

Auburn Finance Committee
Minutes of the Meeting - March 27, 2019
Auburn Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room
104 Central Street, Auburn, Massachusetts

Members Present: Kevin Hussey, Anne Cavanaugh, Ed Coleman, Kimberley Holstrom,
Malory O'Brien, Kevin Kennedy and Trevor Sansoucy
Also Present: Chief Financial Officer Ed Kazanovicz and Adm. Assistant to Town
Manager Sharon Kwiatkowski

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by the Chairman Kevin Hussey.

Chairman Kevin Hussey gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

Town Clerk Debra Gremo was present for her budget requests for FY2020. She discussed the change to the Travel/Conference/Education Account in the Town Clerk's budget to send the Assistant Town Clerk to school for CMC Certification. Mr. Kazanovicz presented a revision to the Town Manager's recommendation for the Town Clerk's salary. Ms. Gremo also explained the Elections budget. She said that there were two elections in FY20.

The Finance Committee reviewed the CIP for Town Clerk. There was a request for \$20,000.00 for upgrades to the vault. Mr. Kazanovicz discussed the system. Ms. Gremo discussed metal shelving needs in the vault and the third floor storage area. She discussed the requirements to retain some paper records. She said that \$20,000.00 was being requested in the CIP and \$20,000.00 in outside warrant articles.

The Finance Committee then voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$175,671.00 for the operations of department #01161 Town Clerk, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Ms. Cavanaugh; motion seconded by Ms. Holstrom) voted in favor 7 to 0.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$21,585.00 for the operations of department #01162 Elections, as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Ms. Holstrom; motion seconded by Ms. Cavanaugh) voted in favor 7 to 0.

Dr. Maryellen Brunelle presented the FY20 School Department Budget. The School Business Manager Cecelia Wirzbicki was also in attendance.

Dr. Brunelle reviewed the student enrollment numbers for the years 2008 to 2018 that reflected a net gain of 185 students, not including school choice students.

Proposed new staff positions were:
Swanson Road Intermediate School -
1.0 FTE Grade 5 Teacher -Maintain appropriate staffing
1.0 FTE Counselor - Social-Emotional support

Bryn Mawr School

3.00 FTE ABAs - Required to fulfill IEPs

0.5 FTE Permanent sub - Ensure ample staffing

Pakachoag School

0.5 FTE Permanent sub- Ensure ample staffing

Fine Arts

Appendix C Stipend (timesheet) Strings Teacher - Continue strings program into AMS

Teaching and Learning

1.0 FTE /EL Tutor for AMS - Support EL students at Auburn Middle School

District - Wide

2.0 Social-emotional support Professionals -Provide additional SEL support for students

Dr. Brunelle reviewed budget offsets and some of the assumptions employed in the formulation of the budget.

- Used student October 1st enrollment counts.
- Used 240 grants SPED Title 1 and 2
- Level funded Medicaid Reimbursement projected at \$185,000.00
- Assumed Circuit Breaker number at \$291,000.00
- Maintained School Choice at 82 students
- IAs and ABAs noted in their current assignments
- Assumed bus ridership to maintain 11 regular school buses
- Utilized revolving accounts as offsets

Superintendent Brunelle discussed the School Department's warrant articles for the annual town meeting that included two for repurposing some CIP funds:

- 1) Medicaid reimbursement of \$185,000.00
- 2) Interest earned on the Pappas Trust that pays for the use of gym and related facilities
- 3) McKinney-Vento reimbursements for transportation for homeless students.
- 4) Establish Revolving Account for tuitions and state reimbursements for Non-Resident and Foster Care students.
- 5) Repurpose \$127,685.00 by amending Article 15 of the May 2018 Town Meeting to be used for purposes of removing the Underground Oil Tank at Swanson Road Intermediate School, 10 Swanson Road.
- 6) Repurpose CIP funds by amending Article 4 of the May 2017 Town Meeting in the amount of \$193,000.00 as follows: \$60,000.00 to remain but be re-purposed for uninvent upgrades at Pakachoag; authorize \$55,000.00 to be used for purchase of a Multi-Function School Activity Bus and authorize the amount of \$78,000.00 for purposes of removing the Underground Oil Tank at Swanson Road Intermediate School.

CFO Kazanovicz noted that the School Department had adjusted its operating budget recommendation to \$26,934,157.00, which is a 4.2% increase over FY19 and so he

would like to adjust the Town Manager's recommendation to that figure as the Town Manager had originally recommended a 4.25% increase prior to the School Committee's action reducing their budget request.

She discussed Article 4, which seeks authorization to enter into a five-year bus contract because the administration believes that they will get a better price, but there is no funding associated with the article.

The Finance Committee discussed the CIP for the School Department. Mr. Hussey asked about the replacement cost for the all-purpose field. Dr. Brunelle explained that the actual cost was \$425,000.00, with financing over three years from the CIP. The work will be done this summer.

Chairman Kevin Hussey gave an overview of the School Department's operating budget revised request of \$26,934,157.00 and opened the floor for questions from the Finance Committee.

Anne Cavanaugh asked about the status of collective bargaining contracts. Dr. Brunelle said that they have just concluded the Cafeteria Workers Contract and next year the negotiations will be with the School Custodians, Secretaries, and IAs. The Teachers' Contract will not be up until the following school year.

Ed Coleman asked about School Choice numbers. Dr. Brunelle replied that the District gets \$5,000.00 per student that does not have special needs. She said that the School Committee decided to limit School Choice only to the middle school and high school levels due to class sizes at the elementary grades. She doesn't foresee the committee adding anything new next year and noted that the number has been stable over the last few years. Superintendent Brunelle said that where they have added school choice students the numbers haven't required hiring additional teachers but even out the class sizes (e.g. instead of 17 in a class there would be 20).

Mr. Kennedy asked about the process for the school choice program. Dr. Brunelle replied that the application process is a random blind lottery acceptance with no review of attendance records, behavior, special needs, or transcript records. She talked about a review she did for school choice students and in most cases they did as well or slightly better than the Auburn students. Once accepted into the town's school choice program, the students are eligible to remain at the Auburn schools until graduation.

Kevin Kennedy questioned if the School Committee has taken into consideration the impact of employee benefit numbers and the number of work hours for the proposed new staff.

Dr. Brunelle replied in the affirmative and she said that the District realizes the impact for the town and so they only request the position(s) if they believe there is an absolute need for them.

Mr. Kennedy then asked about the impact of the two new social-emotional professionals on the services that the Auburn Youth & Family Services provides. Dr. Brunelle responded that the positions would supplement the AY&FS services, not replace them.

Kim Holstrom asked about the average employee benefit cost.

CFO Ed Kazanovicz advised that it's normally 30-38% of the salary. In the case of health insurance it would depend on the plan chosen by the employee. He said that it could range from an employer cost for a single plan of \$6,000.00 to as high as an employer contribution for a family plan of \$20,000.00 all depending on the plan that the Town has to absorb when bringing on new employees. The Town accounts for a number of new positions each year in the group health insurance appropriation. Mr. Kazanovicz spoke about efforts to contain costs wherever possible and he advised that the Town has a very successful health trust with \$10,000,000.00 in it and we're paying for actual claims and not on a premium basis saving the Town hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. That's how the Town has built up the trust.

CFO Kazanovicz also talked about the OPEB liability and the progress the Town has made to address it over the last few years.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$26,934,157.00 for #01201 School Department (Motion made by Ms. Cavanaugh; motion seconded by Ms. Holstrom) voted in favor 7 to 0.

Mr. Kazanovicz discussed the Norfolk Assessment increase. He said that there are two students projected in the Norfolk Assessment budget.

The School Superintendent explained that Norfolk has an Animal Science Program. The law stipulates that if a program is not offered at our vocational school the Town has to pay for the school where the program is available. Bay Path has no such program.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$111,000.00 for #01303 Norfolk as presented in the recommendation of the Town Manager (Motion made by Ms. Cavanaugh; motion seconded by Ms. Holstrom) voted in favor 7 to 0.

Mr. Kennedy asked about the formula for the assessment paid to Bay Path. Dr. Brunelle said that there were two parts: one called the Capital based on the town's portion of available school enrollment and the wealth of the community, and the other based on enrollment. She said that there are 84 Auburn students at the school this year (FY19).

Mr. Kennedy asked about the term of the town's agreement with Bay Path. Mr. Kazanovicz said that he would have to check on the language. Ms. Holstrom said that she thought it was legislative.

The Finance Committee voted to recommend approval of a total budget appropriation of \$1,074,885.00 for #01302 Bay Path as presented in the recommendation of the Town

Manager (Motion made by Ms. Holstrom; motion seconded by Ms. Cavanaugh) voted in favor 7 to 0.

The Finance Committee voted to adjourn at 8:12 P.M. (Motion made by Anne Cavanaugh; motion seconded by Kim Holstrom) voted in favor 7 to 0.

Submitted: Sharon A. Kwiatkowski
Adm. Assistant to the Town Manager

The following documents were part of the Finance Committee's Meeting of March 27, 2019 and are retained in the Executive Office of the Town Manager:

- March 27, 2019 Agenda
- FY2020 Department Budget Requests (including CIP) - Town Clerk, Elections, School Department, Norfolk and Bay Path