

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
January 3, 2017
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:35 p.m., Mr. McAllister called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Guay, Ms. Santiago, Mr. Pierce, and Mr. Brosgol. Student Representative Mary Manning was also in attendance.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Personnel Report

Mr. Sills announced the hiring of Andrew Goetchius, a new ELL teacher at the Middle School.

4. FY'18 Budget Discussion

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to carefully review the FY'18 budget binder prepared by David Coelho. The Committee agreed that tonight, they would review each line item in the proposed budget to fully understand the FY'18 budget request for each department.

Mr. Sills reviewed the following points about the FY'18 budget:

- The Finance Committee's FY'18 guideline for the Schools is a 3.5% increase over last year's budget.
- The Superintendent's Maintenance of Service Budget request for the schools is at a 2.57% increase over last year's.
- The proposed total Superintendent's FY'18 Budget request is at a 4.05% increase.
- The difference between Guideline and Proposed FY'18 is approximately \$206,000

Mr. McAllister said that tonight the review will be done in order to understand each line item in the budget in order to help the School Committee make decisions to either reduce the total FY'18 request to 3.5% or to decide to ask the Finance Committee to agree to more funding.

Highlights of this detailed analysis and discussion include:

Central Office Budget includes:

- Funding for the new Aesop's (Substitute) System, Aspen, Mailings, Memberships, and the School Resource Officers (police match).
- The School Committee Reserve Fund which is used to cover unforeseen expenses that arise during the school year. Also funding for legal retainers, and the School Committee secretary stipend.
- 6.8 ELL teachers (all schools)
- The money in the ERI/SLB (early retirements and sick leave buybacks) is a placeholder for any retirees who have announced retirements for 2018.
- AV system-wide includes machines used district wide such as copiers and funds to maintain.

Ms. McClung, a member of the Finance Committee who was in the audience, asked for some general information on Mr. Coelho's thoughts on copier machine leasing and/or purchasing. Mr. Coelho explained that our experience with leasing machines is that it is not cost effective because

the schools tend to keep machines longer than three years. Mr. Coelho also explained that he has learned that it is more cost effective to purchase larger machines because they are more durable – less maintenance issues arise.

Mr. McAllister suggested that the ink and toner budgets be consolidated to one place in the budget.

High School Budget:

Mr. Coelho explained that there are no more ERate funds to offset the costs of iPads. This was a special program that is now over. Mr. Coelho also explained that generally, the first year of a lease is the most costly. Years two and three are less expensive.

Mr. McAllister asked why iPads are not making the Foreign Language lab obsolete. (Cost is \$7,000 per year to maintain). Ms. Manning, student representative, explained how the language lab is unique and that the Ipad applications did not work as well for the teachers.

Mr. McAllister asked Mr. Sills to clarify the math textbook number since some of the costs is related to creating online texts. Mr. Sills agreed.

Mr. Sills explained that the ROTC program is under review by the Federal Government because we do not meet participation numbers. The High School is trying to find ways to increase participation including reaching out to other towns. However, the Program is at risk.

Substitute Budget:

Mr. Sills explained that the district is struggling to get substitutes. Bedford pays less than surrounding towns. He would like to consider increasing the substitute pay next year.

Ms. Santiago agreed that \$75 a day is very low compared to other nearby towns and that it has been several years since we increased the pay and that minimum wage has increased.

Mr. Sills said that the new Aesop's system will provide lot of information on sub usage and the amount of classes not covered due to lack of subs. He will put all the information together to see whether it makes sense to request an increase in sub pay for FY'19.

JGMS Budget

The School Committee commented that the line items in this section were straightforward so there was not a lot of discussion.

Mr. Sills did review the desired increases in Arts and Wellness staff as well as the need for some additional technology.

Ms. Santiago said that since enrollment has been increasing at JGMS and the elementary schools, it may make sense to increase supplies slightly. Mr. Sills said he would review this.

Lane School Budget

The budget called for additional FTE for a new classroom and some additional Ipad acquisitions. Mr. Pierce suggested that Mr. Sills define our goal for the iPad to student ratio. This would help put the yearly requests in context. Mr. Pierce also suggested combining each of the school's technology purchases on a summary sheet at the beginning of the budget binder.

Davis School

There were not any unusual funding requests in the budget so there was limited discussion.

Special Education

Mr. Sills explained that the Budget assumed that there would be a 7% increase in CASE tuitions. He also noted that the number of students enrolled in CASE programs is down to five.

Mr. Sills reported that the PreSchool Program at the High School has grown significantly due to a large number of students coming in from Early Intervention. The FY'18 budget includes costs to add an additional program to accommodate these new children.

Mr. Coelho noted that since we have fewer out-of-district students, we are not getting as much money back from the State (Circuit Breaker reimbursements). He reminded everyone that this is a good thing.

Custodians

The FY'18 has an increase in salaries due to an increase in overtime averages.

Mr. Pierce asked if the addition of a custodian at Lane and Davis (requested in the FY'18 budget) would cause a reduction in the overtime. Mr. Sills said he would expect to see this. He also thinks the addition of a snowplow (if approved by Capital Expenditures) would decrease overtime (less time shoveling by hand.)

Mr. McAllister thanked Mr. Sills and Mr. Coelho for putting together a comprehensive document and for delivering it to the School Committee early so they each had time to review the details.

Mr. Pierce said he was looking forward to hearing ideas from Mr. Sills and Mr. Coelho on areas that could be cut back.

Mr. Brosgol asked how funds from POMS or BEF are accounted for in the budget. Mr. Coelho said they are not part of the budget and money is used to purchase nonbudgetary items.

Mr. Sills said he will come back to the School Committee with a budget request that is at 3.75% and one that is at 3.5%.

Mr. Pierce said that the School Committee needs to understand the risks inherent in the budget at all levels. Mr. Sills agreed to outline the risks.

5. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Sills reported that the MSBA did not accept our Statement of Interests for an addition to Davis and John Glenn Middle schools. Therefore, he has asked the Building Task force to reconvene to verify enrollment projections and to move forward with presenting a proposal. Mr. Sills said that given our early Town Meeting, timing is tricky. We may have to put out a request for bid before the Task Force can finish its background work.

Mr. Sills noted that the Collective Bargaining process begins next week. Also, the Religious/Holiday Task Force will be meeting again soon.

Mr. Sills ended the meeting by showing a video of the Lane School (700 people) doing the mannequin challenge.

6. Adjournment

Ms. Guay made the following motion:

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:05 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Santiago

MOTION APPROVED 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. McAllister Yes

Ms. Guay Yes

Mr. Brosgol Yes

Mr. Pierce Yes

Ms. Santiago Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

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Exhibits/Documents

None