

December 6, 2018

A joint meeting of the Wareham School Committee, Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee was held on Thursday, December 6, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Wareham Middle School Auditorium.

School Committee Members present were Joyce Bacchiocchi, Laurie Spear, Michael Flaherty, Rebekah Pratt and student representative Emily Roberge as well as Superintendent Kimberly Shaver-Hood and recording secretary, Michelle Ruiz. Absent was member Mary Morgan.

Board of Selectmen Members present were Peter Teitelbaum and Mary Bruce - No quorum

Finance Committee Members present were Bernard Pigeon, Dominic Cammarano, Gerald Stefanski, David Heard, and Ellis Bailey.

Chair Bacchiocchi called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. She announced that the meeting was being broadcast live by WCTV and an audio recording by Mrs. Ruiz.

### **PUBLIC HEARING on FY'20 Budget**

Chair Bacchiocchi opened the hearing and thanked everyone who had a part in the budget process so far and was especially thankful for the work done by the Superintendent and Business Manager from the last budget presentation.

Introductions of all board members present.

Superintendent Shaver-Hood stated that last week we showed the entire budget request without any adjustments, which is different from what has been done in past years. We have looked over the budget and revenues.

Susan Owen, Business Manager, briefly spoke on the district's vision, strategic questions, and school committee budget priorities. She shared information on student enrollment and staffing. Last week's proposed budget was \$31,179,142 or a 7.43% increase which was arrived by taking the approved FY19 budget, plus salary increases, out of district decrease, and increased staffing and other supplies. The anticipated additional revenue sources are town appropriation \$200,000; town meeting vote capital \$400,000; Medicaid reimbursement \$100,000; FY19 circuit breaker \$700,000; and sped stabilization fund \$200,000.

Dr. Shaver-Hood stated that town meeting approved \$400,000 for capital items, which was pulled out of this year's budget. We anticipate receiving \$382,000 from the state for Medicaid this year and would like \$50,000 back now and the following year another \$50,000 back since the school department pays a service to have this work done and our staff are performing the duties. We will be receiving \$700,000 in circuit breaker reimbursement from the state and plan to apply it towards next year's budget.

Ms. Owens reviewed the budget reductions totaling \$316,896 plus revenue to be generated at \$1,600,000 for a new budget request of \$29,262,246. The next steps are budget adoption vote by the School Committee and continue to meet with town officials to review needs and capital requests. She thanked everyone for their input into this budget.

Chair Bacchiocchi opened the hearing for questions and comments:

- Has circuit breaker funds been used for the next year in the past?

Yes, but with budget difficulties, we had to use it in past years. We may need to tap some of this money if a high needs student moves into the district.

- Who determines when to use circuit breaker funds?

Circuit breaker funds are in a revolving account and the Director of Student Services makes that determination.

- The historical data provided for Medicaid indicates  $\frac{1}{3}$  more eligible students but the funding did not increase by that same amount.

The funding is not determined by the number of students but by the type of services students are receiving when we spend above the state average. Ms. Fay explained Medicaid reimbursement is for any student who receives services as deemed by the state as eligible, i.e., speech, physical and occupational therapy, vision, BCBA, school adjustment counseling, nursing. This money comes to the town.

- The capital amount of \$400,000 was in the original proposed budget and then taken out to make it a capital request.
- Explain the reductions on page 12 and page 22.

Page 12 shows requests and page 22 shows reductions we are not going forward with. No current staff reductions are in the budget, only reductions in potential new staff and we are keeping some of the requests. The central office cut is not due to the budget.

- Cutting 5.5 FTE positions for \$316,000 also creates an impact on the town by another 25% for in-kind expenses.

Some of the positions are just expanding and people are already employed.

Chairman Slavin had a prepared statement read into the record by Peter Teitelbaum as his thoughts only, not the Board (see document School Budget Hearing for 2020 12/4/2018).

Mr. Teitelbaum stated that in the past the Town Administrator talked with the school Business Manager about doing a revenue sharing agreement. He was not sure if this has been brought to the School Committee as a proposal but believes it should be brought to both boards. He spoke on ways in past the boards have dealt with the school budget and it's time for an agreed formula that takes away town vs school and the uncertainty.

Chair Bacchiocchi stated that with the presentation tonight, it is evident we are listening and will be open to conversations.

Finance Committee Chair Pigeon agreed moving forward with an agreement between the two parties would help in the budget process.

Since this has not been presented to the School Committee yet and the budget vote is only two weeks away, this proposal should be something to consider going forward.

There was discussion on student enrollment going down and cost per pupil based on this budget now. The cost per pupil is based on a state formula and the superintendent will try to get this information.

Ms. Owen reviewed the per pupil expenditure comparison she had prepared based on 2016-17 enrollments for Bourne, Carver, Middleboro, Sandwich, and Wareham. The state average per pupil was \$16,014 and Wareham falls below the state average.

Superintendent Shaver-Hood stated that when using per pupil costs we must look at the needs of students and with our high population of special needs students, about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of our population, the IEP

drives the services. You can get a false sense if you are just looking at the numbers. Wareham's special needs population is 26% and the state is 17%. Wareham is meeting the needs of students PreK-9 when they are with us the whole time but not as successful with move-ins and DCF placements into our district. The social/emotional needs of students have soared. We have social workers, counselors, and behaviorists on board and we are retooling our teachers to deal with trauma students. It is a growing problem across the nation.

Another concern was losing 1.4 million for school choice. Superintendent Shaver-Hood indicated ways to keep students in Wareham are having our programs in place for students to be successful; maintaining discipline in buildings by meeting the social/emotional needs of students; offering dual enrollment, AP, IB and athletic programs. We must maintain our facilities and are extremely grateful for the town support of a new school. Our staff work hard every day and we keep our class size low. We also offer alternative programs and in January will be offering a career program.

Emily, student representative, stated that not a lot of younger kids know what is offered at WHS but now with 8th graders at the high school, students are planning on staying in the district.

Dr. Shaver-Hood offered to speak in further detail with members and the public and she would be happy to come to meetings and get board members information. She announced that Wareham is invited to the MSBA next Wednesday for its meeting to vote on the new school.

Chair Bacchiocchi stated that she looked forward to the collaboration amongst the boards and hearing no further comments or questions, closed the hearing.

Mrs. Pratt moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Flaherty.

VOTE: yea – 4; nay – 0; abstain – 0

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

**List of documents:**

WPS FY20 Budget Public Hearing Power Point

WPS Public Hearing – Preliminary Budget FY2020

School Budget Hearing for 2020 – Alan Slavin Selectmen