

AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET/FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 4, 2020

(Meeting conducted under the Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c.30A, Section 20, signed on March 12, 2020)

Present at 7 p.m. were Mel Webster, Chair; Mayor Gove, Peter Hoyt, Kate Currie, Jana DeBeer, Maryann Welch, Elaine Bucher, Joan Liporto, Director of Finance and Operations; Jared Fulgoni, Superintendent of Schools; Lynn Catarius, Director of Special Education and Student Services; Lyn Jacques, Director of Teaching and Learning; Elizabeth McAndrews, AHS principal; Eryn Maguire, AIHS principal; Michael Curry, AMS principal; Shannon Nolan, AES principal and Karina Mascia-Fayles, CES principal; Tim Costello, and Daniel Grayton, assistant to the superintendent.

Mr. Webster called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. A roll call was taken and all school committee members were present.

There were no questions on the first agenda item, school warrants.

FISCAL 20 AND 21 BUDGETS - There was significant discussion related to the Fiscal 20 and 21 school department budgets. Mr. Webster and Supt. Fulgoni both noted that the consensus coming from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is that state should be able to meet its funding commitments for the rest of Fiscal 20, but that we have to keep a close watch.

Director of Finance and Operations Joan Liporto noted that she expects several hundred thousand dollars in savings in Fiscal 20 as a result of the school buildings being closed. She stated she would like to use some of those funds to defray the special education out of district tuition deficit of almost \$400,000. She also noted that school choice funds and an expected emergency circuit breaker payment from the state. She said she would like to use any remaining funds to replenish revolving accounts, many of which have a balance close to zero. The Mayor stated she would like to see remaining surplus turned back to the city.

The fiscal 21 budget presents a significant challenge and there was discussion around developing an annual budget versus 1/12 budgets. The Mayor asked that the school department develop 1/12 budgets for July, August and September. At this point, it is likely none of the new budget items for Fiscal 21 approved by the school committee will be able to be funded. After much discussion, it was concluded that a level funded budget is the most likely scenario, but much depends on whether we receive an infusion of federal funds and when that occurs. Members of the committee discussed the importance of including some of the critical new items in the budget and that it is going to be extremely difficult setting priorities.

COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPACT – Ms. Liporto presented a spreadsheet that showed more than \$220,000 in savings so far as a result of the school buildings being closed. These numbers did not include potential savings we expect to see in energy costs for the last 3 months of the fiscal year. In addition, there were a few increased costs, for a total of slightly less than \$5,000. Ms. Liporto said she expects there will be more additional expenditures before the end of the year.

The committee discussed the various fees collected by the school department and whether those fees were refunded. Supt. Fulgoni said a letter had already gone home to families regarding Spring athletic fees, giving the option of receiving a refund or rolling the money over to the next athletic season.

Ms. Liporto said the districts served by Salter Transportation had reached an agreement with the company regarding a discounted rate for the school year and that she hoped to bring that to the school committee for a vote at its next meeting.

Other potential fee refunds were also discussed, including busing and extracurricular, but at this time no decisions have been made.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 p.m. on a motion by Ms. DeBeer and a second by Mr. Hoyt. The vote was unanimous.