

BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD
JANUARY 11, 2018
PUBLIC HEARING
MEETING MINUTES

A Public Hearing was conducted by the Brookline School Board on Thursday, January 11, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.

Chairman Matthew Maguire presided:

Members of the Board Present: Lauren DiGennaro, Vice Chairman
 Alison Marsano, Secretary
 Kenneth Haag

Members of the Board Absent: Erin Sarris

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
 Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent
 Kristen Maher, Assistant Business Administrator
 Dennis Dobe, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy
 Daniel Molinari, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School

BROOKLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT
FY19 BUDGET

Superintendent Corey explained the purpose of the Public Hearing was to present and obtain public input on the Brookline School District proposed FY19 budget. He provided a brief synopsis of the different Warrant Articles, and stated, if each of the articles were to be approved, the total would be \$9,679,276, which represents an increase of \$434,227 or 4.5% over FY18.

Article 2

To see if the Brookline School District will vote to approve the cost of items for the first of a two-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Brookline School Board and the Brookline Teachers Association for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years, which calls for the following increase in professional staff salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2018-19	\$154,095

*and further to raise and appropriate a sum of **\$154,095** for the first fiscal year (2018-2019 school year), such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in professional staff salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. This is the first fiscal year of a two-year agreement. Negotiated cost item increases for the next fiscal year (2019-2020) will require approval of a specific warrant article on the ballot.*

Superintendent Corey stated the District did not have a teacher contract in place last year. This year's cost is \$154,095. Year two of the contract would be a reduction to \$143,563. Salaries in 2018/2019 represent a 1.5% table increase plus step movement and 2.25% for off-step employees.

In 2019-2020, it is .75% table increase plus step, and 2.25% for off-step employees.

The District pays 100% of the lowest cost health insurance plan. Caps are applied to remaining plans.

Testimony in Favor

Peter Webb, 48 Mason Road

Suggested the terminology and acronyms that are familiar to the Board, be explained clearly for the voters.

Superintendent Corey explained the salary table consists of a series of steps, each with an identified/associated salary. Employees move along the salary table in steps, e.g., year 1 is step 1, year 2 step 2, etc. What is meant by a table increase is an increase to the identified salary amount for a step on the table, e.g., year 1, 1.5% increase, year 2, .75% increase. Off-step is for those employees who have exceeded the number of steps (years) on the table. Those individuals receive what he referred to as cost of living increase (2.25%).

Testimony in Opposition - None

Testimony in Favor - None

Testimony in Opposition - None

Article 3

To see if the Brookline School District will vote to approve the cost of items included in a four-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Brookline School Board and the Brookline Education Support Staff Association for the 2018-2019 through 2021-2022 school years, which calls for the following increase in support staff salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2018-2019	\$40,467
2019-2020	\$32,542
2020-2021	\$35,544
2021-2022	\$31,754

*and further to raise and appropriate a sum of **\$40,467** for the first fiscal year (2018-2019 school year), such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in support staff salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.*

The Board ratified the contract at a special meeting conducted on January 9, 2018.

Superintendent Corey remarked the support staff contract was negotiated this year. It is a four-year agreement.

This year's cost is \$40,467. Salaries in 2018/2019 represent a 2% table increase plus step movement. Off-step employees receive a 3% increase. In the three years following, it is a 2.25% table increase plus step movement, and 3% for off-step employees. As part of the agreement, the Para-professionals have been asked to work an additional day at the beginning of the school year. Included in the first-year cost is the \$2,300 to cover the cost of that 1 additional day.

Testimony in Favor

Amy Fessenden, 4 Oak Hill Road

Thanked the Administration and Board for their work in this regard.

Testimony in Opposition - None

Testimony in Favor - None

Testimony in Opposition - None

Article 4

*To see if the Brookline School District will vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling **\$9,080,562**. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be **\$8,939,050**, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the school district or by law or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Majority vote required to pass.*

Superintendent Corey stated the FY18 operating budget was \$8,833,998. Proposed for FY19 is \$9,080,562, which represents an increase of 2.79%.

Personnel changes (\$104,000) are related to instruction and represent the largest portion of the increase to the budget. Increasing enrollment is being seen. Last year the Board set forth a class size policy to reduce the number of students in the classroom. This is year two of that process, and the request is for 1 classroom teaching position. An additional request is to increase the science specialists from part-time to full-time (0.7 to 1.0). It is believed this will significantly enhance and continue efforts in the area of science.

Under academics, there is an increase in the amount of \$7,250 for new software that brings additional math and science learning opportunities to the students.

Taken into consideration is the need to continue to improve the building maintenance needs.

On the revenue side, increases are seen through the Retained Education Tax (\$17,120) and in special education aid (\$29,000) (formerly known as catastrophic aid). Decreases are in Medicare (\$16,500), Adequacy Aid Grant (\$59,590), and other revenues (approx. \$22,000). Superintendent Corey stressed, at this time, the figures are estimates.

The major changes in the budget include a reduction in the cost of health insurance (GMR of -1%) resulting in a decrease of \$24,367. Special education transportation costs have increased by \$41,875. There are some students who do not attend the Brookline public schools, but attend other elementary schools that meet their needs, and this is a direct result of those transportation costs. There were 2 retirements in FY18, and none planned for FY19. There is a contractual obligation associated with retirements (last year the cost was \$53,885).

If the default budget were to be put in place, class sizes would not decrease, the science curriculum improvements and some needed improvements to the buildings would not be funded. An overview of the default budget was provided.

Testimony in Favor

Peter Webb, 48 Mason Road

Noted his position as neutral, and suggested a greater definition be provided for the default budget. Superintendent Corey responded as part of a SB2 school district, voters have a choice between the proposed operating budget and the default budget. If the voters were to reject the proposed operating budget, the default budget automatically goes into place. The default budget is the amount of the same appropriations as contained in the operating budget authorized for the previous year, reduced and increased, as the case may be, by debt service, contracts, and other obligations previously incurred or mandated by law, and reduced by one-time expenses contained in the operating budget.

Karen Chu

Commented she assisted in the Science Fair and the school-wide STEM activity and would love to see what the Science Specialist could do if she were full-time.

Testimony in Opposition - None

Testimony in Favor - None

Testimony in Opposition - None

Article 5

*To see if a school district will vote to establish a contingency fund for the current year for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further to raise and appropriate a sum of up to **\$50,000** to go into fund. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2018.*

Superintendent Corey noted the Article is new to the District. Such a fund would be utilized for unexpected expenses that may occur, e.g., staffing level in the preschool was increased this year because of State and Federal laws. That cost was unanticipated/not budgeted. The number of move-ins could not be anticipated. The funds had to be taken from other areas of the budget thereby resulting in planned items not being supported.

Monies allocated to the fund would be from year-end surplus. Although taxes would not have to be raised, year-end surplus would not be returned to the tax base. Expenditures from the fund would require a vote of the Board.

Testimony in Favor

Amy Fessenden, 4 Oak Hill Road

Questioned, and was informed were there to be a request to expend from the fund, the Board would vote after the public had the opportunity to provide input.

Testimony in Opposition - None

Testimony in Favor - None

Testimony in Opposition - None

Article 6

*To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of up to **\$50,000** from the June 30 unreserved fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1 of this year to be added to the previously established SCHOOL FACILITIES MAINTENANCE FUND.*

Superintendent Corey stated the allocation to the Maintenance Trust Fund in FY18 was \$40,000. Being proposed for FY19 is an allocation of \$50,000. The Maintenance Fund has been utilized for many years as a means of addressing maintenance issues. A few years back the District was able to accomplish two significant roof projects using this fund. By address it through this fund, and not the operating budget, avoided is the need to look to the taxpayers for additional funding and fluctuations in the tax rate.

Testimony in Favor

Amy Fessenden, 4 Oak Hill Road

Questioned the current balance and was informed it is \$72,000.

Testimony in Opposition - None

Testimony in Favor - None

Testimony in Opposition - None

Article 7

*To see if the Brookline School District will vote to establish a SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND per RSA 198:20-c, to be used for special education expenses and to raise and appropriate up to **\$25,000** to put in the fund, with this amount to come from fund balance available for transfer on July 1. No amount to be raised from taxation, further to name the school board as agents to expend from the fund.*

Superintendent Corey noted the trust was established in FY18. During the Deliberative Session voters went beyond the requested allocation (\$10,000) and approved an allocation of \$100,000. The request for FY19 is an allocation of \$25,000. The intent is to cover unanticipated costs related to special education.

Superintendent Corey commented during the budget process monies are identified for known costs. However, were a single student having significant needs to move into the District after the approval of the budget, those costs would have to be covered through funding in the general operating budget, taking monies away from other identified needs.

Superintendent Corey noted, in September, he informed the Board of an unanticipated move-in. As is always the case, attempts are first made to absorb the cost through the operating budget. If that cannot be done, a request would be made for a transfer from the expendable trust in the March/April timeframe.

Testimony in Favor - None

Testimony in Opposition - None

Testimony in Favor

Christopher Henchey

Asked for clarification on the establishment of the fund and the current balance. Superintendent Corey explained the proposal put before the voters last year was for the establishment of the fund and an initial allocation of \$10,000. The voters approved a \$100,000 appropriation. The \$100,000 is the current balance.

Testimony in Opposition - None

Article 8

*Shall the voters of the Brookline School District adopt a school administrative unit budget of \$1,577,723 for the forthcoming fiscal year in which **\$279,152** is assigned to the school budget of this school district? This year's adjusted budget of \$1,543,057 with \$274,158 assigned to the school budget of this school district will be adopted if the article does not receive a majority vote of all the school district voters voting in this school administrative unit.*

The School Administrative Unit is the business and administrative offices. The proposed budget encompasses 14 individuals that work within the SAU. Those individuals are responsible for payroll for all the Districts, accounts receivable/accounts payable, Human Resources (1 individual), 1 full-time administrative support person for special education, 1 part-time receptionist, and 1 part-time administrative assistant that supports the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

Superintendent Corey stated the portion of the SAU budget attributed to the Brookline School District in FY18 was \$271,051. The Brookline School District portion of the proposed budget for FY19 is \$279,152 or an increase of 2.98%.

The article addresses the adjusted/default budget should the proposed budget not be supported by a majority of the voters of all three districts.

Superintendent Corey noted, although not a significant increase to the Brookline School District's portion, it is a significant increase from a staffing point as the budget includes the hiring of an additional position for the Business Office. It was noted, between the four entities, SAU 41 is a \$50 million corporation with six buildings, which is overseen by 4 individuals.

Testimony in Favor - None

Testimony in Opposition – None

Testimony in Favor - None

Testimony in Opposition - None

A chart was shown demonstrating ten-year gross appropriations. Superintendent Corey noted in FY16/FY17 the District saw significant decreases in enrollment and staffing was reduced, where appropriate. An uptick in enrollment is being seen. What is heard from families is they are choosing this community because of its school district and the ability to go to the COOP after 6th grade. There was a staffing increase in FY18 and proposed in FY19 is a \$104,000 staffing increases; teacher and increase in science position.

A chart was displayed highlighting items within the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP is sorted by items anticipated to cost under \$20,000 and over \$20,000. In the category of under \$20,000, proposed for FY19 are expenditures totaling \$28,650 for RMMS and \$12,600 for CSDA, and the total for items in the category of over \$20,000 for RMMS is \$7,550 (represents phase 1 of the HVAC work) and CSDA \$0.00.

If Article 6, School Facilities Maintenance Fund, is passed, the balance would be \$122,000.

Charts were provided that delineated the percentage and actual dollar value associated with the different areas of the proposed budget. A chart was displayed that provided for comparison between FY17 actual expenditures, FY18 budgeted expenses, and FY19 proposed.

Historical information was provided on the amount of year-end fund balance returned to the tax base to offset taxes. Superintendent Corey remarked the District is working hard to ensure it can fund the articles the unreserved fund balance is used for, but at the same time trying to maintain prudent budgeting so that the unreserved fund balance doesn't become excessive.

Information was provided on the trend in enrollment. Superintendent Corey spoke of the significant number of inquiries being received.

Article 9

To see if the school district voters will authorize the Brookline School District to access future year state and federal special education aid funds in the event that special education costs exceed budget limitations.

Voters would be granting permission for the Board to seek catastrophic aid, under the scenario described.

The term "Catastrophic Aid" refers to the financial assistance for special education costs distributed under RSA 186-C: 18, III, which reads in part "The state board of education through the commissioner, department of education, shall distribute aid available under this paragraph as entitlement to such school districts as have a special education pupil for whose costs they are responsible, for whom the costs of special education in the fiscal year exceed 3 1/2 times the estimated state average expenditure per pupil for the school year preceding the year of distribution."

Testimony in Favor - None

Testimony in Opposition - None

Testimony in Favor - None

Testimony in Opposition – None

Chairman Maguire declared the Public Hearing closed at 7:46 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____