

MINUTES

Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee
School Committee Meeting - Budget Hearing
Monday, March 11, 2024 - 6:30 p.m.
Hoosac Valley High School
125 Savoy Road, Cheshire, MA

PRESENT: Mike Mucci, John Duval, Andrew Przystanski, Erin Milne, Mike Henault, Adam Emerson, Robert Tetlow

ABSENT:

OTHERS: Superintendent Aaron Dean

104162 Call to Order

Chairman Mike Mucci called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

104163 Approval of Minutes - February 5, 2024

MOTION: On Motion of Erin Milne and second by Mike Henault:

VOTED: to approve the February 5, 2024 School Committee minutes. The vote was unanimous.

104164 Communications -

A. Update - Spain Trip - Tammie Shafer: will be taking over as group leader for the Spain trip. Was going on the trip anyways, group leader is having a baby, so she is taking over. Did fundraising, looking for a bus to get to the airport, will do fundraising for that as well. Adam: Who is going in Tammie's place? Tammie will be looking for chaperones. Still working on it. 20 students will be going. 11 day total trip with EF tours.

104165 Report of Superintendent -

A. **Budget Hearing** - Aaron: reported to the committee, how programs support our budget: Portrait of a Graduate: Goal for students to create communicators, lifelong learners, critical thinkers, global citizens, prepared individual and responsible persons. A lot of work we are doing is getting a high quality curriculum. Pathways: getting positive feedback, a number of students appear to be choosing Hoosac. Higher percentage than in the past. 2 state designated pathways. Will be working on others in the coming years. A step we are taking at the high school level. Help them to design a path for them. Working on Pre-k programming, for a number of years, we had limited slots. Going into next year, we are offering universal Pre-k to our families. A great way to get students at the earliest ages. Exciting shift and change for us. Funded through the CPPI grant. A continual grant. Key piece is that they are trying to make high quality programming sustainable, this is the only way to do it. Going through the budget, you will see we will shift money out of the budget and into this grant.

Aaron went over the projected enrollment - pre-k will help us with the projected enrollment. Pretty steady around the 75 number with the exception of grade 3 with 103. A potential enrollment of 400 for elementary school, 17 sections of teachers. Proposing we offer school choice slots in the elementary school. Looking to boost our enrollment. We don't have space to add to grade 3. Middle School: class of 63, 87, 73 and 76. We gained some students over the year. Looking to maintain 4 sections for our teaching staff. High School: grade 8 - 78, grade 9 - 50; grade 10 - 55; grade 11 - 71; and grade 12 - 48. Hoping to have students find their match here. We need to continue to do our work with the pathways. There will be a reduction of sections at the high school. History teacher, we will not fill out from attrition. Pathway students were most interested in: Arts and Entertainment, biomedical science, business, environmental studies, sports medicine. Very small percentage were interested in education. Very successful start to our pathway programs.

Students with disabilities: there has been a drop since 2019, but also drops in terms of enrollment. Currently we have 25.6% designated with a learning disability. Look at outside placement, \$451,000 for out of district tuition. This is a number that we do an educated guess. Building up our in house programs to help the cost of sending students out. Also why we have to maintain our 5% for our E & D account.

Student needs: Data to track academics, attendance, behavior and social emotional learning skills, through panorama. Mike Henault asked about the attendance data and what the plan is to help reduce absenteeism: Each building has an attendance team, reaching out to families, sometimes referring to DCF, and the family engagement coordinator has a role in attendance as well. Bob: when do you see the academic number being a true figure? At the end of the semester.

Impact of enrollment splits: Assessment calculation - over minimum & transportation assessments; Cheshire = 224 (23.5% in FY25 vs. 220 (22.1%) in FY24; Adams = 729 (76.5%) in FY25 vs. 774 (77.9%) in FY24;

Capital Assessment: based on HV Middle/High School Enrollment only. Cheshire: 139 = 23.84% in FY25 vs. 130 (21.7%) in FY24; Adams: 444 = 76.16% in FY25 vs. 468 (78.3%) in FY24.

Revenue Assumptions: Chapter 70 - Student opportunity funding receiving \$584,000; Charter increased based on increased funding and formula; Overall flat E&D additional funds used for one time maintenance projects (\$175,000); MLC as set by State increased for both towns, over minum reduced 15% compared to FY24; Enrollment overall Adams decreased, Cheshire increased; Increased transportation funds used to reduce assessments; CPPI grant to fund (3) Pre-k classes, not 3-year old program (covered in operating budget).

Expenditures - operating budget: Maintenance capital additions - offset by E&D; all positions currently not negotiated have built in contingencies; Health and dental increased 7% most offset by staff turnover; Buildings - added line items for District Office (hear/custodial services); HVMS Health & HVHS Computers out of ESSER into operating budget, counselor position removed from operating budget (gran funded FY25), Position reductions handled through attrition (i.e. Social Studies, SPED); Several positions will need funding in FY26 instructional accountability coordinator and SSC positions); Increased in Charter and Choice Tuitions.

Aaron reviewed the budget packet with the committee. See attached. Chapter 70 5.2%; Charter tuition reimbursement 140.0%; Adams foundation assessment down -2.3% and Cheshire up 3.5%. Total town foundation assessments: -0.4%. Aaron went over the expenditure summary.

Mike Mucci: He, Adam and Mike Henault reviewed the budget in A & E meetings, had questions during those meetings and reviewed the budget line by line.

Aaron asked the committee for questions. Bob: at the bottom of the scale in Berkshire County regarding teacher salary, are we doing better? Do we have good retention with teachers? Working on teacher retention, stronger mentoring programs, more support. Our top salary is still not there. Mike Mucci: the percentage increased for the teachers is one of the largest ones we have had in our District in years. Aaron: The committee stepped up to go as far as we could go for our teachers.

104166 Public Comment or Question - None

MOTION: On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by Mike Henault :

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Dean, Superintendent

Lisa Bresett, Recording Secretary