

Mount Greylock Regional School District School Committee Finance Subcommittee

Location: Zoom Remote Meeting

Date: Thursday, December 3, 2020

Time: 4:00 PM Join Zoom Meeting: Per Governor Baker's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L.c. 30A sec. 20, this meeting will take place virtually via ZOOM. Please mute your audio before entering the meeting.

Open Session Agenda

- I. Call to order
- II. Appoint Subcommittee Secretary VOTE I
- III. Approval of October 22, 2020 meeting minutes VOTE
- IV. Review of warrants A. Payroll B. Accounts Payable
- V. Discussion of long-term renewal planning for MGRS
- VI. Review of fields proposal from Perkins Eastman
- VII. FY22 budget development timeline
- VIII. Other items for discussion not reasonably anticipated by the chair 48 hours before the meeting.
- IX. Motion to adjourn

Present: Carrie Greene (Chair), Michelle Johnson, Steven Miller

Also present: Jason McCandless (Superintendent), Joe Bergeron (Business Manager)

Start 4:01

- I. Michelle nominates Steve to be secretary, Carrie seconds, motion passes 3-0.
- II. Carrie moves to approve the Oct 22, 2020 minutes, Steve second, motion passes 2-0-1 (Michelle abstains as not at the meeting; Steve was not at the meeting but was on the school committee at the time; need 2 of 3 to approve minutes).
- III. Approval of warrants: Description from Joe: chair signs off on warrants, preferably before if not after the finance committee reviews and can ask questions to exercise oversight. By law required to go thru this process as on the hook for overall financials.... Typically a payroll and an accounts payable. Payroll get to flip thru in all detail, how it breaks down. Challenge, especially when start, on all the items. Payables a bit more obvious – can flip thru and see what funds are being used. Prior to next meeting will produce a walk-thru of all the funds we have, building codes, DESE codes, so that the FinComm will have that going forward.

Business office team manages these (payroll, payables). Treasurer does internal review and then signs off (she hadn't reviewed before the meeting but has now, and Joe showed signature on screen).

Carrie: goal is to approve before processed, with good fortune can approve before, sometimes will flag and ask to hold (right account). Sometimes approving after the fact, trying to align timing. Been converting from district schools to regional schools, different account codes, DESE has codes. Three business managers have been working to align accounts, not there but getting there.

Carrie: Any questions on items? No.

- IV. Discussion on long-term renewal planning. Carrie: Related to question raised by School Committee Member Jose about putting aside money from the Williams Gift to a long-term endowed fund. What will we need the money for, can we ballpark how much we need to put aside so it can grow as needed?

Joe: have started on this. Boilers are not new, comprising the heating system. Have 4, each is about \$65,000 in terms of replacement cost. According to Tim probably do not need to worry about replacing the first of the boilers until 2030, so do not expect to see anytime soon. When look at \$260,000 over 10 years not as big as roof, floors, These are items that the MSBA is able to participate in renewal of, though our reading of when they allow people to apply are long after the windows or roof or floor really need that kind of renewal, kind of a backstop funding if cannot fund. Roof for instance depending on the extent it needs to be renewed in 20 years, current dollar figures are between \$3 and \$6 million, huge range as a variety of things that could need to be replaced. Hope is in 20 years will only need to go skin deep / surface, then estimate is about \$3 million. Don't have numbers yet for bathroom, tiles, floors,

Steve: Do we have a sense if the roof was installed correctly?

Joe: Yes. Lots of new types of material, cutting edge materials, control systems, that we have had adventures with.

Carrie: Any major expenses anticipate hitting in the next ten years?

Joe: No.

Michelle: Boiler.

Joe: Yes, that would be the 10 year mark, but given the knowledge of the building thus far there are plenty of computer systems, sensors, ... that are going out far sooner than expected, but experience says spending a few tens of thousands of dollars is regular life with our building. The boilers are probably going to be dwarfed by replacing a lot of items. Trying to come up with renewal cycles.

Carrie: If fund is for major capital expenditures then in spirit of the gift should not be using for the smaller fixing costs. Should be roof, boilers. Are there other things we should be saving

for? Somewhat limited in terms of what we can spend the money on in the horizon, nothing huge coming up. If do not spend now probably not spending on something else.

Joe: Our spending from the Williams College Gift to the Williamstown Elementary School: Now 16 years old, spending over the last 2 years was \$400,000. On numerous \$34,000 and \$10,000 and \$20,000; all around the heating and cooling systems. Those funds do add up.

Steve: My thought was the gift was more for the big long term expenses or the sudden shocks that were not planned. The smaller frequent expenses should be included in the regular budget we send to the towns.

Carrie: When we review the gift would be good to review the language so we can be clear to ourselves and to the public what the intent and what the expenditures should be.

Joe: Right now WES gift at \$1.7 million, invested with the Williams endowment. Official language is a bit different than the recent gift, but gist is the same: can use the gains and principal. Believe it started around a million (Carrie). The Williams gift to Mt Greylock wording: payments shall be limited to capital projects at Mt Greylock Regional School.

No other questions on long term renewal plan.

- V. Review of the fields proposal: Carrie: Steve: You were in the group that looked at the value engineered group. Items on the list would have been worked out in fall 2019. Was discussion on reviewing this list and updating it, but the advice / recommendation given to Joe working with Perkins – Eastman was this should happen as the new bid documents are developed. Could be additions / changes. Would need to get into the documents. This is not a new list. Has been sitting around for a year, has not gone out to bid, was intended to go out last fall but the committee got a lot of feedback on whether or not the committee should be investing in a synthetic field. For a variety of reasons never went out. Next step for the school committee to either approve or not approve this proposal. Money here represents the cost of redesigning, clarifying any issues. When bids came back were all over the place, make sure that doesn't happen again (Steve: one bidder didn't understand and misbid part of it).

Michelle: how much was the previous bid?

Joe: This is lower than initial package (last maybe \$170,000 but that included the multi-purpose as well, apples to oranges for comparison).

Michelle: when get bids all over the place problem. Has that been taken into account in the fee they are charging us now, as they were part of the problem. Such variation could indicate an issue with how things were written up, are we getting a discount?

Joe: Not sure to what extent if any.

Michelle: Why are we paying for a new one if there were issues with the first bid? Would be nice if that were reflected in the fee charged.

Carrie: Suggesting we hire our own cost estimator.

Michelle: Did they produce the bid document? OK, they sub-contracted, so they are responsible.

Steve: Excellent point. If there is an issue can see if can reflect in the fee.

Carrie: Joe can take that feedback to Perkins-Eastman.

Michelle: What went wrong, and how will we fix? Does this fee reflect essentially a discount for want of a better term for issues with the bid document?

Steve: I think the line items were all over the place but the final bid costs were similar.

Joe: Shows the three bids. Do see great variances (turf, softball). Did go back and ask the bidders, we as a district cannot go and negotiate directly per procurement laws, asked why did you bid in this way, presumably have learned from this and will contribute to a new round if it happens.

Carrie: Asking Joe to bring this back.

Joe: Questions: (a) given variation in bids: what went wrong, how did they fix it in the new proposal? (b) any discount can offer based on the fact that the bid was problematic? Note might have a discount already factored in. Some shock and displeasure was expressed at the last round during the review of the results, not sure how that translated. Looks as though the Phase II Fields Subcommittee reviewed notes from a call John Skavlem (former subcommittee chair) had with Traverse.

Carrie: Suggest that we help review with Joe. Don't want to offend the architect, but understand Michelle where you are coming from. There has also been a long delay, over a year since original bid went out. Individuals can work with Joe without violating OML.

VI. FY22 budget development timeline:

FY22 Budget Events

Finance Subcommittee Meetings:

- December 3, 2020
- December 17, 2020
- December 31, 2020 (what date is better for SC review of final warrants?)

- January 14, 2021
- January 28, 2021
- February 11, 2021
- February 25, 2021
- March 11, 2021
- March 25, 2021

SC Meeting Dates:

- December 8, 2020
- December 22, 2020
- January 14, 2021
- January 28, 2021
- February 11, 2021
- February 25, 2021
- March 4, 2021
 - Public Hearing / SC vote on budget
(alternate March 9th)

Town Finance Committee Meetings:

- TBD, ideally we give a brief update in late January and then a lengthier full presentation after SC approval of a budget in mid March

Town Meetings:

- May 18, 2021
 - Williamstown Town Meeting
- June 8, 2021
 - Lanesborough Town Meeting

The following are touch points during budget development (not necessarily in this order):

- Request and receive School Council priorities in line with School Improvement Plans
- Receive input from both town managers regarding their financial outlooks
- Set tuition rates for FY22 (SC decision)
- Set FY22 School Choice slot openings (SC decision)
- Receive early FY22 Cherry Sheet estimates, updated as state budget cycle goes
- Receive health insurance rates for FY22 in January from BHG

Joe: Do not know when will have the state budgets. We don't want the budget cycle to feel compressed but there will be a lot happening. Want to make sure school committee approves a budget that goes to the town finance committees, they often want to hear estimates earlier than we can provide (they start in Jan/Feb, and we are 2/3rds of the town budgets, so not knowing anything about 2/3rds of your budget is challenging, what extent can we help). In the past have tried to get a sense of high/low where we are heading by late Jan so can give some heads-up with lots of caveats.

Early Jan: try to hear the school council's priorities based on the school approval plans. Set tuition rates. Not expecting any major shake-ups. School choice slot openings. Chery sheet estimates: state indicating where they are heading. Health insurance rate setting in January. Budgets due 45 days prior to May 18th. Saturday April 3rd, 2021; so probably Friday April 2nd.

Joe: Given the wackiness of this year, think it would be better to be in conversation with the towns early to see how to be a good partner.

Carrie: will have one budget hearing in the public (probably thru zoom).

- VII. Other items for discussion not reasonably anticipated by the chair 48 hours before the meeting. Carrie: Was an email from the chair of the school committee requesting dates for two public forums to bring newer school committee members up to date. Asked how these will be structured. A pro/con format could be problematic.

Steve: Send out information, see what information new members need.

Michelle: This will be a public discussion. Not sure how to structure, want to hear from people passionate about the topic.

Email from School Committee Chair: In an attempt to bring our new members up to speed on the complex field discussion, we are proposing the following solution: Two, hour-long forums (preferably on different days), where each field group (pro/against) can present their case to the School Committee. The committee will have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. The concept here is to allow us to make a more informed decision on Dec. 22nd, in regard to moving forward with Perkins Eastman contract.

Michelle: Do pro-against then against-pro, so have time to rebut.

Carrie: Christina said wouldn't be structured with presentations, but there is a presentation for the fields. Someone has to own that. Phase II will probably want to present, people opposed will probably want to oppose. Would be good to structure.

Jake: Will have again on the school committee meeting on Tuesday. Real vision behind this is that there is frustration in the community in how long this has been going on (just make a decision), new members of the committee who need / deserve time to ponder and hear from the community. This is a way to not have it take another 2-3-4 months, condensed information. Full committee will have an opportunity to discuss the structure.

Carrie: Goal is to have the week of Dec 14th. If folks have feedback send to Jake or Christina.

Steve: Do we need two, and we should reach out to anyone who has expressed strong opinions.

VIII. Motion to adjourn: Michelle moves, Steve seconds, passes 3-0.

Notes taken by Steven J Miller.

Approved 12.17.20