

Finance Subcommittee (of the School Committee)

12/6/23
Minutes

Jeanne Downs, chair
Erin Mueller
Susan Bottan, Director of Finance and Operations
Abigail Shute, Town Sustainability Manager
Jim Mullane, Waycam Director

Jeanne called the meeting to order at 8:37 am and noted it was being recorded by Waycam. The following items were discussed:

Public Comment
There was none.

Discussion of Town's Green Energy Program in Schools with Abigail Shute, Town Sustainability Manager

Abigail began the discussion of Town's Green Energy Program in Schools with the Loker Solar project which spans arrays on the rooftop. Engineers found that the roof would not be able to support the weight of the original rooftop design. It would have been intensive to reinforce the roof because of the way it was built and would cost an additional 20k for the engineering plan alone. They are moving forward with a smaller array and no battery storage, which didn't offer the same capacity but called for a smaller storage solution and can be supported by the roof currently in place. .

Abby is working to draft an article for a policy to extend the life of the project to 25 years. Scalability is possible to create a new emergency location if we transition from the middle school.

2nd topic is the green communities grant - guardian did a review for a full comprehensive retrocommissioning to make all of the heating and cooling function more efficiently. Guardian cannot take on the project this year. B2Q is available and has extensive experience. They are available to conduct the assessment for no more than 10k to see what is needed and potentially avoid a full retrocommissioning. There is no money in the facilities budget for this. Susan receives weekly calls from the high school on air circulation. Susan is going to speak with Ben Keefe and Brian Keveny.

Wayland High school composting program. Students interviewed to gain a baseline of neighboring communities composting programs. Most successful programs are funded by district or Mass DEP recycling dividends program. Wayland already maxes out the DEP recycling program. Abby believes that the composting is \$95 a week for the high school, which is funded by the Food Service Program. There is a state requirement to have a zero waste program by 2050 but with a reduction goal by 2030. Susan asked for a comprehensive reduction program. Abby is working on renewable energy first and then will focus on waste.

Abby mentioned that she and neighboring towns are trying to gain more insight on the possibility of clean school bus, electric bus through the federal school bus application. While there is interest in electric buses, we don't have electric buses budgeted for and Wayland is not currently a candidate for rebate nor did our buses meet the grant criteria for replacement. There is a possibility of a future Clean EPA school bus program/grant. Weston, Concord and Sudbury expressed interest in sharing electric buses. Abby also suggested working with our current bus company or leasing electric buses.

Aiden O'hara's lighting project will update more than 200 lights to reduce electricity. This will be rebate funded.

Abby is evaluating the critical load of Emergency Shelter, what do we need to power and how much would the battery provide.

Susan is meeting with Cheryl Judd on ways to improve the food services department, Given that they reduced the waste by 70%.

Review FY24 and FY25 Enrollment and Class Size Reports

Projections of 2735 students, which includes the children's way students. Now that they are included in the public schools, Jeanne suggested that this be made more clear in the report. Class sizes are expected to slightly decline.

Happy Hollow rising 2nd graders class size is expected to be smaller, it was considered to combine to 2 classrooms. Susan mentioned that given potential changes and needs of the students it is not prudent at this time to do that.

Review Building Use and Policy Guidelines

Susan shared the Building Use Guidelines Recommendations that lists all of the organizations that use our buildings for FY23. There are 3 revisions that Susan suggested based on who is using our building, number of days/hours and the revenue generated. Most significant change is to eliminate the long-term rental rate discount for category 3 users (private organizations outside of Wayland). The \$9,600 in fees generated by category 1 went to custodial overtime. There is a new technical fee if tech support is needed. Increases are aligned with the bargaining agreement.

Susan suggested that we add the language change to an upcoming SC meeting.

Discuss Full Day Kindergarten and Chapter 70 Impact

Susan reached out to DESE's finance director for technical assistance for calculating the chapter 70 funds. He gave Susan a general estimate of what our Chapter 70 would have been this year, which would have covered the 530k needed to adopt full day kindergarten.

DESE suggested to Susan to take the inflation factor into account as it has significantly impacted the reimbursement. They will better know the the inflation rate this year. Last year they used 4.5%. Hudson public schools was able to share their Chapter 70 funding policy and Travis Ahern from Holliston suggested that we work with Legislatures, All but 5 of our student are attending full day, tuition based K.

Discussion of WayCam Budget Request with Jim Mullane, Waycam Director

The state of Massachusetts is working to pass a bill that streaming services need to pay a portion of PEG (Public Education and Government). Currently 5% of the individual cable bill goes to support PEG funding. Waycam viewers have historically accessed their content via cable, but as more people move away from traditional cable, their support is declining. Waycam currently has a suggested subscriber fee on their site: Paid subscribers \$150, students \$15.

Waycam's operating budget is declining 5k per quarter and cannot sustain this anymore. The select board was made aware in August and offered to pay half if the school committee could fund half.

The School District includes the WayCam Personnel in the SC budget, but not the 15k for the streaming services. Waycam provides more than 340 programs annually. Michael McCall is possibly planning to put this in their budget for FY25.

Susan has earmarked 15k from this current budget to support WayCam. If the school funds - the school will get streaming services, but the town will not. WAYCAM is open to suggestions on how Boston Families can access Waycam. Streaming services are not privy to the same regulations and they are able to advertise on streaming.

FY25 Budget Update

Per Susan budget presentations are being put together. Susan is drafting the budget book. The finance committee has presented Susan with reports, lists, etc. The town's budget book is only 8 pages long without categories, analysis that fin comm is requesting from the school committee. The town does not trend the year over year trend. The school budget is 50% of the budget. Why is there such a drastic difference between the Town (8page) budget book and the SC is much more comprehensive. Susan is going to align our budget book with Sudbury's. Executive Summary, One page snapshot, graphs, appendices.

Town manager confirmed that we are within budget range and in fact in the lower end of the range given what the town is presenting. Susan doesn't believe this will be a surprise. Erin Gibbons shared a general percent increase with Fin Comm, the town agreed that it would fit their expected range.

Continued Discussion of Long-Term School Building Plan

Focus is on special town meeting and budget. Susan has talked about combining resources and funding with the town for a long term building plan. She provided examples of studies completed in Concord and Reading.

Susan was able to confirm that the budget of 288k is not school specific. The next step is to present to the Town to determine if they want to be involved in the facilities study. If not, proceed with the school facilities review.

Review and Approval of Minutes: October 23, 2023 and November 8, 2023.

Motion made by Jeanne to approve 11_8_23 and 10_23_23 minutes, we voted all in favor to approve the minutes.

There were no matters not reasonable anticipated by the chair

Upon a motion made by Jeanne Downs and seconded by Erin Mueller, the subcommittee voted all in favor to adjourn at 10:39pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Erin Mueller

Corresponding Documents

-October 23, 2023 and November 8, 2023 draft minutes