

WILLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

SPECIAL MEETING

BUDGET WORKSHOP #4

MINUTES

February 20, 2024, 6:00 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting: Zoom and Lower Level Town Office Building

Video recording

In person: Briana Ross, Arthur Christensen, Jon Mitchell, Tracey Anderson, Jen Goodale

On Zoom: Ann Grosjean

Absent: Samantha Sperry

1. Call to order

Chair Ross called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

2. Present to Speak

James Marshall, Fisher Hill Road, spoke in support of having a facilities director. He stated he felt with the number of projects the board was facing it was critical to support.

3. Program adjustments

a. Overview

Superintendent Stevens reviewed the program adjustments the Board had already implemented. Programs 1, 2, 8, and 10 had insurance and staff salary adjustments. The adjustments brought the budget to a 4.36% increase and Superintendent Stevens showed the updated budget document to the Board. He then reviewed the items the Board had remaining to discuss including a facilities director, a special education teacher, maintenance funding, and a staff support specialist. Superintendent Stevens shared that the average Board of Education budget in the state was over a 5% increase.

b. Facilities Director

Superintendent Stevens provided an overview of the items the facilities director would be responsible for, including projecting future projects for the schools. A. Christensen shared his support for adding a facilities director. A. Grosjean asked about the potential of sharing a facilities manager with the town and P. Stevens shared the selectmen had not put any money in their budget for the position. P. Stevens shared the differences between a maintenance director and a facilities director. T. Anderson shared her support for the position but was unsure if taxpayers and the Board of Finance would support the budget. J. Goodale stated it made sense to add the position with all the large projects coming up for the Board. J. Mitchell stated he felt the public wanted a facilities manager.

c. Special Education Teacher

A. Christensen shared his support for adding at least one more special education teacher to the budget. He didn't want the district to just make due and supported the addition. Director McGinley provided the process for identifying the number of paraprofessionals and teachers required to meet student-individualized education plans and the size of the teacher caseloads. She felt they could meet the students' needs, and

recognized that the teachers were always extremely busy. B. Ross asked Director McGinley how she would use the individual if she had an additional special education teacher. Director McGinley responded that they had built a program at the elementary program that helps keep students in the district, and they have a need to build a similar type of program at the middle school. J. Goodale shared her reluctance to add the position as it was not requested by the administration balanced with the current status of the budget. B. Ross asked what the Board could do for the program. Director McGinley shared that they are working on increasing BCBA hours without increasing the budget by collaborating with another district. A. Christensen and J. Mitchell both advocated for the position and felt the need would continue to grow in the future.

d. Other

Superintendent Stevens shared the Board's request for an additional staff support specialist to be added. He shared that he had reluctantly removed the position when the grant had dried up. He also shared the Board's request for \$10,000 for maintenance for each school. A. Christensen advocated for the position and stated it reduced the need to find substitute teachers, which were a challenge to find. He also shared his support for the maintenance funds. T. Anderson shared that it is less disruptive when you have the staff support specialist because it reduces how often other staff members, such as interventionists, are pulled from instruction.

4. Adjournment

T. Anderson made a motion to adjourn.

J. Mitchell seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:58 pm.

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TOWN CLERK