

Board of Finance Special Meeting Minutes
Mar 7, 2022 6 PM
Meeting held remotely due to Covid 19

1. **Call to order:** Board of Finance Chair Rone Baldwin called the meeting to order at 6pm, also in attendance were Board of Finance members Steve Ezzes, Amy Gare, Michael Imber, Dick Bochinski, Jeff Farr and Jamie Zeppernick, Weston Schools Superintendent Lisa Wolak, Board of Education Chair Tony Pesco, Weston Public Schools Finance Director Phil Cross.
2. **Pledge of allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
3. **Discussion/ Decision concerning the Board of Education's proposed budget for FY 2022-2023:** Mr. Baldwin introduced Superintendent Lisa Wolak who reviewed a PowerPoint presentation. She went into detail on various grant funding and staffing allocations. Questions were heard on the following:
 - a. Mr. Imber asked if the step up increases are contractual, the answer was yes. Superintendent Wolak said that the contracts are posted on the school website.
 - b. Mr. Farr asked for context with last year's operations and next year's projection compared to Covid vs no Covid. Superintendent Wolak responded.
 - c. Mr. Bochinski raised questions about the Capital Budget most notably the Road Paving costs and the duct cleaning. Mr. Cross responded, including saying that they took many factors into account placing the duct cleaning work for this year into the capital budget. There was some discussion around this topic. Mr. Pesco and Superintendent Wolak were in agreement that this work has to be done.
 - d. Mr. Baldwin asked questions about the SPED budget and what was driving the large increase this year. Ms. Tracey Edwards explained in detail the cause of the increase.
 - e. Mr. Ezzes asked about benefits, the State Partnership Plan and the Board of Education's view on its solvency. Mr. Pesco mentioned that The Board will need to be aggressive in looking for alternates. Mr. Baldwin mentioned the need to make this a priority for next year.
 - f. Mr. Imber asked questions about the transportation expenses. Mr. Cross responded.
 - g. Mr. Baldwin asked what was budgeted for fuel costs. Mr. Cross said they were unable to lock in a price, there will be some volatility with gas and diesel costs due to the situation with Russia. They assumed some level of increase, based on the pricing in December.
 - h. Mr. Farr asked about the difference between district settlements and out of district placements. Ms. Edwards answered..
 - i. Mr. Farr asked what the comparison of costs is from ESS to Alternative Pathways. The cost is slightly more but Ms. Edwards explained that they had seen significant successes with the program.
 - j. Mr. Baldwin asked about the increase in administrative salaries with Ms. Gare asking about the legal position and external legal budget. Superintendent Wolak and Mr. Pesco responded in detail on the salaries and position changes. Mr. Pesco mentioned the legal work is very complex and too much for one person's responsibilities.
 - k. Mr. Baldwin asked about the wage increase including GWI and STEP. Mr. Cross responded.. Mr. Baldwin asked questions about grants and their expiration affecting next year's budget. Mr. Cross responded.
 - l. Mr. Baldwin asked about the technology replacement equipment plan, going to a leased approach. Mr. Farr went into detail on the payment structure which Mr. Cross and Mr. DeVito reiterated.
 - m. Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Ezzes asked about the enrollment figures, Mr. Pesco answered. Ms. Wolak mentioned that they followed the numbers closely and worked to align staffing to enrollment as much as possible.

- n. Mr. Farr asked about equipment repairs. Mr. Cross said these were general repairs that they anticipated having throughout the year.
- o. Mr. Imber asked about the insurance expenses and the increase. Mr. Cross responded including that cyber insurance costs are now additional because they are no longer included under CIRMA's coverage, this is a permanent change.
- p. Mr. Farr had a question about building substitutes. Ms. Wolak and Mr. Cross went into much detail on this.
- q. Capital budget:
 - i. Mr. Ezzes asked if there was anything that could be deferred at Hurlbutt given the upcoming work of the Facilities Optimization Committee. Mr. Pesco responded saying that some of this really cannot wait and that their list is a prioritized.
 - ii. There was a discussion around the HVAC system at Hurlbutt. Mr. Pesco mentioned that they were working with the Building Committee on this. Mr. Imber asked if there were grants available for HVAC upgrades. Town Administrator Jonathan Luiz said that there had been little to no success with these grants in Connecticut.
 - iii. Mr. Imber asked if the Board of Ed would support the Board of Selectmen's suggestion to postpone the paving charge. Mr. Pesco and Ms. Wolak said that yes they would support that and expected it to be deferred.
 - iv. These items will be discussed further in the meeting on March 8.

4. Adjournment: Mr. Imber moved to adjourn at 8.45pm. Mr. Farr seconded this. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes submitted by: Sara Beer, Executive Administrative Assistant