

Westport School Committee
Budget Work Session
DATE: Tuesday, March 22, 2022
TIME: 5:30 p.m.
PLACE: Westport Middle-High School Media Center

MINUTES

Members Present: Michelle Orlando, Melissa Pacheco (*arrived at 6:52 pm.*), Nancy Stanton Cross, Nancy Tavares, Antonio Viveiros

Also Present: Thomas Aubin Superintendent, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager

I. Call to Order - Chair Tavares opened the In-Person School Committee Budget Work Session at 5:46 pm.

II. Correspondence from FinCom -

Ms. Stanton Cross went over a Memorandum of Understanding as a result of a meeting between Superintendent Aubin, Town Administrator Jim Hartnett, Finance Committee Chair Karen Raus, School Business Manager Michelle Rapoza and School Committee Vice Chair Nancy Stanton Cross that took place via Zoom on March 21, 2022 at 12:00 pm. concerning the reduction in the school budget and the use and costs of the old high school building.

Details of this MOU:

- Ownership of the former high school building. Town authorized the transfer back to the Town pursuant to Warrant Article 31 in 2021 at Town Meeting however procedurally this did not take place, therefore the Town is not in control of the school. The School Committee would need to vote to transfer the building to the Town. Mr. Hartnett indicated the Town would not accept the transfer.
- School Department Administration would like to occupy the building for FY2022/2023 until the Town decides what will be done with it.
- Town estimates costs for the building in 2023 to be around \$200,000.
- School will be responsible for \$50,000 of the operating costs and Town will be responsible for any additional costs above the \$50,000 for FY2023.
- Schools maintain reasonable costs for elevators, maintenance, snow removal similar to past year of 2022. Does not include major repairs.
- Capped at \$50,000 for one-year use FY2023.
- School Department would like to place other programs in the building for example basketball recreational programming, Council on Aging, Dept. of Recreation, Extended Day for 2022-2023 with the right for the school to keep the money generated from these programs.
- Reduction of the requested school budget by \$363,951.

After review of the MOU make 2 additions:

In the event any Town departments desire to relocate to the building, would need school's permission and agreement upon allocation of school's cost and maintenance of the building.

School is sole occupant.

III. Discussion of Former Jr./Sr. High School Expenses -

Ms. Rapoza shared the high school expenses sheet. Estimated costs for the former high school reached a total of \$225,240.

Discussion took place on the use of solar energy and solar credits.

Discussion took place on what programs can be placed in the old high school. Mr. Aubin is looking into a program to pilot besides the boatbuilding program. A grant for laptops to teach online technical programming is being pursued.

Discussion took place on out-of-district placements. Mr. Aubin will look into information on students that are in the collaborative.

Ms. Stanton Cross will communicate to Tracy Priestner that the School Department will agree to take \$300,000 free cash, contingent the school is sole occupant of the former HS building for \$50,000 of the costs and approval of an MOU. Schools are on board subject to a complete understanding of the old building.

Ms. Stanton Cross will adjust the MOU and will have Attorney Coleman review it.

The MOU will be placed on the Action Agenda on Thursday's Virtual School Committee Meeting on March 31, 2022 at 6:30 pm.

(Ms. Pacheco arrived here at 6:52 pm.)

Next issue - Budget Override

Discussion took place on the 2 1/2 override budget. The Town wants the school's budget number. The Town came in at \$1.8 M for their override budget.

Ms. Rapoza shared the document **FY23 Budget - Override Budget B** showing the following:

Budget B Priority 1 -	\$2,137,600
Budget B Priority 2 -	\$1,616,200
Totals -	\$3,753,800

After discussion it was decided to provide both Priority 1 and Priority 2 budgets and leave it to discretion of the Select Board to pick which one.

IV. Adjourn - A motion was made to adjourn the In-Person School Committee Budget Work Session.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Stanton Cross

5/0/0

The In-Person School Committee Budget Work Session ended at 7:25 pm.