

Meeting began at 6:05 PM.

Present: Doug Boyd, Heather Turcotte, Carol Fitzgerald, Sandra Sheehan, Kathy Pessolano

Guests: Dick Patullo, Cliff Bombard, Sarah from Reminder

Minutes from 2/28/22 meeting were reviewed. Kathy made a motion to approve; Doug seconded. All were in favor.

Review of draft budget submissions for School District and Police Department.

School Department – Al Ganem and Aaron Osborne

Review of the draft budget presentation prepared for, but not yet approved by, the Regional School Committee. Highlights include the addition of an assistant principal with a behavioral and social/emotional focus due to the increased need and acuity of students, which they hope will bring some out of district placements back to HWRSD; addition of grade 1 and 3 teachers to support the “bubble” classrooms at Green Meadows; special education teachers at Green Meadows and Minnechaug. There are also six additional school adjustment counselors paid for through a grant. Additional school choice is a significant consideration in this year’s budget to offset much of these expenses. There is also a reduction of .5 FTE Nurse at TWB which is not currently needed.

Cost increases include:

Out of district placements	\$624,532
Health insurance	\$360,395
Retirement	\$173,816
Salaries	\$910,576
Transportation	\$53,533
Total	\$2,122,852

Projected savings/offsets include:

School Choice	\$250,000
Circuit Breaker	\$200,000
ESSER II & III Grants	\$235,000
Bond interest	\$79,270
Early Childhood revenue	\$50,000
Staff reduction	\$29,000
Total	\$834,270

The District’s E&D is currently at \$2.5 million. They anticipate increasing the use of E&D to support the budget by an additional \$175,000.

Aaron also showed information about the change in economically disadvantaged students in the district, currently at 23.4%. He indicated that the definition of economically disadvantaged is per the DESE website.

The preliminary assessment for Hampden is a 3.43% increase. Our minimum local contribution, which is a formula dictated by the state increased 5.44%. However, Wilbraham has told the District that they can’t

support their proposed corresponding increase. It is likely to decrease, which will decrease Hampden's assessment as well.

In terms of capital needs, Al and Aaron outlined the following:

Stadium seating – HWRSD is likely to take small steps to repairing the stands at the Minnechaug football field while there is further consideration of a longer-term solution.

Network switches – upgrades are needed as they are aging at Minnechaug. Doug questioned whether we could use ARPA funds for this purpose. Aaron will research.

Phone system – currently there are six different phone systems in use throughout the district, and there is no connectivity between them. They anticipate that \$100,000 would start to address this safety and security issue.

The final budget needs to be approved by the school committee on 3/24/22. Aaron anticipates sending the assessment letters to each town the following day.

Police Department – Scott Trombley and Kathy Zanetti, with Board of Selectmen

The budget includes increases due to police contract requirement changes such as the legal defense fund, officer cell phones, and mandatory overtime, as well as increases for non-contracted salaries. Other highlights include the addition of one new vehicle, costs associated with an increase in elections. There was general discussion about the police vehicles, their maintenance and schedule for replacement.

The police/fire communications figure is not included in the police budget. We'll confirm that with the BOS.

Miscellaneous updates

Advisory is still waiting for revised Park and Rec budget.

Cliff expressed concern that we've been spending with "promised" funds that we haven't received yet, including the tree and casino money.

Doug made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Heather seconded. All were in favor.
Meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Recorded by Carol Fitzgerald