which describes the following deficiencies and the priority categories for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the town of Wareham School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Mr. Swett moved the motion as stated, seconded by Mrs. Veugen.

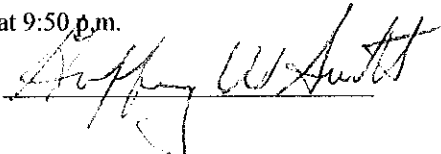
VOTE: yea – 5; nay – 0; abstain - 0

Mrs. Eckstrom read the above motion for the Board of Selectmen and it was voted favorably
yea – 3; nay – 0; abstain - 0

Mr. Fontes moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Swett.

VOTE: yea – 5; nay – 0; abstain - 0

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: 

List of Documents:

Massachusetts School Building Authority - Statement of Interest Minot Forest School

2012 Budget Presentation - All Day Budget Review - January 5, 2011, Power Point 1/19/2011

Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Update & Citizen's Input Forum - Board of Selectmen & Town Administrator Power Point