

Minutes – Wayland School Committee Finance Subcommittee  
Dec. 7, 2017

A meeting of the School committee's Finance subcommittee was called to order at 2:10 PM by Jeanne Downs.

Present were:

Jeanne Downs, chair  
Kathie Steinberg

Also present:

Arthur Unobskey, Superintendent  
Susan Bottan, Business Administrator  
Ben Keefe, Facilities Manager  
Klaus Shigley, Finance Committee Liaison  
Carole Plumb

1. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

2. Financial Matters

(a) Review of Loker Kitchen Project

Ben Keefe updated the committee on the Loker Kitchen project. The contract with the designer has been negotiated and approved by the Board of Selectmen. The construction docs to bid should be available for Town Meeting to allow for accurate cost numbers. The additional step in getting contracts approved may warrant consideration for a different, less cumbersome process.

The Loker Kitchen project is part of the Capital Omnibus budget and not a separate warrant article. Details of the project will be outlined in the write up of the capital budget.

(b) Bus Parking

Susan updated the committee on the progress of the agreement with HDR Holdings for bus parking. They have offered a more advantageous location for the office on the first floor. Talks about moving the sign continue, with HDR responsible for cutting the shrubs and moving the sign back 10 feet to enhance site lines. Permitting should be completed by Jan 2018. The contract is being refined with the input of counsel. Rivers Edge is moving more slowly, so language to increase the flexibility in the contract is being reviewed.

(c) Finance Committee Presentation

The School Committee is scheduled for 7:05 PM on the Finance Committee Agenda on 12/11/17 for the budget presentation. Klaus has reviewed the presentation and has provided some feedback. A discussion of the presentation ensued including the purpose of the presentation, how the budget was derived and questions about the budget guidelines. The length of the presentation and the selection of the slides to include was discussed.

The subcommittee identified the following areas for discussion with the Finance Committee:

- Teacher contracts
- SPED
- District focus on creating and streamlining programs to add capacity, reduce transportation and out of district placements.
- Doing what is right for kids which will ultimately bring more efficiencies down the road.

- Demystifying the numbers and inaccurate perceptions about SPED, FTEs and staffing.
- Building a sustainable budget
- Understanding basic enrollment and how students are distributed throughout the district impacts budget more than the numbers (where they are vs. how many there are)
- Myth of adding employees – FTE vs. contract services

Jeanne reiterated the need to discuss the guidelines to develop a better understanding between Fin Com and the schools. The original request of over a month ago as laid out in the memo to Fin Com, was to understand guidelines, and discuss how the school budget is derived, headcount, final enrollment, and share information with Fin Com on contractual obligations and mandated requirements that don't appear to be included in the Fin Com discussion.

During the meeting, specific questions regarding how the school model is used and how discretionary categories are defined need to be discussed. For example, do committed costs include schools mandated costs? How did it influence early discussion on the guidelines? Part of presentation should include what schools define as "committed" costs that are baked into the budget and provide those numbers, which were not available at the time of Fin Com's budget guideline discussion.

Susan reported we now have final enrollment. What does it mean for the Town and School to come in under 3.5%. Is Fin Com looking at salaries and other contractual obligations? Reconcile the timing of the availability of our numbers: model informs us until the enrollment numbers are formalized in October. It may be helpful to share the utility of our school budget model and how we use it in our budgeting process so Fin Com can understand its strengths and weaknesses.

Guidelines didn't include baked in numbers and just used incomplete information from model and Fin Com's characterization of costs (discretionary, committed). Had this info been available earlier, how would that affect their budget guideline discussion?

The list of questions received will be included with the Budget Book.

Jeanne reported on some of the updated comparison tables, including the per pupil expenditures. Wayland's per pupil expenditures have decreased in FY16 from FY15, and is one of the two districts to experience a decrease.

Concern about inaccurate information being reported in other presentations. Kathie reported on a consultants presentation to the Board of Selectmen included the incorrect cost for the HS Field capital project at \$8.4 MM and not \$5.4 Mm. Susan questioned how incorrect numbers make their way into any presentation and why they aren't checked with the schools. Need to correct so public is accurately informed.

We will include correct numbers to Fin Com to make sure they have accurate information, including the other funding sources of CPA and revenue funds. The request to taxpayers is LESS than \$5.4 m once the other funding sources are considered.

Klaus agreed it is hard to have the correct figures given the different sources of info and different funding sources that aren't initially recognized.

## (d) Budget Discussion

Kathie suggested we streamline the budget questions for those new initiatives for which all five of the committee members will have questions to avoid duplicating efforts. The subcommittee will formulate some of the questions and identify topics at next meeting.

### 3. Administrative Matters

#### (a) Budget Calendar

The budget calendar was discussed including the scheduling of the various community and school presentations. There is a conflict with the Warrant Hearing and our presentation to Fin Com scheduled for Jan 22, 2018 which we will need to work around. The date of the elementary presentation is still under discussion.

#### (b) Outstanding Projects

Susan has been focused on the budget and budget presentations so there is no additional information to report. Susan confirmed with Klaus that the School Committee presentation to Fin Com will be Dec 18, 2017.

#### (4) Future Agenda Topics and Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for Dec 21, 2017 and will include Bus Parking updates and continuation of budget discussions. Jeanne will identify Subcommittee meeting dates for the second half of the year to continue on Thursday afternoons from 2-4 PM. The need for meeting in January was discussed.

#### (6) Public Comment (out of order)

Carol Plumb recommended reviewing George Bezois' presentation on Waycam.

#### (5) Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion made by Kathie Steinberg, seconded by Jeanne Downs, the Finance Subcommittee voted (2-0) to approve the minutes of Oct 23, 2017 as amended.

#### (7) Adjournment

Upon a motion made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Kathie Steinberg, the Finance subcommittee voted (2-0) to adjourn the meeting at 3:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathie Steinberg

Corresponding documents  
Agenda  
Budget Presentation