

**WILLINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
BUDGET WORKSHOP #3
MINUTES**

January 31, 2024, 6:00 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting: Zoom and Lower Level Town Office Building

Zoom Recording

Members Present (in person)

Briana Ross - Chair
Jennifer Goodale - Vice Chair
Ann Grosjean
Tracey Anderson (6:05 pm)
Samantha Sperry, Secretary (6:09 pm)

Members Absent

Arthur Christensen

Also Present

Superintendent Stevens

Members Present (via Zoom)

Jon Mitchell

1. Call to order

Chair Ross called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Ross led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Present to Speak

No community members were present to speak.

4. Review of prior programs

Superintendent Stevens reviewed budget adjustments including a teacher retirement from Center School, a reduction for cyber security insurance, and removing items to be purchased using ARP ESSER funds. The changes brought the budget to a 4.94% increase. The teacher retiring would be filling the HMS Staff Support Specialist position, but would withdraw their letter of resignation should the position be cut in the current budget. Superintendent Stevens also shared there was a chance that the Board may see a reduction in the cost of health insurance and that he would keep them apprised of any changes.

At the end of the review of programs, Chair Ross recognized James Marshall, Fisher Hill Road. Mr. Marshall advocated for adding a Facilities Manager to the budget for all the school projects. He felt the Selectmen should also be considering the same thing so the town has the ability to discuss the need for the position and debate it as a town.

5. Program 8 Operations/Maintenance, Review and BOE Discussion

Superintendent Stevens reviewed Program 8 including the staffing and salaries. He noted the CIRMA property insurance would decrease some as that is where the cyber insurance is located. Superintendent Stevens also stated despite a vendor change and lower prices, they are still seeing an increase in custodian supplies.

J. Mitchell asked for the placement of a Facilities Director in Program 8. Superintendent Stevens believed it would add \$110,000 to the budget between salary and benefits. A. Grosjean mentioned she thought it could be a shared position with the town. Superintendent Stevens shared various options instead of adding the position such as a block of hours with an approved vendor such as QA+M or Colliers. Superintendent Stevens stated he would follow through with the First Selectmen. J. Goodale felt a joint position may be good, but would consider adding it to the BOE budget if the Selectmen were not interested in adding it to their budget.

S. Sperry asked about funding for minor repairs in the budget. Superintendent Stevens stated they had very little funding for these types of repairs, but they have some minor funds for building maintenance in programs 1 and 2. He also shared the Board could pay for projects out of the \$1,000,000 allotted or the non-lapsing funds, but both were earmarked for other projects. Superintendent Stevens shared the creative ways he utilizes funds to make minor repairs. Board Members discussed the CIP approach and the impact on the school buildings. Superintendent Stevens stated that the \$1.5 million the Board requested from the CIP committee is the funds needed to make the priority repairs the schools need. J. Goodale requested the Board consider a subcommittee to continue working on all these projects and the impact of their CIP projects being approved or rejected. Superintendent Stevens shared that the starting point is the report from QA+M. The Board discussed the funding sources available to them to get repairs done. Superintendent Stevens shared a document he will be sharing with the CIP committee that demonstrates the Board's priority projects and the funding needed along with the timing of grants.

6. Program 9 System-Wide Support, Review and BOE Discussion

Superintendent Stevens reviewed the items in Program 9. He reviewed the costs for IT, legal fees, magnet school tuition, and licenses. A. Grosjean asked about the actuarial services required and Superintendent Stevens stated it was a review of the services tied to retired teachers being eligible for health benefits. J. Mitchell asked what speeds we were getting for internet and Superintendent Stevens stated he would gather that information.

7. Program adjustments

Superintendent Stevens asked if the Board had any other changes they would be considering. He stated he would make the discussed adjustments in the budget, and have numbers prepared should the Board consider a Facilities Manager or another special education teacher. T. Anderson thought it was important to have the numbers for the next meeting so they are prepared to discuss and vote. The Board agreed they needed the 6:00 pm meeting on February 13 to discuss the final details.

8. Adjournment

J. Goodale made a motion to adjourn.

A. Grosjean seconded the motion.

Motion passes unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm.

Future Budget Workshops

Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 6:00 p.m. (before regular BOE meeting)

Final B.O.E. Budget discussion if needed

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