

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
SCHOOL BUDGET FY18 MEETING  
THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2017  
SUPERINTENDENTS' OFFICE

Date Approved/Released: 4/13/17

Date Approved/Hold: 4/13/17

School Committee Chair: Paul Cohen

**1. Call to order: 6:02 P M.**

Present: Danielle LaPointe, Dawn Fronte, Larry Murphy (6:17 PM), Felicia Nurmsen  
Steven Haddad, Superintendent, Richard Ikonen, Business Manager

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Proposed School Budget FY18:**

S. Haddad reviewed the FY'18 budget cover letter, noting the budget was prepared with the focus of achieving the districts' strategic plan as a guide. Based on the governor's proposed budget, the district faces a \$425,078 deficit. Contributing factors to the deficit were noted, including the WTA contract that was negotiated with a 2.1 % salary increase and declining enrollment. Measures to balance the budget include cutting expenses by 10.19% and eliminating several personnel positions.

Three proposed budgets were presented and discussed in detail; a "balanced budget", an "improved budget" and a "what we really need budget". The personnel cuts in each budget draft were reviewed, stressing the impact it would have on achieving the district goals.

The total budget of \$15,187,715 includes grants and revolving accounts as revenue sources.

The DOE recommended the addition of a Director of Curriculum position in the District Accountability Report. Discussion included the need and the financial impact of funding the position.

**6:17 L. Murphy arrived**

S. Haddad reviewed the budget process and time line at the state level. An anticipated \$50,000 that will have to be added to the town budget due to timing can be voted on at the Special Town Meeting to amend the final school budget number.

S. Haddad stated he is looking for guidance from the committee; the outcome of an override request was discussed. The previously approved override amount is already in the budget. Increasing class size was discussed. L. Murphy stated that residents and voters are voicing concerns about teacher's salaries being too high. Strategies to present the importance of an increased budget to the voters were discussed. The committee also talked about potential challenges to the budget from the public.

L. Murphy suggested hiring a part-time Director of Curriculum to get things jumpstarted, then going to fulltime when planned progress is made.

Michael Barbaro, BOS, stated that the unemployment line is \$250,000 below what is actually needed; he explained that for every 3 positions cut, an additional 1 employee has to be fired to pay for unemployment (that number was given by the Town Manager based on current figures). He also noted that when employees retire the district can stagger sick buy-back over 24 months.

The committee will present the three budget drafts to the Finance Committee at a joint meeting on Thursday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM at Town Hall.

Articles for the town meeting warrant are due Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

S. Haddad has started to reach out to staff and teachers to support the budget.

F. Nurmsen suggested marketing the Murdock Academy to attract more students; tuition and potential additional costs were discussed.

L. Murphy stated "the committee must show voters how we are being fiscally responsible while meeting the needs of students". This includes showing all ways the committee has tried to keep costs down but keep quality up while meeting long term goals.

The committee will vote on FY'18 budget on April 13<sup>th</sup>.

D. Fronte moved to present the draft FY'18 Budget to the public. L. Murphy second. Approved 4-0-0.

4. **Adjournment:** L. Murphy moved to adjourn. Second by D. Fronte. Approved 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted: Barrie E. Martins, School Committee Recording Secretary