

**WILLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**BUDGET WORKSHOP**  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, February 4, 2020  
**Town Office Building, Upper Level Meeting Room**  
**6:00 p.m.**

Audio Recording: Yes

Notes Taken: Yes

**Members Present**

Michelle Doucette Cunningham

Herb Arico

Elena Testa

Ann Grosjean

Tracey Anderson

Donna Cook

Liz Perry

**Members Absent**

**Also Present**

Superintendent of Schools Phil Stevens

Business Manager Donna Latinsics

Members of the Public

**Meeting was called to order at 6:01pm.**

**Present to Speak**

No-one present to speak.

**Review of Programs Previously Presented and B.O.E. Discussion**

Superintendent Stevens summarized the programs that have been presented and asked whether the Board had any questions or further discussion regarding those programs.

H. Arico clarified that the reason that the Hall School expenditure is less than last year was due to staffing changes, and Superintendent Stevens confirmed. H. Arico inquired in which program the Board of Education insurance is covered. Superintendent Stevens stated that it will be discussed in an upcoming program.

M. Cunningham referenced the amount added to the budget for long-term substitutes. H. Arico inquired if that money isn't spent, can the Board keep it and use it for things they might like to see in the budget. Superintendent Stevens replied that the Board can do that any year if there is a surplus and that there is a policy surrounding that. M. Cunningham confirmed that the analysis showed that the actual cost for long-term substitutes was closer to \$31,000 per year.

**Program 8: Operations/Maintenance Review and B.O.E. Discussion**

Superintendent Stevens presented page 19, Program 8: Operations/Maintenance and the Board discussed the following points:

Positions:

- One of the Hall School secretaries is coded to this program at 0.15. She is a full time secretary, but 15% of her responsibilities are related to this program.
- There are 2 custodians who clean Hall School in the evening and 1 at Center School. The difference is directly related to the square footage of the buildings to be covered.
- There is 1 maintenance custodian at Center School and 1 at Hall School. There used to be a district-wide Head Custodian, but the district chose not to fill that and instead have a Head Maintenance Custodian in each building. That change created significant savings.

Salaries: Amounts are contractual. Summer/substitutes refers to the additional people brought in to paint classrooms, move or wash furniture, etc. to prepare the buildings for the new year. Center School hires at least 1 additional person and Hall School hires 2 additional people.

Purchased services:

- CIRMA is the property insurance company that everyone uses. They were extremely responsive when the pipe burst 2 years ago at HMS and the replacement process was very smooth.
- EMCOR is now built into Programs 1 & 2.

Supplies: Funds such items as paper towels, toilet paper, tissues, mops, cleaning chemicals, gloves, soap, paint, etc. for both buildings. The maintenance custodians contract out through different companies to get the best prices and order supplies as they need them.

Travel reimbursement: When custodians need gas for a snowblower or the tractor or a part at the local hardware store and they take their personal car, they are reimbursed at the IRS rate.

M. Cunningham inquired if there was a problem in one of the buildings that did not reach the CIP threshold, would that come out of this program? Superintendent Stevens confirmed and

elaborated that if it's something larger that doesn't meet the CIP threshold, they look for the funding elsewhere, e.g. in the insurance savings. He added that the district paints its own classrooms instead of contracting out usually and that when you look at the expenditure report, this is the most obscure program because it encompasses so many items and they aren't necessarily broken apart by school. Sometimes the district asks staff to wait on larger purchases, but no, there is not much contingency in this budget.

D. Cook mentioned that in some other states, maintenance staff are required to hold certain certifications and inquired if that was the case here. Superintendent Stevens replied that maintenance staff go through certain training that pertains to their job, e.g. how to handle and mix certain chemicals. Many of the training sessions are provided by CIRMA and relate to safety but no, there are no required certifications.

H. Arico inquired whether the district uses all the summer/substitute money. Superintendent Stevens replied that the summer employees are only hired for the time they are needed and mentioned that they make sure not to use it all up front during the summer so they have funds available to hire substitutes during the school year. Business Manager Donna Latincsics added that if there is money remaining in this program toward the end of the year, they try to put it toward larger projects such as waxing the floors.

### **Program 9: System-wide Support Review and B.O.E. Discussion**

Superintendent Stevens presented pages 20 and 21, Program 9: System-wide Support and the Board discussed the following points:

Positions: The administrative assistant is full time, but she also works with transportation, so a portion of her position is listed under that program.

Purchased Services:

- Magnet School Tuition - there are 7 students attending magnet schools this year and 6 are anticipated next year, so there has been a decrease. There is no buffer built in.
- Teacher Retirement Valuation: an actuarial valuation of the assets and liabilities for retired teachers that happens every 2 years and was budgeted for in the current year, but it will actually need to happen in 2021. It is required due to the health insurance offered to retirees, and the report comes back identifying it as a liability for the district.
- Legal Fees - the Board pays a retainer fee to their attorney in smaller pieces throughout the year, which rolls over year-to-year. The town receives a bill monthly and adds more money as needed. \$15,000 covers negotiations and anything that comes up that requires legal opinion, but if a big legal case comes up, that won't be enough. The attorney the

Board has long worked with charges very reasonable fees, is responsive, and the overall experience with him is positive.

E. Testa asked to see the contract with the attorney or a copy of the bill for his hourly rate. Donna Latinsics clarified that the town does not hold a contract with him, but there is an agreed-upon rate per hour. E. Testa noted that if it's not a contract and the Board can find better rates, they can hire someone else. M. Cunningham added that there is probably a standard letter containing language on how the relationship would end if desired by either party.

- Copier lease/maintenance - decreased due to the purchase of a used copier instead of leasing. The district shares a color copier with the town. Toner is included in the contract.
- School Messenger Service is used to contact parents via text, email and phone during emergencies as well as sending information home via the digital backpack. That system coordinates with Powerschool.
- IT Support, PowerSchool Hosting, iReady, Raptor.
  - The IT support costs are shared with the town. The town receives 5 days per week of support with Novus and the experience has been outstanding. The attack a few months ago could've been extremely damaging, but they took care of it, kept communication going, and it was handled extremely well. We share the cost of IT Support with the town and we did not budget enough this year for Novus.
  - Host PowerSchool in the cloud, don't have to have our own server onsite.
  - iReady- student testing system in 1st year.
  - Raptor - a system that processes a background check on school visitors. Initial fee is a little more for setup and equipment, but 1/3 the price after that for the subscription.
- Telephone down due to new phone system installed this summer
- Internet up, but may go down depending on what happens with eRate reimbursement
- Postage - everything mailed out of district from either school
- BOE clerk takes our minutes
- ELL ability to purchase resources for students to translate, books, etc.
- Homebound removed 2 years ago, this is the 1st year town has had someone receiving services, minor expense being covered under special education
- 504 rehabilitation act prohibits discrimination due to disability. Not required for specialized instruction, but some level of accommodation. Special seating, audiological, large print books, visual aids, technology related, etc.
- CPI training - workbooks, crisis team training. State changed from everyone, to certified staff, to crisis teams. Done on a regular basis. Deescalation training. SpEd director trained in it, and has to maintain her certification so she can train the staff. If we were to send out, \$500 per person yearly.
- Tutorial support removed.

- Public safety officer. Promotion ceremony at HMS, play, part of school security, who is walking around checking hallways, stairwells, checking classrooms after events. Contractual rate. Not for every night event, but when the parking lots are full. Teams of 2.
- Supplies/materials: Flat. Pens/pencils, office supplies.

Other:

CT REAP - Where jobs are posted.

Dues to professional agencies provide additional coverage, sometimes legal fees are covered for a certain number of hours, or calling CABE with a question they'll just answer it. NESDEC is enrollment projections. Would recommend continuing with the same ones.

Increase mainly due to IT and other items that went up slightly.

E. Testa - suggest putting video recording of BOE meetings. Someone else pays right now, but \$25/meeting - good rate. 12 meetings = \$300, plus special meetings, \$600 double it. Michelle - double it at \$1200 for the same as a recorder. Would we have to go out to bid? Ann - recorder spends more time outside the meeting. Michelle - would want to make sure to have a town sponsored account so nothing unassociated with the meeting would show up next to it. Elena - unsponsored channel would disable ads. Elena - professional video recorder willing to do it for \$20, \$25 would return her interest. Not a hard job. Could be flexible with anyone to do the job. Phil - The town may also be considering this. Elena - wouldn't want to depend on town and if the rest of the town wants to join us, good. Phil - you might get a better rate if we can provide guaranteed more time. Phil - would take this to NOVUS and see if we can store it on their cloud. Mansfield's is great. Michelle- has to be someone within the town structure. Elena - we should use the same page. Michelle - not owned by the town. Who controls it and has the password? Elena - John Blessington. Michelle - As long as he is willing to turn over control to the town. Elena - should keep it because it's already set up and people already navigate to it. P. Stevens stated that he will find more details, but the Board will have to write a policy.

E. Testa made a motion to add \$1,000 for video recordings into Program 9, Supplies/Materials systemwide support for video recording

L. Perry seconded the motion.

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
H. Arico	X			
M. Cunningham	X			
D. Cook	X			

T. Anderson	X			
A. Grosjean	X			
E. Testa	X			
L. Perry	X			

M. Cunningham recommended that the district double check with Novus to see if they're aware of anything that the Board isn't.

P. Stevens said we don't want to have lag issues with our videos.

E. Testa suggested a link on BOE page

A. Grosjean said we should look into transferring what's already on YouTube onto the website.

**Review of Superintendent's Proposed Spending Plan (Budget) and B.O.E. Discussion**

M. Cunningham - long term substitutes. Think we should budget what that actually should cost. By not putting in there what you've spent on average, it undercuts every other line. Put in expected actual for that. Should be exact here too.

M. Cunningham made a motion to increase the line for long term substitutes in Program 10 from \$20,000 to \$31,000.

E. Testa - places in budget waiting for possible savings. Insurance and transportation. Personally, I think the budget looks good. Maybe BOF will let it through 1st time. How many chances will we get transportation and insurance savings? Phil - if it goes through. Routes being run, updated information hopefully next week. Can't count on it at this point.

Michelle - not a line item before because you took it out in other ways. Spending freeze last year. High risk area you're going to go over the 20k. Other savings can be talked about later.

Elena - extra 10k, if we don't use it what happens to it?

Phil - Board gets to decide to transfer or return it. Teacher leaves in summer, expected to pay 60k, shortage area, open search, but candidate needs 80k, we would transfer money. E.g. valuation in program 8 isn't happening this year, 11k going to cover sped shortfall. Board makes those transfers.

M. Cunningham - every year we give money back to the town if we don't spend it, it goes back to the general fund. One year outplaced kids were brought back in and we had big savings. It doesn't always get transferred. Herb - more often than not we give it back.

Ann - another thing we can do is add a little surplus to 1% account.

Ann -what does it do to % increase if we add 11k.

Phil 3.25% to approximately 3.35%, which Donna confirmed.

Herb - hoping percent would be 2.9%. Every 10k you add 0.1%. Adds to increase over last year's budget. Drives the mil rate, which is about 30.9. With increases it may go up.

Michelle - we can't estimate the effect on mil rate based on ours, it depends on how EOS and town come in. We know the town has to cover the cost, which they do by changing the mil rate, but the Board has to do what it believes it needs to do to run great schools.

Herb - just something to keep in mind. BOF has to address this as well.

Tracey - think this is a reasonable budget and not asking for anything more, asking for what we have with increases needed. Agree with adding in videotaping and exact amount of long term subs. We deal with people, most likely next year another situation will arise. Should go forward with this and propose to BOF and see what they have to say. Keep in the back of mind that they have a little slush fund and over the limit of what they need to keep. We don't know the rest of the budgets in the town. Put this budget forward next week and vote on it with the increases that have been talked about.

Elena - suggest adding the 11k in now, if BOF minds, then we revisit it.

Phil - when you vote on this next week, you'll see all of the numbers updated and that's what will go to BOF.

Elena - can we just add 12k to the previous total.

A. Grosjean seconded the motion.

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
H. Arico	X			
M. Cunningham	X			
D. Cook	X			
T. Anderson	X			
A. Grosjean	X			
E. Testa	X			
L. Perry	X			

**Present to Speak**

Mike Perry of 87 Balazs Rd. thanked members on the Board for their time and diligence in working through the budget, as it's a big responsibility. He stated that he doesn't want to dictate

what the Board should do and knows they are volunteers, but as he is new to town, he has been doing research and has been seeing on the internet that the grade levels are below average within the state. The only way the Board is going to bring that up is to get into the schools and find out whether it's the curriculum, teachers, oversight, etc. and what needs to be done to bring the grade levels higher. The Board has their work cut out for them and how they do it is up to them.

M. Cunningham made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:08pm.

A. Grosjean seconded the motion.

<b>Vote:</b>	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
H. Arico	X			
M. Cunningham	X			
D. Cook	X			
T. Anderson	X			
A. Grosjean	X			
E. Testa	X			
L. Perry	X			