

**Finance Committee Meeting Notes
Crescent Lake School
November 12, 2024 6:00pm**

PRESENT

GWRSB Finance Committee: Brodie Deshaies – Team Leader, Guy Pike, James Pittman, Dr. Beth Sheckler

Administration: Superintendent Caroline Arakelian, Business Administrator Kathy O’Blenes, Kerry Hunt, Paul Famulari, Kathy Tetreault

Other: Tom Bickford, Mary Schillereff, community members

SUBJECT MATTER

Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2026 – General Fund

BUDGET OVERVIEW/DISCUSSION

- Superintendent Arakelian described how the budget was prepared and the process that was followed in considering last year's total spending, this year's spending to date, and requests submitted by building administrators. She noted budget drivers that would show increases in items such as utilities, oil, telephone, insurance, and building maintenance. She also reviewed the schedule of presentations and explained that the committee would vote on moving the budget forward at the conclusion of the final meeting.
- Superintendent Arakelian briefly summarized the new staff requests for the Board that are included in the proposed 2025-2026 budget for the KRMS, KRHS, LRTC, NDS, TCS, CLS, EES, Special Education, and District needs.
- Principal Hunt presented the proposed budget for Kingswood Regional Middle School with an increase of 5.95%. Ms. Hunt projected enrollment for next school year to be around 340 students, a slight decrease from this year. She shared that the middle school is fully staffed with professional teachers but they continue to try to fill 10 open support staff positions. She offered appreciation for the presence of the second SRO and a hall monitor this year. She explained that she has again asked for the funds to construct a permanent and dedicated counseling center through the repairs and maintenance line to benefit the growing student needs in the building. The budget represents necessary replacements and purchases of materials to support the student population. She requested to increase the Special Education secretary from part-time to full time hours (+3.5 hours/week plus 10 days in the summer) to draw a quality candidate and further support the DPT with the heavy caseload. Ms. Hunt answered questions from the committee.
- Principal Famulari presented the proposed budget for Kingswood Regional High School with an increase of 1.88%. Mr. Famulari projected an enrollment of 739 students for the next school year, a slight decrease from this year. He reported that the high school is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year and is also fully staffed with professional teachers. There is a candidate for the Wood Technology teaching position with the plan to resume the program in

the second semester. He noted the budget drivers of fuels, the nurse contract, facility contracts (Pop Whalen and The Nick), and professional services (Lakeside Academy). He requested one new Student Support Center position which would be partially offset by an unfilled hall monitor position. Decreased snow removal costs were attributed to a new contractor bid in place. Mr. Famulari answered questions from the committee.

- Principal Tetreault presented the proposed budget for the Lakes Region Technology Center with an increase of 6.21%. Ms. Tetreault reported that LRTC is fully staffed with a current enrollment of 230 students. She described obstacles faced by students who would otherwise enroll at LRTC and reported that the new Marine Technology and Allied Health programs are in the works but will not impact the 2025-2026 budget. She explained that the budget increases are due mainly to increased cost of maintenance, utilities, and supplies. She requested a new CTE support staff position to provide additional safety supervision in increasingly popular course classrooms. Ms. Tetreault answered questions from the committee.
- Business Administrator Kathy O'Blenes presented the proposed budget for the Facilities Department, which includes a request for an additional full-time maintenance technician for the District. She explained that, according to industry standards, the total square footage of the District's facilities (roughly 650,000 square feet) requires a total of 13 maintenance technicians. The District currently has 3 full-time maintenance technicians, 1 full-time working Director, and 1 full-time Administrative Assistant. Ms. O'Blenes requested 1 additional full-time maintenance technician who would be tasked with some of the athletic maintenance functions currently performed by a contracted service provider, in addition to other duties. Ms. O'Blenes answered questions from the committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: At 7:15 pm a motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Moved: Mr. Pike – **Second:** Mr. Pittman

Vote: All in favor

Recorded by,



Kathy Lagace

School Board Secretary

Approved by School Board: **12/02/2024**