

**Mount Greylock Regional School District School Committee
Finance Subcommittee**

Location: Zoom Remote Meeting Date: Thursday, March 4, 2021

Time: 4:00 PM

Present: Carrie Greene, Michelle Johnson, Steve Miller

Also Present: Joe Bergeron, Jason McCandless

Open Session Agenda

I. Call to order

II. Approval of meeting minutes - February 25, 2021 VOTE

III. FY22 Budget Review

IV. Other items for discussion not reasonably anticipated by the chair 48 hours before the meeting.

V. Motion to adjourn

START: 4:01pm

Open Session Agenda

I. Call to order
4:01pm

II. Approval of meeting minutes - February 25, 2021 VOTE
Moved by Michelle, seconded by Steve, passes unanimously (Greene aye, Johnson aye, Miller aye).

III. FY22 Budget Review
Joe: Good meeting with Williamstown finance committee.
Jake: Several committee members wrote to say what a great job Joe did.
Joe: Slides from that presentation.



COVID Year Summary

- The District is still healthy financially, though we have never seen anything close to the rapid-paced mandates followed by partial funding that came this year
 - Additional staffing, HVAC modifications, furniture for distancing requirements, PPE, COVID-19 testing, remote learning, and operating concurrent learning models
- We will probably end the year with \$700K in COVID-19 spending against \$355K in direct COVID aid, \$345K in revolver use.
- Our revolving accounts (tuition, school choice, and excess and deficiency) will end the year healthy.



FY22 Revenue Expectations

Outside of member town assessments:

- State education funding proposed is slightly lower than FY21
- Federal aid for FY22 COVID-19 relief is starting to arrive (~ \$400K ESSER II)
- Additional grants are expected level



FY22 Apportionment Changes

- Net impact of enrollment and EQV fluctuations shifts the sharing slightly toward Lanesborough for both MGRS operating (0.29% shift) and MGRS capital (0.25% shift).



MGRS Building Project

Moving to MSBA closeout

- Remaining issues resolved and final payments are being processed
- 6-8 month closeout process will follow
- We will need to renew some short-term borrowing while we wait for final MSBA payment. Current short-term borrowing is due June 2021.
- Long-term borrowing: less than expected + low rates

Question from Carrie: When we finance the long term borrowing is it the whole thing or the last part?

Joe: Original plan to keep the long term we already have and have a smaller 4-4.5 million long term borrowing as a separate, but given the market condition we are trying to figure out if we can refinance the entire thing and take advantage and do a 32 million or so package, not sure if possible yet.

WES Building Update



Entering renewal phase

- The current team is initiating planning for windows, roof, flooring, and other renewal needs.
- Williams College’s gift to the school is invested with the college’s endowment and was valued at \$1.6M as of July 2020.
- We are always exploring state funding avenues outside of the college.

Joe: That was the summary, now details. Revenue....

These are part of the Governor’s proposal, so not final yet

State Education Funding



PROGRAM	FY2021 Cherry Sheet Estimate	FY2022 Governor's Budget Proposal
Education Receipts		
Chapter 70	3,554,057	3,584,477
Charter Tuition Reimbursement	29,736	14,101
Regional School Transportation	398,228	307,009
Receipts :	3,951,745	3,873,124

Unlikely to be revised downward, could go up....

We did revise transportation costs downward, other districts do not appear to have done so. Inquiring.

Carrie: Are the chapter 70/71 completely distinct offices? You had mentioned enrollment data potentially year before. Is it possible that the data could be used from the prior year?

Joe: These numbers are foundational enrollment being used for Chapter 70 are Oct 1 from this year. They did go forward with those numbers. They did make some adjustments to take into account exits to other schools / home schooling (that hurts us as home school students are not counted in foundational enrollments).

Michelle: Expect most to come back. In Bennington use buses to deliver meals.

Jake: Several other districts in Berkshires doing that. Not using their entire fleet of buses.

Carrie: Going back to homeschool: Is that a trend across the state? Or local?

Jake: We've been following, it is a big bite out of the entire commonwealth. Some parts b/c of ready availability of parochial school / independent school seats saw double / triple effect. Home school all over. We are anticipating a good number will be right back. Looking at enrollments for WES/LES, thinking will open up only a few choice seats as anticipate most home school will be back.

Carrie: Any movement across the state to encourage funding to make up?

Jake: Was on call with commissioner of education and his team. His answer to that question is that it is built in to the chapter 70 formula for fiscal 2022.

Projected Grant and Relief Funding

Grant Name	Amount
Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund II	\$411,657
Williams College Fund to MGRS	\$190,000
<i>Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Program Federal Entitlement Grant</i>	<i>\$14,000</i>
<i>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Federal Special Education Entitlement Grant</i>	<i>\$350,000</i>
<i>Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs</i>	<i>\$120,000</i>
<i>Title II, Part A: Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching and Learning</i>	<i>\$20,000</i>
<i>Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>
District Total	\$1,125,657



Inputs to Apportionment

- Chapter 70/71/Charter Revenue Apportionment
 - Resident enrollment at each school
 - Equalized Valuations (EQVs)
- Minimum Local Contributions
 - Apportion each town’s minimum local contribution based on enrollment at each school
- Apportioning operating costs above minimum local
 - MGRS: based on the 5-year rolling average of member contribution to enrollment
 - Elementary Schools: local town covers remainder 100%
- Apportioning MGRS capital costs
 - 5-year rolling average of member contribution to enrollment
 - EQVs



EQVs

	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
Lanesborough	449,430,700	448,510,800	419,083,500	413,758,100	402,579,400	426,435,400
Williamstown	1,110,091,100	1,101,167,500	1,044,563,700	1,012,008,600	1,008,880,400	1,054,809,700
W % of total	71.18%	71.06%	71.37%	70.98%	71.48%	71.21%

MGRS Operating Cost Sharing



Operating Budget Sharing for MGRS remainder above towns' MLC

	FY20 5 Yr Avg	FY21 5 Yr Avg	FY22 5 Yr Avg
Williamstown	66.04%	66.76%	66.47%
Lanesborough	33.96%	33.24%	33.53%

MGRS Capital Cost Sharing



	FY20			FY21			FY22		
	Enrollment Ratio	EQV Ratio	Capital Split	Enrollment Ratio	EQV Ratio	Capital Split	Enrollment Ratio	EQV Ratio	Capital Split
Williamstown	0.6655	0.7120	68.88%	0.6698	0.7123	69.10%	0.6647	0.7122	68.85%
Lanesborough	0.3345	0.2880	31.12%	0.3302	0.2877	30.90%	0.3353	0.2878	31.15%

Gentle shifts

About a \$12,000 swing for MtG and about \$5000 on capital: far from nothing, but not huge impact.

Wish had more state / federal funding, but overall solid, on shaky ground on what will happen over next few months.

Normally would talk about how this is a contract negotiation year – sign of the times that are not talking about that.

Health insurance premiums being held steady. Will have a health insurance premium for final month this year.

Might have incentives to teachers for early retirement, if so could have a significant impact for us if people choose retirement 5 years earlier than were planning....

Carrie: How does that work? How does a bill from the state offer things local contracts don't?

Jake: Every district would have to adopt this for educators in that district to be able to participate. Essentially, happy to go into detail if wish, the opportunity would be there for some educators to have 5 years of service and 5 years of age added to selves. Looks like a bill that has the potential to stretch out for some months. So if 52 and in 30th year and need to get to 56 and 4 years to get to 80% maximum this would be very attractive, we have several people in that sweet spot. Every district / municipality would have to approve and would have to promise to hire teachers to replace teachers or rational to state as to why not replacing. This keeps districts from not replacing.....

Carrie: How often does the state do something like this? Early retirement not new but....

Jake: Bill has been entered into legislative session, will email text later.

Carrie: Is goal to reduce cost, open up opportunities?

Michelle: Wish had done that this year. Lot of these people would've done this year as many have waivers to work from home.

Joe: Will talk about staffing. Then review numbers. Rest still in flux.

JAKE:

LES: One full time social worker – no brainer given so many factors, especially 150-180 preK – 6th grade going to have need (direct service, family needs, liaison needs).

Also look at one special ed and one para professional to support programming.

WES: request to adding one FTE teacher to reduce class sizes. When I went in and did analysis (what bring to school / kids / position that might eliminate in a year): did not tick any of the boxes to promote the request. By simply taking a smaller cohort.... There are some grades with more kids than others, can gently reshuffle some teachers to accommodate. Not bringing forward the additional classroom FTE, we are bringing forward as in LES one full time special ed teacher and one full time para professional. Already have one FTE social worker.

MtG: piloting a small scale one additional FTE social worker, more talking about a teaching social worker, primary role not as a school adjustment councilor but someone teaching social / emotional learning classes, more direct instruction, how to be a more healthy / whole individual, as schedule allows run groups for students experiencing similar concerns in their lives. We think these positions are sustainable: we are not hiring and laying off – don't want to hire with grant funds as often unstable.

Where is the line item for a full tie diversity / inclusion / equity director. Will have money in the budget for this work, unless we have a vision for how such an individual would spend their days I am loath to spend \$70/\$80,000 on the position until have a clear vision on what doing with their days. I think this will come from a strategic planning process on DEI, will bring forward request for funding to support such efforts.

Michelle: Does this have to be its own position? Curriculum is one piece, hiring social workers in two buildings, that is a huge focus on all the interviews. I've been on hiring committees and heard questions. As own position hard to define. Should it be part of curriculum?

Jake: Have had positions in Pittsfield, needed real help in getting everything we want from this position. No matter what form we take, it's better if we have a road map in front of us with measurable milestones. If hiring an individual is vital to reaching those milestones then that drives why we do. If we need a very specific type of councilor.... In Pittsfield our data

indicated we had a number of students fitting some demographics and wanted a councilor that looked like this demographic, came up empty after 18 months of trying to fill. A lot more complex than saying we have problems and want to hire a position to fix – need a really solid vision for who and how will help.

Carrie: Do we have any retirements coming up?

Joe: We have some. One confirmed at MtG, one at WES (two others considering), LES no one. Couple of para professionals across schools retiring. Then one or two others. Have some but not many.

Carrie: Are there other savings that balance the potential hires?

Joe: Yes.

Steve: Questions on summer studies and what need.

Jake: Will present that next week.

Michelle: Considering some sort of programming during a break next year instead of during a summer (winter break?). Trying to think outside the box, often summer program not appealing, I'm a special educator, if there is loss Looking at science and social studies, how can we re-coup?

Jake: I like the idea of school break academies. Can be a tough sell to get staff to staff them....

Michelle: I know one year LES had some troubling MCAS scores, did after school programming the next year.

Jake: Have that in the mix.

Carrie: Anything else on the budget to be presented now?

Joe: No. Pressed for time, doing everything we can, we'll get there.

Carrie: We have a finance committee meeting the afternoon of the public presentation. How can we be helpful or would you prefer to have that time to continue preparing?

Joe: What might be helpful is for me to walk you thru some of the detailed mechanics.

Might move the next FinComm meeting from Thurs to Wednesday next week. Tentatively 430pm. Will take detailed notes and send to full committee, will have a summary document.

Maybe have a joint meeting with the school committee so if others have questions..... Ask Christina if she has a preference for a joint meeting or just school committee members attending and not participating. Will see about reviewing warrants on Wednesday.

IV. Other items for discussion not reasonably anticipated by the chair 48 hours before the meeting.

V. Motion to adjourn

Moved by Michelle, seconded by Steve, passes unanimously (Greene aye, Johnson aye, Miller aye).

Passes 5:13pm

Minutes taken by Steven Miller, Secretary

Approved 03.10.21