

BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: May 17, 2022

Place: Havemeyer Building, Staff Development Room

Present: Christina Downey (chair)

Joe Kelly

Cody Kittle

Laura Kostin (via telephone)

Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent

Mr. Sean O'Keefe, Chief Operating Officer

The meeting was called to order at 11:06 AM

Mr. Kittle moved the approval of the minutes from the February 22, 2022 committee meeting and Mr. Kelly seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Discussion items:

2021 - 2022 Operating Budget and Current Status

The committee had a discussion about the efforts that have been made to reduce expenditures to cover the shortfall in the operating budget which is due in large part to out of district special education tuition. As part of that discussion, Mr. O'Keefe informed the committee of the expense exception form implemented effective March 28, 2022 that must be submitted by each budget owner (school or program) in an effort to limit the spending to critical items. It was also brought up that a portion of the savings is due to a number of unfilled positions during the past year.

In the discussion Dr. Jones discussed concerns regarding a shortage of substitute teachers. In order to provide incentives to work, substitute teachers have been offered bonuses for working full days/weeks (this refers to daily subs rather than longterm or building subs). These additional funds have come from ARP funding rather than operating funds, and have helped the district attract and retain substitute teachers as needed.

2022 - 2023 Budget Issues

Mr. O'Keefe reported the changes made by the BET and RTM, noting a \$290K reduction in the operating budget, as well as a reduction of \$150K for an increase in benefits costs that will be accounted for on the Town side. The committee then discussed allocating the reductions to the proper accounts. Included in the discussion was the use of ARP funds in the FY 23 budget.

ARP Funding

Mr. O'Keefe then reviewed the ESSER 2 and ARP grants request for BET appropriation, which will be voted on by the full Board. Mr. Kittle asked about the addition of multiple positions, most notably social workers and math interventionists for the elementary schools. Dr. Jones explained the need for these positions to cover disparities in both learning and homelife caused by COVID-19. The committee also discussed the Special Education needs that could be funded from this grant, along with teaching materials such as those for science and elementary school reading needs in order to provide consistency amongst the schools.

Ms. Downey moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Kelly seconded. Motion passed 4- 0.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 PM