

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Budget Hearing/Regular Session – March 12, 2012

A Budget Hearing/Regular Session of the Wayland School Committee was held on Monday, March 12, 2012, at 7:00 P.M. in the Large Hearing Room of the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Barb Fletcher, Chair
Beth Butler, Vice Chair
Malcolm Astley
Ellen Grieco
Shawn Kinney

Also:

Paul Stein
Superintendent of Schools

Brad J. Crozier
Assistant Superintendent

Geoffrey S. MacDonald
Business Administrator

Marlene M. Dodyk
Director of Student Services

Chair Barb Fletcher convened the Budget Hearing at 7:03 P.M.

1. Public Hearing on FY13 Budget:

Barb Fletcher presented the Wayland Public Schools FY13 Operating Budget and stated that it was developed from the bottoms up. The PowerPoint presentation also included the FY13 Capital Budget request and the status of the School Committee's TAG Recommendations related to The Abrahams Group Report.

Barb stated that the budget supports the District Mission Statement, the District Goals, the Strategic Goal Areas, and the Core Values. She commented that the School Committee is pleased to have Paul Stein as Superintendent, and she praised the HSBC and the high school administrators and staff on the opening of the new high school facility, as the project moves toward completion.

Barb reviewed the maintenance of effort budget as it relates to the enrollment and staff ratio of each school building, including departments at Central Office. She also reviewed the offsets and cost savings. Paul Stein highlighted some of the new initiatives, including the 1:1 Computer Initiative, the Chinese Initiative, the .5 middle school math coach, the elementary Math Preview Program, the high school .6 math labs teacher, and the Health Ed initiative.

The School Committee and Administrators answered questions and received comments from members of the audience surrounding the proposed FY13 budget.

Kim Cook asked the School Committee what the percentage of increase is in the FY13 budget over the FY11 actuals. She also asked about the total of the recommended salary adjustments, the context of teachers' contracts, and the revolving accounts.

Margo Melnicove asked about the revolving accounts and commented on the recommended FY13 budget and the proposed initiatives, as well as the WTA contract.

Louis Jurist commented on the proposed new initiatives, including the 1:1 laptop initiative. He also commented on the WTA contract and per pupil spending in comparison to other peer towns.

Sheila Carel thanked the School Committee for budget increases that directly affect the education of the students.

Tom Sciacca asked the School Committee as a Wayland Voters' Network member about the new HVAC position in the FY13 budget and the 1:1 laptop initiative in terms of savings going forward.

The Budget Hearing ended at 8:05 p.m.

2. Comments & Written Statements from the Public:

Tom Sciacca commented on the two articles that he emailed to the School Committee: “What You (Really) Need to Know” and “How to Be Creative.” Tom commented that visions must be developed by visionaries, based on an overall vision and understanding of what the 21st Century will look like. He also stated that, according to the article, “What You (Really) Need to Know,” factual knowledge will be much less valuable in the 21st Century than knowing how to access and analyze this knowledge. He feels that this is also based on America’s role in the world in the 21st Century, and referenced Apple’s model in the world as being a reasonable one. He feels that the Wayland Public Schools have a real vision going forward.

Malcolm Astley commented on the article he submitted from the Marshall Memo, “Colleges Should Teach Intellectual Virtues” and named the five academic virtues: Love of Truth, Honesty, Courage, Fairness, and Wisdom. Malcolm stated that the definition of Wisdom, as stated in the article, is what enables us to find the balance between timidity and recklessness, between careless and obsessiveness, and the issue of priorities and how one helps students to increasingly sort through items in terms of finding what is priority.

Links have been provided “for educational purposes only” to access the aforementioned articles: <http://pulse.me/s/6OGM7> and <http://chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Should-Teach/130868/>

3. Discussion and Approval of FY13 Budget and Related Fees and Tuitions:

Based on the Budget Hearing and comments received, the School Committee discussed the FY13 budget prior to their vote to approve the budget. They discussed the revolving accounts and what can be done with the surplus money going forward based on the forthcoming legal opinion from Attorney Jim Toomey.

They also discussed the user fees (parking, instrumental music, transportation, and athletics), as well as the BASE, TCW, and FDK fees.

Paul Stein stated that parking, instrumental music, and athletic fees, as well as WSCP fees with the exception of Pegasus, which has been lowered, have not been increased for FY13. He also gave some history as to how the fees were established and why.

As a result of this discussion, a reference was made to the Committee of the document online detailing the expenses for each of the WSCP programs for the past 5 years.

In terms of fees for WSCP programs that are already being set up for next year, Paul suggested that going forward, the Committee work with Brian Jones, Director of WSCP, and Cheryl Fertig, Director of The Children’s Way, to take a closer look at their budget and make suggestions for adjustments to fees. He also stated that since none of the current fees represent increases, the Committee could approve these fees, with the understanding that adjustments could be made later. He also stated that he is comfortable with the fees he recommends for FY13 as a result of the Quarterly Reports.

Geoff MacDonald commented that the Quarterly Report is a projection; thus, going forward, in accordance with the Abrahams Group, there will be a full breakdown of each of the revolving accounts incorporated into the budget documents for next fall.

Barb commented on invoking the Rule of Necessity, as three School Committee members are impacted by the fees and there wouldn’t be a quorum otherwise. Since all filed the appropriate Conflict of Interest forms in a timely manner, Beth Butler stated that they are exempt from the potential of having a conflict and the Rule of Necessity does not have to be invoked. Beth also commented that anyone having a conflict that has not been disclosed, then it is another matter altogether.

Upon a motion duly made by Beth Butler, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the FY13 Operating Budget as presented in the amount of \$32,526,704.

Capital Budget:

The School Committee discussed the FY13 Capital Budget, specifically the repair of the middle school roof. Shawn Kinney recommended that the repair be postponed a year from now until the MSBA makes their final decision

regarding the state funding. They also discussed the pros and cons of waiting a year in terms of the MSBA approval and the timeline should the funding be approved.

Barb Fletcher recommended the Committee postpone their vote on the Capital Budget until John Moynihan has had his site visit with the MSBA and acquires more information regarding the process. She will ask John to make his recommendations at the March 26th meeting, after which the School Committee will vote on the FY13 Capital Budget.

4. **Continued Discussion of Space Utilization Study:**

Paul Stein updated the School Committee regarding the elementary space Utilization Study. He reviewed the long term and short term (by next September) courses of action in terms of the elementary schools. He stated that the enrollment projections are estimated to remain flat or come in lower; however, that could change due to the Town Center and other programs in Wayland. He asked the School Committee for their feedback in terms of how the administrators should proceed.

The School Committee and administrators discussed potential plans of action for the elementary schools, specifically Happy Hollow at this time, and how to proceed in terms of cost and timelines.

The School Committee concluded that they would hire an independent architectural firm to assess options for the short-term solutions, and, as an action item, the Committee will consider long-term solutions and whether to hire an independent outside firm and/or form a task force in terms of forming a vision going forward. Paul was asked by the Committee to investigate the cost of a consultant for such work. As part of this process, the School Committee will consider the option of grade level vs. neighborhood schools.

5. **Town Meeting Preparation:**

The School Committee began preparation for the Annual Town Meeting, which commences on Monday, April 9. They also reviewed the Table of Contents for the school budget information. Paul Stein commented on his revisions of the sections he was assigned and passed out his completed sections for the Committee's comments and/or revisions.

Barb Fletcher will draft a presentation in support of the budget for Town Meeting and will have it available for the School Committee at the March 26th meeting.

6. **Acceptance of Gift:**

The School Committee discussed the generous, but unusual, nature of the following gift, as well as the equity issue. The consensus was to postpone the vote to accept in order to review past similar gifts and the gift policy further. The School Committee thanked the potential donor for this generous donation; Barb will contact him.

- A donation of \$2,000 to the WHS Baseball Team (varsity and junior varsity players/coaches) to cover the cost of sandwiches, etc. for 10 away games.

7. **Return Balance of Truck Purchased to Account:**

Geoff MacDonald returned to the issue of hiring an architect/consultant for services provided with regard to the issues raised in the space utilization study, who are not part of the exemption, and commented that a scope of work would have to be done in order to get quotes for anything over \$5,000.

Upon a motion duly made by Shawn Kinney, seconded by Beth Butler, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to return the balance remaining of \$6,461 after the purchase of a truck this year (Project 3761) to the appropriate account at the end of this fiscal year.

8. **Approval of Accounts Payables & Payroll Warrants:**

Upon a motion duly made by Ellen Grieco, seconded by Beth Butler, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve payment of the following:

- Wayland Public Schools Payroll Warrant, dated 3/8/2012, in the amount of \$1,136,204.68
- Wayland Public Schools Accounts Payable Warrant, dated 3/12/2012, in the amount of \$331,209.14

9. **Approval of Minutes:**

Upon a motion duly made by Malcolm Astley, seconded by Shawn Kinney, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the Regular Session minutes of February 27, 2012, as written.

10. **Superintendent's Report:**

(a) School News:

Paul stated that he saw a terrific musical, "Katastrophe Kate," at the Middle School. He praised Steve Murray as the composer and author of the musical and felt it was developmentally appropriate for the students. He also praised the many students who participated and showcased their talents in the musical ensembles.

Paul stated that an immediate need has been identified for additional ELL services and will provide further information for the next School Committee meeting.

Paul also stated that he took a tour of the woods in the area near the Middle School regarding the possibility of endangered species. He wanted to mention this to the School Committee in case of concerns on their part or if there is a general support. The School Committee is in support of these efforts. A community member would like to set traps to determine if endangered species reside in this area.

11. **Follow-up and Future Agenda Items:**

(a) Review Draft of School Committee Report re: Part II of the Abrahams Report:
Agenda item was tabled.

(b) Review of School Committee Protocols:

Barb Fletcher reminded the School Committee that when a Committee member has a request for information, he/she copies the Chair and Paul Stein. If it is a simple request, it can be responded to quickly, but if it is a more complicated one, then it will be put on a meeting agenda for the School Committee to discuss and review.

Barb also stated that if there is a request from a Committee member for a product or a service, it should be sent to the administration to see if there is an interest. However, if a decision has not been reached by the administration, then it should come to the School Committee for discussion. The Chair of the School Committee and Paul Stein should be copied on these requests so they can follow up.

Beth Butler referred to and objected to a letter related to School Committee business that was sent to a state agency on January 25, 2012 by a School Committee member who didn't make it clear that he was acting as an individual. Beth asks that the policy be clarified as to the protocol of this action. Going forward, School Committee members will be more specific in their requests to outside agencies that they are acting as individuals, unless the Committee is acting as a whole.

(c) Update from the Superintendent Evaluation Subcommittee:

Malcolm Astley and Beth Butler met twice and discussed the DESE Superintendent Evaluation Tool and what it means. They asked the School Committee for their approval to meet with Paul Stein in order to understand the terminology and gain some clarification surrounding the evaluation process for teachers and principals and how it will work as a coordinated effort.

Beth stated that the new superintendent evaluation tool does not come into effect until September 2013; thus, the Subcommittee would like to make some recommendations for the tool being used for this year's evaluation. She also asked the School Committee to read the material related to the evaluation tool and provide some input to the Subcommittee. Malcolm added that they would like to adopt information from the new instrument and incorporate it into the current instrument immediately.

Barb Fletcher would like the School Committee to think about the future in terms of the development and timing of the superintendent's goals. She suggested to the Subcommittee that since goal setting is a big part of the evaluation process, they take into consideration the appropriate timing and when to have it in place during the evaluation process.

12. **Comments from the Public:**

Sheila Carel thanked the School Committee for their support in allowing them to proceed with the study of endangered species on the middle school property. She stated that she would like to share information and photos with the Middle School, but would need to clear with the State in terms of the information that can be shared with the public. She also stated that the study is purely for educational purposes, as the area is no longer being considered for school fields.

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Tom Sciacca commented that the Wall Street Journal articles he provided to the School Committee are ways to foster creative thinking. He also made an analogy stating that most professionals, regardless of their expertise, feel that having the best quality vs. saving money is always better. He suggested that there can always be somewhat less of an improvement, but still save money. He asked the Committee to consider this plan of action, especially in the technology capital request.

Louis Jurist commented on the revolving accounts and, in his opinion, the fees were designed to raise revenue or defer costs and were transferred to the general school fund. He suggested that, if legally possible, the surplus money in those accounts be returned to free cash and then possibly be used to defer the costs for the FY13 proposed budget. He also stated the reason for the institution of the parking fee. Louis informed the Committee that on M.A.S.C. website, there are guidelines on the protocol and ethics of School Committee members, individually or collectively.

Geoff MacDonald commented on the per pupil expenditures and stated that they were recently posted. He compared Wayland's to Weston's per pupil expenditures, as well as giving the state average.

13. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Shawn Kinney, seconded by Malcolm Astley, the School Committee voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the Regular Session at 10:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Stein, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Observers:
See attached.

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Wall Street Journal "How to Be Creative"
2. New York Times "What You (Really) Need to Know"
3. Marshall Memo "Colleges Should Teach Intellectual Virtues"
4. FY13 Budget Booklet
5. Town Meeting Presentation – Table of Contents
6. Memo re: Space Utilization Study
7. Tuition Fees Schedules
8. Gift Letter
9. Payroll Warrant & Summary
10. Accounts Payables Warrant
11. February 27, 2012 Regular Minutes