

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

June 4, 2020

Live Virtual Online Meeting using Zoom™ Audio/Video Conference Software

*** Due to the Covid-19 Crisis, this meeting was live-streamed over the internet using Zoom™ video/audio conferencing software in order to adhere with social distancing measures put in place by Governor Baker. This meeting was open to the public for live chat during Public Comment.*

1. Call to Order

At 7:33 p.m., Ms. Santiago called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Mr. Brosgol, Mr. Morrison, Ms. Scoville and Ms. Guay. There was no student representative present.

2. Comments from Public

*Mr. Richard Doherty
Elm St*

Concerned about the cuts to the FY21 budget and the impact on students, staff and curriculum.

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills reviewed the Personnel report with the members of the School Committee, which included a job description for a full time Counselor at Bedford High School. This is a new position for the FY21 school year.

4. Budget Reduction Discussion

Ms. Santiago started by explaining that the budget reduction for the fiscal year 2021 is a reduction to the originally proposed increase to the FY21 budget. She said that it does not result in a budget that is lower than the fiscal year 2020 budget.

Mr. Sills posted a slide where he outlined the final list of proposed deductions for the 2021 budget to the School Committee.

Some of the items included reductions in these areas:

- Supplies and materials
- Textbook replacement
- Athletic uniform/equipment replacement
- Elimination of an expansion to IT and Facilities contracted services
- Reduction in district wide professional development
- Elimination of summer IT interns
- Elimination of the JV hockey expansion

- Reduction of grade 3 World Language teachers, instructional coaches, a Gifted and Talented teacher, Library EA positions, Teaching Assistant positions and reduction of a 5-Day Sub position
- A 0% COLA for non-contracted personnel

The School Committee had some questions and concerns.

Mr. Brosgol wondered about costs for substitutes compared to what has been in the past.

Mr. Sills said that Bedford is lower than other towns but the sub costs have doubled in the past three years.

Ms. Kirrane said that she has done a careful review of the costs of substitutes, the costs have gone up and the need is unpredictable due to staff absences. Her analysis shows that around 300K was due to the need for long-term subs.

Mr. Brosgol mentioned that he understands the cut to the JV hockey program but he does not support the third grade World Language cut. He also had concerns about the support of special education students at the Davis School.

Mr. Morrison wondered how there could be a 10% cut in supplies considering the need for PPE and additional cleaning supplies due to the pandemic.

Mr. Sills mentioned that there is 1.2M available to the Town in Cares Act funding to help cover these needs.

Mr. Morrison believes that the third grade students are bearing a heavy burden with the cuts to Teaching Assistant positions as well as the proposed reduction to the World Language teacher.

Ms. Guay asked if there were any grant funds available to help with mentors and new teachers. She also wondered if there were funds through Mass Health that Bedford may be able to access.

Ms. Kirrane said that Bedford does get Medicaid money but these funds go directly to the Town.

Ms. Guay mentioned that she too struggles with the cut to the third grade World Language. She suggested that cuts could be revisited if the incoming Circuit Breaker funds are higher than expected.

Mr. Sills noted that Chapter 70 might not be cut as badly as he had originally believed and cuts can certainly be revisited.

Ms. Scoville pointed out that the third grade had the biggest class size and that she is concerned about cutting teaching assistants as well as World Language. She also expressed her disappointment with the cut to Junior Varsity hockey.

Ms. Santiago asked for more detail about the third grade World Language reduction. She believes that third grade teaching assistants should be at the top of the list to retain if there are funds available.

Mr. Sills explained that the cuts are not easy and that he understands that there will be an impact. He talked about his concerns with the loss of learning to date and the need for students to have face-to-face learning.

Ms. Santiago asked about the reduction of the .8 instructional coach and some specifics about the textbook reduction and replacement cut.

Mr. Sills said that he hoped he could make up for the .8 instructional coach cut with some changes in scheduling.

Ms. Kirrane explained that the textbook cuts would be a combination of trimming library book replacement and worn textbook replacement.

Mr. Sills went on to discuss the needs of SAIL students, students with IEPs, busing needs, Town reserve and other comments from the budget reduction slide with the School Committee members.

Mr. Sills asked if the School Committee was prepared to vote on the final number of the reduction. He stated that there is an upcoming Finance Committee meeting on June 15th and more detail could be discussed at the June 9th School Committee meeting.

The School Committee members had mixed feelings on voting on a budget number without a list of finalized line items.

Mr. Sills withdrew his request to have the School Committee vote on the final FY21 budget number.

5. EDCO

Mr. Sills reported that at a recent EDCO meeting, some of the towns that were originally going to withdraw from the EDCO Collaborative, have chosen to rescind their withdrawal decision.

At 9:12 p.m., the School Committee meeting was interrupted and reconvened 9:19 p.m. After a second interruption, the School Committee had a vote to move to Executive Session.

The June 4, 2020 School Committee meeting was continued on June 10, 2020

6. Superintendent's Report

Postponed

7. Minutes

Postponed

8. Adjournment

Mr. Brosgol made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 9:21 p.m. into Executive Session, not to reopen.

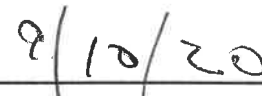
MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Morrison

MOTION APPROVED 5-0-0

Mr. Brosgol	Yes
Ms. Santiago	Yes
Ms. Scoville	Yes
Ms. Guay	Yes
Mr. Morrison	Yes



School Committee Secretary



Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
June 4, 2020
Exhibits/Documents

- Job Descriptions
 - BHS Counselor
- FY21 Budget Reduction Presentation
- Minutes
 - March 20, 2020
 - March 25, 2020
 - April 9, 2020