

MINUTES – FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE of Wayland School Committee

Wednesday, January 13, 2016

A meeting of the Finance Subcommittee of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, January 13, 2016 in the School Committee conference room at the Wayland Town Building.

Present:

Donna Bouchard
Barb Fletcher

Also present:

Susan Bottan – WPS, School Business Administrator
Dave Watkins – Finance Committee
Carol Martin – Finance Committee
Adrian Bryan – Boston Parent Council for Wayland METCO Program

The meeting was convened at 11:10am and it was announced that the meeting was not recorded by WayCam due to a disk error.

1. Comments & Written Statements from the Public

Anette Lewis commented that the MA DESE website shows a student population in some years for preschool and in other years there is no student population. Barb noted that preschool enrollment reporting would be an action item for the schools to work on with DESE.

Anette also noted that she did not support extending the OPEB repayment plan from 10 years to 15 years. The OPEB Advisory Committee had already helped the Town realize a substantial reduction in the annual payment amount, and all other entities had paid their fair share. She urged the subcommittee not to support a payment extension plan.

2. Financial Matters

(a) Review Draft Peer Analysis for the Wayland Public Schools

Dave Watkins presented a comprehensive analysis of the Wayland Public Schools Peer Towns. Barb then read public comment from Gordon Cliff, a member of the finance committee (emailing with his own opinion). Gordon asked that the peer analysis focus on nearby school systems if possible.

Dave Watkins reassessed the criteria for determining a school peer towns. He noted that the Finance Committee peer towns were chosen based on financial statistics. The schools must continue to consider academic performance as well.

Dave used the MA DESE website data to determine a variety of criteria. For example, he noted enrollment, average class size, the percent of students attending college after graduation, SAT scores, MCAS scores that are proficient or higher, staff retention rates, teacher salaries and per pupil expenditure figures.

Dave presented visual analytics to support his conclusions in determining a new set of peer towns that included some prior towns while introducing others. He kept the information broad and recommended we now take a closer look at his data. Barb noted that she would look at his metrics to determine if anything was missing, look at the list of districts and then outline a procedure to address the information at the next finance subcommittee meeting.

The subcommittee thanked Dave for the extensive amount of work he did to help guide the process in determining our peer towns.

(h) Discuss Consideration of New Fundraising Form for Elementary Student Activities

This item was taken out of order. Susan introduced a new form for the “service learning project” fundraisers.

(b) Receive Update of Boston Parent Council Status and Request to be a Support Organization of the Wayland Public Schools

Mabel Reid-Wallace was unable to attend the meeting, however Adrian spoke on her behalf and noted that the Boston Parent Council (BPC) had organized as a 501©3 entity under METCO Inc..

The BPC is also organizing a separate account to handle the fundraising from the Florence Adler Walk/Run, which will be used for METCO scholarship awards. Susan will ask Mabel what the METCO revolving fund will now cover, in terms of the proposed FY/17 budget. Anette offered to help correct the BPC bylaw information.

(c) Discuss Status of the METCO Advisory Council and Receive Draft Annual Appeal Letter

This item was passed over.

(d) Discuss Superintendent’s Recommended FY17 Budget, including Review of the Utility Expense Budget and Brainstorming of Possible Efficiencies/Cost Saving Opportunities

Susan and Ben met with the Energy Advisory Committee and after discussing the methodology for the proposed increase in electricity charges for FY’17, they determined the cost will not increase as originally anticipated and there will be a \$147,000 savings in the proposed FY’17 budget. Also, the ESCO project funds helped to save money, however the savings were used to replace the high school HVAC fan units, since 26 of them failed.

Susan will provide the School Committee with an update on negotiations concerning a new electricity contract in the spring.

(e) Discuss FY17 Budgets for Wayland School Community Programs (WSCP), METCO and The Children’s Way, including Possible Extension of OPEB Parity Payment and Registration Fee for FY17 for The Children’s Way

Barb asked if there are any changes to the indirect cost allocations that will impact the operating budget. Susan is continuing to look at the proposed fees. Barb noted that long-term, it may make sense for the Recreation Department and WSCP to look at their program offerings and see if they can combine some programs. Donna noted that it would be great if the Recreation Department and WSCP could eventually merge, to free up the School Committee in terms of only having to deal with matters directly related to education.

Susan noted that the health insurance numbers and OPEB numbers came in lower than anticipated and she will work on adjusting fees accordingly. Barb asked Susan to check with Cliff Lewis of the OPEB Advisory Committee to understand the magnitude of changing the repayment terms from 10 years to 15 years. A registration fee for The Children’s Way was discussed again, however no decision was made.

(f) Discuss Potential Uses of Surplus Funds for WSCP, including to Fund Certain FY17 Capital Requests

Susan consulted with Attorney Mark Lanza for parameters concerning what the surplus funds could be used for going forward. Most of the proposals appeared to be okay, except for the “scholarship”

idea (financial assistance). Carol Martin noted that the Finance Committee would be determining the capital requests, and one possible idea would be to use these one-time funds on some capital items or projects, for example, to help defray the cost of the Happy Hollow playground equipment.

(g) Receive Update regarding Questions Raised about Establishing DBA/Checking Accounts by School Employees

Susan confirmed that all employees were asked to declare if they were custodians of any checking accounts “doing business as” the Wayland Public Schools or its subsidiaries. No employee reported any such conflict. Susan will add this topic to the online employee training for future employees.

3. Administrative Matters

(a) Receive Updated Status on Various Outstanding Projects by the Business Administrator

Susan asked if the “Fast Facts” booklet will be produced for town meeting. Barb noted that it would be helpful.

4. Future Agenda Topics and Date of Next Meeting

It was decided to wait until after Thursday’s School Committee meeting to determine if any additional topics should be added to the next finance subcommittee agenda.

5. Consent Agenda

(a) Approval of Finance Subcommittee October 14, 2015, November 19, 2015 and December 11, 2015 Minutes

The November 19th minutes were passed over. Upon a motion made by Barb, seconded by Donna, the minutes of October 14, 2015 and December 11, 2015 were approved.

6. Comments from the Public

Anette Lewis commented that she believed the “Building Use” revolving fund should zero out annually.

7. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made by Barb Fletcher, seconded by Donna Bouchard, the subcommittee voted unanimously (2-0) to adjourn at 1:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Bouchard
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. **Agenda**
2. **Email from Gordon Cliff re: Peer Analysis**

3. Peer Info provided by Dave Watkins
4. Service Learning Form
5. FY2016 Boston Parent Council Budget and Bylaws
6. FY2016 METCO Grant and FY2017 METCO Revolving Account Budget
7. FY2017 Special Revenue Fund Budgets – Revolving Accounts
8. FY2017 WSCP Recommended Budgets
9. TCW Budget with OPEB Parity Extension
10. WPS Direct and Indirect Cost Allocations for Fee-Based Programs
11. WSCP Revolving Account Retained Balances Consideration for Allocation