

Regional School District 12
Board of Education
Public District Budget Hearing
Shepaug Valley School
March 27, 2017

The Public District Budget Hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m., on Monday, March 27, 2017, by Chairman Hirschfield. Present were Board members: Anthony Amato, Valerie Andersen, Rebecca Devine, Michelle Gorra, Stephanie Kolnick, Lisa Roush, Michael Sinatra and Peter Tagley. Jennifer Pote arrived at 7:01 p.m., Alan Brown arrived at 7:02 p.m. and Gregory Cava arrived at 7:16 p.m. Also present were Dr. Patricia Cosentino, Superintendent, and Robert Giesen, Director of Finance and Operations.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

Chairman Hirschfield requested a motion for a moderator to read the Notice of Public Budget Hearing.

MOTION: made by Michelle Gorra, seconded by Valerie Andersen, to appoint Jay Hubelbank as moderator.

VOTE: unanimous.

Jay Hubelbank read the Notice of Public Budget Hearing:

“Notice is hereby given to all those entitled to vote in town meetings in the towns of Bridgewater, Roxbury and Washington, that a Public Hearing will be held on Monday, March 27, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Library of the Shepaug Valley School, 159 South Street, Washington, CT to present the Annual Budget for the year 2017-2018, prepared by the Regional Board of Education for Shepaug Valley Regional School District 12, copies of which will be available at the Public Meeting.

SHEPAUG VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 12
BRIDGEWATER – ROXBURY – WASHINGTON
By – James Hirschfield, Chairman
Board of Education
Washington Depot, CT 06794”

OVERVIEW PRESENTATION OF THE BUDGET PROCESS AND THE 2017-2018 ANNUAL BUDGET FOR RSD 12

Dr. Cosentino gave an overview of the budget process. After meeting with administrators, department chairs and program directors, she met with Director of Finance and Operations, Bob Giesen, to adjust the budget. The Board Finance Committee members invited the towns’ Finance Board Chairs and First Selectmen to attend meetings with administrators and department chairs. Dr. Cosentino provided details on substantial changes in the staff and the enrollment, and two programs that are being added. Dr. Cosentino presented her proposed budget on March 6, 2017 at a 0% increase over last year’s budget or \$21,561,446. Dr. Cosentino spoke about recent conversations with staff and Mrs. Gorra about adding back a .4 FTE music position and that she supports adding it back in. She also spoke about a scoreboard

for the main field at Shepaug. Don O'Leary received an estimate of \$23,500. After speaking to staff, she did not think this was the year to put it in the budget.

REVIEW BURNHAM SCHOOL UPDATE

Cathy Colella spoke about two configuration options for Burnham School structured with either Grade 3/4 with one teacher or Grade 3/4/5 with two teachers. Mrs. Colella's recommendation for the 2017-2018 school year is to combine Grade 3/4/5 with two teachers and one highly qualified support staff member. The curriculum is demanding and more difficult to blend; in particular Math, Science and Social Studies, but with the small numbers, Mrs. Colella's staff shares her vision that they can provide a quality education by creating a program centered around individual learning goals. Mrs. Colella spoke next about the benefits of combining classes, team teaching, site visits, release time, and summer curriculum work. Questions followed.

QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS CONCERNING THE BUDGET

Chairman Hirschfield opened the floor to the public for questions and comments.

Jay Hubelbank, Washington – Represented the Board of Selectmen in Washington. Mr. Hubelbank spoke on how the Board of Selectmen support the flat budget proposed and agree with the staffing reductions.

Curtis Read, Bridgewater – First Selectman in Bridgewater. Mr. Read asked questions about class sizes in each grade level and what the "magic" number is for joining classes. Asked if families have been polled, spoke about reducing the tuition, shared that he spoke with Danbury mayor to send kids to Region 12.

Joy Rupper, Bridgewater – Spoke about the Grade 3/4/5 configuration.

Angela Macchiarula, Bridgewater – Spoke about the Grade 3/4/5 configuration and marketing for the district.

Carolan Dwyer, Bridgewater – Spoke about the budget, staffing, moving students within district. Valerie Andersen and Rebecca Devine spoke on the issue of moving students while keeping the K-5 grades at each school.

Ed Wainwright, Bridgewater – Asked if AgSTEM is included in the 2017-18 budget. Mr. Giesen explained that \$125,000 is included in the budget to cover the interest on a BAND provided we go forward. Mr. Wainwright asked if the budget would be redone if the AgSTEM does not go forward. Mr. Giesen answered that it would not be redone. Mr. Wainwright asked where the \$1.3M came from that was approved in December for the architects and O & G. Mr. Giesen explained that it came from savings from the existing budget from accounts (i.e. utilities, insurance bills negotiated after budget passed last year) in the 2016-17 school year budget, not for \$1.3M but for three months of work. If we move forward more than that, a BAND may be taken for the balance. Dr. Cosentino added that 80% of the monies are reimbursable. Mr. Wainwright asked if any of the \$1.3M was for the science labs. Mr. Giesen explained that most of the work has been done on the science labs but have not gone to the actual building documents.

John Buonaiuto, Washington – As population declines, why are there so many tutors? Dr. Cosentino explained that some classes are large, 21-22, at WPS. BFS has 15 in Grade 1. Mrs. Andersen specified

that details are available on page 2 at the bottom line item 1191250. Mr. Buonaiuto asked if tutors are shared between the schools. Dr. Cosentino said they are under the direct supervision of the administrator in the building. They are not certified staff, very experienced.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: made by Valerie Andersen, seconded by Michelle Gorra, to adjourn the hearing.

VOTE: unanimous.

The hearing was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.