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TOWN OF WINCHENDON



Finance Committee

Telephone (978)-297-5419

Regular Meeting/Public Hearing
Finance Committee Minutes
March 21, 2024 6:30PM
Town Hall 4th Floor Meeting Room

Members Present: Chair Thomas J. Kane Jr., Vice-Chair Dr. Maureen Ward, Charles C. Corts, Doug Delay, Adrian Guerrero
Absent: Anthony Dickson, James Reid
Guests: Principal Thomas Browne, Business Manager Tammy Crockett

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- March 21, 2024 Meeting Agenda
- Proposed FY25 Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School Budget

6:30PM: Chair Thomas Kane Jr. called the Finance Committee meeting to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Presentation of the Proposed FY25 Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School Budget: Monty Tech Principal Thomas Browne and Business Manager Tammy Crockett began their presentation.

T. Browne began by giving an update on the grants. The first was the Career Technical Initiative Grant which is the adult workforce training that is sponsored by Commonwealth corp, in which they received \$720,000. Last month another group of students graduated, there were 4 programs this round- culinary, CNC Operator, Welding, and Property Maintenance.

At the last meeting, they had discussed how excited they were after receiving a donation, using some of those funds to support their cabinet making program by buying some new equipment. They also plan on updating the spray booth in the automotive program, as the original one is still there 50 years later and does not function well. After researching into the cost, they realized it was a lot more expensive than anticipated. After working with their grant writer, they took another look and earned a \$500,000 grant which will fund the replacement. The state reached out and stated there was a section of the workforce population that was being ignored by businesses, people with disabilities between the ages of 18-35. They were awarded a grant of \$130,000 to fund programs tailored to those individuals. The 4 programs offered were hospitality, culinary, graphic communications, and retail/customer service. It will consist of

7 weeks of technical skill training and a week of professional skills training. At the end of the program, the students will finish with two paid weeks and an internship. The Colonial Hotel, The Red Apple Farm and Hannaford were a few of the current partnerships. Monty Tech was the only vocational school in the state that applied for the grant. Last year they applied for the Culinary skills capital grant, which is still pending but are hoping to hear back in the next week or two if it was awarded. The grant will be used to fund a food truck and train the students on running one, as they have become quite popular in the last few years.

Perkins Grant Funds are federal funds that go to workforce training, all comprehensive schools have access to these funds and were allotted around \$300,000. 1/3 of those funds go towards Industry Recognized Credentials (IRC's). Students can earn these certifications that allows them to immediately go into the workforce after graduation.

The facilities director does a great job at ensuring the school is energy efficient. Last Fall, Mass Save stated Monty Tech was 1 of 14 to be recognized on the Mass Save Climate Leaders board.

Last year there was discussion regarding an academy partnership with Fitchburg, Narragansett, and Gardner. They planned on taking the "After Dark" program a lot of schools were doing after school and have it during the day. Last spring they leased a building 1 mile down the road from Monty Tech. Renovations are currently taking place and the building will have 3 vocational shop programs: house carpentry, electrical, and plumbing. The students will stay enrolled in their districts, ensuring the chapter 70 funds stay in the current districts. The schedule will be the same as Monty Tech, 1 week of academic, followed by 1 week of shop and switch every week. Their goal is to see how this program goes and expand if it goes well.

There were positive changes made to the admissions process, including adjustments to the application, interview, and scoring to hopefully give a more fair advantage and less room for bias or inaccurate scoring. Last year there were 850 students applying for 360 spots. The partnership with Worcester State allows students to take dual enrollment classes for no cost and give them a head start on higher education.

Tammy Crockett began presenting the FY25 budget.

The foundational budget was \$29,900,307, which is the minimum spending requirement set by the state. When divided by the number of students, it totaled \$20,258 of minimum spending per pupil.

FY25 Chapter 70 funds are calculated by taking the foundation budget and subtracting the required district contribution, projecting to receive \$18,252,075 in Chapter 70 funds. The required net school spending for FY25 is \$30,011,216, which does not include capital, debt service, student transportation, and student meals. Typically, the foundation budget and net school spending are one of the same. The state takes the required district contributions plus Chapter 70 to determine the net school spending. The net school spending increased by \$525,000 and the Chapter 70 increased by \$44,000, resulting in towns bearing the burden of the increase. The increase for FY25 was \$480,000.

The school transportation was \$2,516,010, that includes 30 buses. FY25 will be the 2nd year of the new bus contract, which has a 4% increase. The capital budget includes capital and vehicles, the total was \$510,000, a \$10,000 increase. The majority will fund the repair and replacement of the athletic bleachers,

with \$25,000 going towards the stabilization fund and \$15,000 to the OPEB account. The total budget was \$33,334,174. They have a regional transportation fund and receive money back on their transportation. If they estimate they are going to receive more than they budgeted, they will put the extra amount into a transportation revolving fund. It is required to spend that extra amount in the following fiscal year to reduce assessments to communities. Resulting in the net assessment for communities at \$487,958. Total assessments for the 18 communities was \$12,446,190. The stabilization account was at \$346,570. OPEB was at \$21,000.

Last fall, Monty Tech fell victim to a cyber attack. They were fortunate enough to not lose any data or have to pay a ransom, but it made them aware they were in need of upgrading some systems and technology. They now have a team that is monitoring their network, and while they have not fell victim again, the reports have shown there have been attempts since.

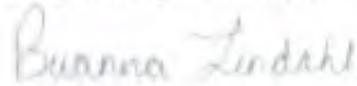
The board thanked Principal Thomas Browne and Business Manager Tammy Crockett for their thorough presentation of the FY25 budget.

Member Comments: None.

Public Input: None.

7:42PM- Dr. M. Ward motioned to adjourn, 2nd by C. Corts
Corts (Y) Delay (Y) Guerrero (Y) Ward (Y) Kane (Y) 5-0

Respectfully submitted:



Brianna Lindahl, Finance Committee Recording Secretary

Thomas Kane Jr., Chair

Dr. Maureen Ward, Vice-Chair

Charles C. Corts

Douglas Delay

Anthony Dickson

Adrian Guerrero

James Reid
