

**AMESBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET/FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES MARCH 2,  
2020**

Present at 5:30 p.m. were Mel Webster, Chair; Mayor Gove, Maryann Welch, Kate Currie, Elaine Bucher, Jana DeBeer, Peter Hoyt, Joan Liporto, Director of Finance and Operations; Matt Bennett, Director of Facilities; and Jared Fulgoni, Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Webster called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Two items were on the agenda tonight, a review of the Fiscal '21 budget requests made by administrators and department heads, and capital requests.

Initial discussion centered on the level services budget, which represents a \$1,781,117 increase or 5.43% over the FY20 budget Supt. The main drivers are out-of-district tuitions and transportation; an increase in the salary line as a result of new contracts, steps and column moves; health insurance premiums; and retirement sick leave buyback. The increased SPED and salary costs represent nearly \$1.3 million of the increase.

Supt. Fulgoni then presented the committee with a tiered list of the budget requests we had received that go above and beyond level services. He and Ms. Liporto broke the list into 3 tiers and much of the discussion was focused on Tier 1. The total cost of the priority 1 additions is \$1,105, 031. There was a consensus that the AMS adjustment councilor be moved from tier 2 and to tier 1. The total for new positions and programs then became \$1,185,043. This figure added to the level services increase would result in a 9.1% increase over the current budget.

The committee reviewed the remaining tier 2 and 3 items and decided to not move any others into tier 1.

Of the new positions and programs in the budget, three that were deemed as critical were a new pre-K program to meet the need of students requiring additional services, a new section in the Autism Spectrum Disorders program to meet increased enrollments, and a new language based program at AMS to meet the needs of 4<sup>th</sup> graders moving to the school next year. Supt. Fulgoni explained that if we do not add these programs, it could result in more students having to be educated outside of the district.

After some discussion it was suggested to Supt. Fulgoni and Ms. Liporto that they come back to the next budget and finance meeting with a budget that represented a 7.5% increase over the current budget. The superintendent made it clear to the committee that this would result in critical items being cut.

The committee then discussed capital requests with Mr. Bennett. The two major capital projects are the middle school roof, and the HVAC units at CES. Other significant projects included reclaiming and resurfacing the high school track, replacing hot water tanks at AMS, and improvement to athletic fields and fences. Total costs for all capital requests listed by Mr Bennett was more than \$4.8 million. After much discussion, the committee agreed to delay some of the items on the list. On a motion by Ms. DeBeer and a second by Ms. Welch, the committee unanimously voted to recommend a \$4,381,900 capital budget request.

At 6:56 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Welch and seconded by Mr. Hoyt. The motion was approved unanimously.