

Marlborough Board of Education

Special Meeting

February 11, 2016

Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School Library/Media Center

1. Call to Order

Ruth Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

BOE Members Present:

Present and seated were Chairmen Ruth Kelly, Wesley Skorski, Louise Concodello, Betty O'Brien, Susan Rapelye, Theresa Brysgel Mimi LaPoint, and Patrick Pabouet.

Administration Present:

Dr. David Sklarz, Superintendent

Dan White, Principal

Kim Kelley, Vice Principal

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments made at this time.

4. Continue Review and Discussion of the Proposed FY 2016-17 Budget

Dr. Sklarz distributed a new cover sheet for the budget packet, noting the reductions in liability insurance and addition for sewer fees.

400 Accounts

Dr. Sklarz noted that the Challenge Course needs to be inspected every year in the gym. Ms. LaPoint questioned if he was referencing just the indoor course, noting that it appears that the outdoor course is not maintained. Dr. Sklarz confirmed that he was just referencing the indoor course. Mr. White noted that there will be an upcoming Eagle Scout Project assigned to remove the outdoor course as it is not utilized or maintained.

Louise Concodello questioned where the generator is located. Mr. White noted that it is outside the Community Room and noted that it does kick on right away when needed.

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Ms. Kelly questioned if the \$5k allocated for emergency repair is enough. Ms. O'Brien commented that she was not aware that these types of funds were already in place. Dr. Sklarz reviewed some the types of items that may need to be addressed with funds from this account. He noted that the current walk in freezer is 12 years old and noted that it needs to be repaired. He also noted grinder pump issues that required repairs. It was noted that last year there was an oven fire that needed to be addressed. Ms. Brysgel questioned if money should be added to this line item. Ms. Rapelye questioned how critical the pending repairs are, including the generator. Dr. Sklarz noted that the recommendation for generator repair came from Chris Corsa. He also noted that the oil tank needs to be repaired. Ms. Rapelye noted her concern that discussions with the Town may not be resolved in enough time to address some of the items that need attention. Dr. Sklarz noted that he has reached out to the First Selectman to continue these discussions. Ms. Rapelye commented that if the Town comes back to the Board and says they will fund these types of items, then money set aside to fund these items would be paid back to the Town as a sign of good faith. Ms. O'Brien commented that if there is money left in the budget, then maybe these items can be addressed this year with additional funds. Dr. Sklarz noted that a motion can be made after the Public Hearing to discuss and make changes to this line item and the overall budget. Mr. Skorski commented that he thinks it is important to make it clear why this line item would increase when presenting the budget and commented that he doesn't think the Town is going to allocate funds in their budget to addresses these items for this budget. Ms. O'Brien commented that going forward she thinks it is important to keep funds in this account and questioned if it is anticipated that anything additional will need to be funded in the cafeteria. Mr. White noted that the two stoves, fridge, and freezer are all 10-12 years old. He noted that hoses and spray nozzles are also needed.

500 Accounts

Dr. Sklarz noted that Liability/Property Insurance has been reduced by approximately \$2k. He noted that they are currently budgeting for 6 students to attend Magnet Schools. Mr. Skorski questioned what the line item Printing & Binding is for. Mr. White noted that many materials utilized by the school are made in house and noted that the use of printed materials has increased now that the use of textbooks is on the decline. Dr. Sklarz noted that there have been discussions regarding whether to reduce the number of buses from 10 to 9, and noted that the main concern is how long students will be riding the bus for, noting that there are kindergarteners on the bus that have been a school for a full day. He noted that the length of the high school runs also needs to be considered. Dr. Sklarz noted that they will continue to monitor this going forward.

562 Out of District Placement-Dr. Sklarz noted that the school continues to train and prepare to accommodate the needs of children in house, and noted that by maintaining students in school, there is a cost savings in the long term. Ms. LaPoint questioned if there is a tipping point for the needs of a child that would allow for that child have their needs better met at another facility.

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She asked the Board to keep considering this. Ms. O'Brien commented that it is always important to begin in house and only move to utilizing another facility when the school is sure they cannot meet the need. She commented that the intent when outsourcing should always be to bring that child back to the school. Mr. Skorski commented that there have been cases where it takes too long to decide that a student does not have their needs met in the classroom. He commented that there are not resources at the school to provide a self-contained environment. Ms. Brysgel commented that she feels that this is a child by child situation.

600 Accounts

611 Instructional Supplies-Dr. Sklarz noted that this line items includes the \$300 allocated to each teacher. Dr. Sklarz noted that teachers purchase all items electronically and that all items are approved. Ms. Concodello noted that the allocated amount was increased from \$200-\$300 in the 2014-15 budget cycle. Ms. Rapelye noted her concern regarding the cost of supplies parents are being asked to purchase for their students at the beginning of the year, commenting that it costs approximately \$40-\$50 per child. Mr. Skorski questioned how much the PTO backpack was last year. It was noted that it was approximately \$28. Ms. O'Brien commented that each teacher also receives \$100 from the PTO for supplies. Ms. LaPoint noted that conceptually the supplies sent in should be for that student. It was noted that sometimes supplies are shared amongst students and some students come home without the supplies that they need. Mr. White commented that the majority of the time, students keep and utilize their own supplies. Ms. Kelly noted that reductions have been made to what is required by parents to send in for their child and noted that non-consumable items, such as calculators and rulers are provided by the school. It was noted that items like tissues and wipes are now funded by the school. Ms. Kelly commented that teachers do need to buy supplies for their own use. Ms. LaPoint commented that what a teacher has to buy is a separate category than what is need for the students. She commented that maybe the teachers do not have to be so specific about what items need to be bought. Ms. Brysgel commented that it would make more fiscal sense for supplies to be bought in bulk. Ms. O'Brien commented that the teachers are ordering their supplies in bulk.

627 Transportation Fuel-Mr. Pabouet questioned what this line item is for. Dr. Sklarz noted that it is for the buses. Dr. Sklarz noted that the propane gas is for the vans.

641 Workbooks/EBooks- Ms. O'Brien commented that this account seems to fluctuate. Mr. White noted that they are addressing the needs for updates to the Science and Social Studies curriculum based on new standards.

700 Accounts

Dr. Sklarz noted that they were able to utilize the REAP Grant to offset many of the items that would have otherwise been funded by this account. He noted that an additional \$17k would

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have been needed to fund this account in the budget if there were no funds available through the REAP Grant. Dr. Sklarz noted that two Epson Projectors were purchased through the REAP Grant and noted that two are allocated for in the budget. Ms. O'Brien questioned if it is possible to use REAP Grant funds to fund all items in this account. Dr. Sklarz commented that they need to be cautious regarding how these funds are used. Ms. Kelly questioned if the funds from the REAP Grant had to be utilized within one year. Mr. White noted that they have two years to utilize the funds. Ms. Rapelye questioned what that listening center is. Dr. Sklarz noted that it is a station with a CD player and headphones that allows for students to listen to stories read aloud via cd.

800 Accounts

Ms. O'Brien commented that it looks like there is an increase of \$7k in this account. Mr. White noted that there is only an increase of \$100. It was noted that the \$3700 allocated for FPS Teams Registrations includes State level registration.

Dr. Sklarz addressed questions received from the Board of Education regarding the budget.

111

For certified staff, what is their total years of teaching service in Marlborough and number of prior years teaching service in other school districts?

Dr. Sklarz distributed a handout to address this question and it is attached to the minutes. He noted that after this year there is a number of years before there will be another retirement. He noted that there are currently five first year teachers.

Since the pre-school program runs Tuesday-Friday, what happens on Mondays? Is the pre-school teacher full time?

It was noted that the pre-school teacher is full-time and that Mondays are utilized for intake of children, home visits as necessary, etc. It was noted that pre-school students do not begin school until 9am. The question was raised and considered as to whether this position could be reduced to .8. Mr. White noted that it would be hard to meet the contractual needs and noted that this pattern is normal in most schools. Ms. O'Brien commented that with declining enrollment, these are the types of discussions that they need to have. She commented that she feels the pre-school program is a good program. She commented that the pre-school teacher does have one full day without students and questioned what the reality is of what is being done on Monday. Ms. Rapelye commented that the children come first and questioned how the students will be impacted if this position is reduced to a .8. Ms. Brysgel commented that their guiding principles are to keep impacts furthest away from the classroom and commented that she considers specials a classroom.

Theresa Brysgel left the meeting at 8:55pm.

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Is the School Psychologist being trained and certified in some type of behavioral expertise? Mr. White noted that they are and commented that it is a lengthy training process. Dr. Sklarz noted that the current special services model provides great services and noted that students that are not mandated are still getting services when needed. Dr. Sklarz noted that \$79k is spent on consultants and that Psychologist should be certified by Summer, 2016. Dr. Sklarz noted that once certification is complete, there is the possibility to offer assistance of these services to other schools for additional funding. Mr. Skorski asked if there is a disclosure in the contract for the Psychologist, that once trained, they will not leave. Dr. Sklarz noted that currently there is not. He noted that there is a transition plan in place to begin movement away first from usage of CREC services and then movement away from the use of EastConn services.

Ms. Kelly commented that she thinks it is important to make the Staff aware of the reality of where things are with the declining enrollment. Dr. Sklarz commented that it is difficult to maintain a teacher when they are .8. He noted that discussions will need to continue, including whether or not the current Spanish model can be maintained. Ms. O'Brien commented that there are currently three Reading teachers and noted her concern that they are addressing writing needs. Mr. White commented that they are Language Arts Specialists that address both reading and writing needs. Ms. LaPoint commented that she thinks it is important to think about educating children, not money and encouraged the Board to be optimistic and forward thinking, working to protect the programs that they currently have. Dr. Sklarz commented that he thinks they need to consider both education and money needs. Ms. Kelly commented that while she wants to ensure that students have everything that they need, it is the Board's responsibility to ensure this is done in coordination with the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance, noting that they do need to consider the impacts to the tax payer. Mr. Skorski noted his concern that increases in the RHAM budget are impacting the local budget and noted his concern regarding enrichment and services that were cut in the past that were never brought back. Ms. O'Brien commented that she feels enrichment was improved. Dr. Sklarz noted that it may be necessary to revisit the guidelines for class size in kindergarten. Ms. LaPoint commented that there are guidelines in place, and that the Board can decide that 20 is too much. Dr. Sklarz noted that he has received a teacher resignation and noted that the teacher will be leaving at the end of the year and will not be receiving unemployment.

Theresa Brysgel returned to the meeting at 8:45pm.

What would be the additional cost if one of the teachers was maintained as a full-time science/tech teacher in the STEAM Room?

Dr. Sklarz noted that the cost would be \$68k if the teacher elected to take health benefits. Dr. Sklarz commented that currently there is a greater need for a teacher at the second grade level. Ms. Brysgel noted that she feels that the needs of Science/Technology are growing and noted her concern regarding the loss of students to the Magnet Schools.

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What is the possibility of reinstating the DARE program?

It was noted that this may not be a budget item, but it was noted that it can be added as a future agenda item. Ms. Rapelye noted that she attended an AHM event where the DARE program was discussed and commented that she feels it is something important to have especially at the sixth grade level. She noted that in Hebron, AHM provides this service to the Town at no cost. Ms. O'Brien commented that the DARE program provides a valuable relationship with the local troopers. Ms. Rapelye agreed and commented that it opens the dialogue between the students and the community. Dr. Sklarz noted that if the Board requests that a program comparable to DARE be put in place, then the Administration will look into it and report back.

112 Non-certified salary account adds up to \$435k but \$448k is show in the budget.

Dr. Sklarz noted that the calculations do match and that the first number is based on last year's salaries.

The combined salary for the 2 positions of Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and the Finance Administrative Assistant who both work 8 hours per day for 261 days a year..is it possible to consolidate some job responsibilities to decrease hours especially over the summer and reduce costs?

Dr. Sklarz commented that the financial needs of the Superintendent's office don't change regardless of the size of the school, etc. He commented that he feels these positions could be consolidated if the Superintendent position was full-time. He commented that they could take a look at the summer months and noted that all office positions and functions need to be reviewed. He commented that going forward, it will be important to ensure that a salary cap is put in place for these positions.

Is there a full-time tech specialist? Can it be done in fewer hours?

Mr. White noted that this position is very busy and noted that more assistance is needed, not less.

340 Is the AHM social worker in our school full-time?

It was noted that this position is contracted for five days/week.

Other Consultants (\$20k)-Explain in more detail the use of the \$20k. How was this account spent this year?

It was noted that this money is used to fund the EastConn support for the BCBA person.

5. Public Comments

Cliff Denniss, 111 Cheney Road, member of the Board of Finance, but speaking as an individual. Mr. Denniss noted that he would like to respond to the comment made by a Board member regarding the increase in the RHAM budget and its impact on the local school budget. Mr. Denniss commented that since he has been a member of the Board of Finance, he can't remember the last time the local school board had a deficit and noted that there has been a surplus in recent years.

Rich Storrs, 6 Stage Harbor Road, commented that teachers are being paid in line with State standards and noted that he is concerned that other needs have been underfunded. He encouraged the Board to make decisions based on what is best for the kids and to ask for what is needed rather than basing decisions on what the Board of Finance or Board of Selectmen may allow. Mr. Storrs also commented that he thinks the current Enrichment Program is valuable, but that he thinks more can be done to ensure gifted and talented students are receiving the needed support. He commented that he would like to see some of the staff that has been cut in the past to support enrichment, restored.

6. Adjournment

Mimi LaPoint made a motion to adjourn meeting at 9:17pm. The motion was seconded by Betty O'Brien and carried by a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted
Karen DeCorleto