

**Finance Committee Meeting Notes
Crescent Lake School
November 16, 2023 6:00pm**

Present:

GWRSB Finance Committee: Jack Widmer – Team Leader, Tom Bickford, James Pittman, Mary Schillereff

Administration: Superintendent Caroline Arakelian, Business Administrator Kathy O'Blenes, Kelly Mask, Paul Michalski

Other: Brodie Deshaies, Stefanie King

Subject Matter

Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2025 – General Fund

Budget Overview/Discussion

- Director of Special Education & Counseling Services, Kelly Mask, presented the proposed budget for Special Education with an increase of 5.52%. Ms. Mask reported that the District has 369 Special Education students from Preschool to age 22, approximately 15.4% of the total student population. She shared that each school in the District is fully staffed with professional teachers, but that many paraprofessional positions remain open. She described how the budget was created, explaining that it is driven by legally required services and tuition expenses. She described the need for a 100% DPT and part time Out of District Coordinator for Crescent Lake School and a 100% Special Education teacher at Kingswood Regional High School, both previously held models for those schools. She explained the occasional need to contract for outside services, how the out of district placement process works and its effect on the budget, the benefits of math and literacy coaches in their partnerships with teachers, and the revenue that returns to the District, also known as SPED Aid. Ms. Mask answered questions from the committee.
- Director of Technology, Paul Michalski presented the proposed budget for Technology with an increase of 44.49%, driven largely by necessary ERATE infrastructure upgrades. Mr. Michalski explained the predicted expense of the ERATE upgrade, "dark" and "lit" fiber networks, the need to replace switches at the Kingswood complex, software programs that are due for renewals, and chromebook repairs & maintenance. He described the technology staff and their roles in the District and requested an additional technician to support the schools. Mr. Michalski answered questions from the committee.
- Business Administrator, Kathy O'Blenes, presented information on District facility maintenance staffing currently in place, the scope of the maintenance work, the number of work orders received during the 2022-2023 school year, the number of buildings maintained, and the area footage maintained. Industry standards recommend a higher staff to footage ratio than is currently in place, so she is requesting to increase a single split 50/50 position to two 100% positions in order to improve coverage, response time, and recordkeeping compliance. Ms. O'Blenes answered questions from the committee.

- The committee reviewed the proposed general fund budget and discussed recommended cuts.

Adjournment: 8:20 pm

Recorded by,

Katharine T. Lagace

Kathy Lagace
School Board Secretary

Approved by School Board: **12/4/2023**