

WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Joint Meeting with Town of Whitman Finance Committee  
Held at the Whitman Town Hall  
54 South Avenue, Whitman MA  
Minutes of December 19, 2018

Meeting convened: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 8:09 p.m.

Members present: Robert Hayes, Frederick Small, Daniel Cullity and Christopher Scriven

Members absent: Robert Trotta, Steve Bois, Robert O'Brien, Jr., Michael Jones, Christopher Howard, Alexandria Taylor

Administrators present: Jeffrey Szymaniak, Superintendent of Schools

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The Town of Whitman invited the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District for a budget discussion at their December 19, 2018 regularly scheduled meeting. The Whitman Finance Committee convened their posted meeting at 7:00 p.m. School Committee members waited to be called into the meeting for discussion.

The Whitman-Hanson Regional School District School Committee did not have a quorum; however, this document will serve as a summary of the meeting attended by several School Committee members and the Superintendent of Schools, Jeff Szymaniak. No votes were taken by the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District School Committee.

Finance Committee Chair, Rick Andersen asked the Finance Committee and all those in attendance to introduce themselves. Mr. Andersen thanked the Whitman-Hanson School District for attending and participating in budget discussions in preparation for a possible town override due to anticipated budget constraints in the Town of Whitman.

School Committee Chair, Robert Hayes, and the Superintendent Szymaniak presented handouts of the preliminary budget projections, as presented at the December 12, 2019 School Committee meeting. Mr. Szymaniak stated the projections are based on a level-service budget for the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District FY2019 vs. FY2020. The preliminary proposed budget for FY2020, based on history and anticipated costs, is \$53,457,929. Based on FY2019 budget of 50,523,181 the proposed FY2020 budget represents a budget deficit of \$2,934,748.

Mr. Szymaniak discussed the budget challenges faced by the District highlighting the lack of standards-based elementary ELA and math instructional materials, the increasing costs of bus transportation, technology needs for mandated state assessments, health care, unemployment and special education tuition among other increasing costs. Mr. Szymaniak shared some of the proposed initiatives to balance the budget and reduce costs in one area and cover increases in other areas. They include a proposal for a language-based program for middle school students to keep out of district students in district. Also the proposed restructuring of a collective bargaining unit to help reduce the cost of contractual obligations and considerations of managing state mandated homeless transportation costs. Mr. Szymaniak provided an overview of the Circuit Breaker process (special education reimbursement) and how it affects the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District. Mr. Andersen commented that all town departments were asked to provide impact statements of a 6% budget cut.

There was continued detailed budget discussion and the Superintendent fielded several questions and requests from the Finance Committee. Of note were the following items.

- Provide Impact Statement for a 6% budget cut (from level funded)
- Review enrollment statistics - enrollment is down for vocational school enrollment but costs are up; W-H receives no Chapter 70 for those students. WHRSD was asked to consider following a student who un-enrolls from WHRSD prior to October 1 for any potential to return to W-H a "change of mind" - (for tuition cost savings)
- Present a detailed budget (line items) of a level-funded budget if an override in Whitman fails (using same local assessment as FY2019 @ \$13 million - represents Whitman's share of the assessment)
- Break out special education costs by town and school - appears Hanson resident cost is \$400 more than a Whitman resident.
- Illustrate number of students on IEPs at the high school level - appears to be a difference between the towns in cost of Hanson student on IEP versus cost of Whitman on IEP
- Provide a cost analysis of unfunded and underfunded mandates to a school district (Transportation, Special Education, McKinney Vento (homelessness), etc.)
- Provide a scenario of costs if transportation was supported by District (district owned fleet) - not utilizing current vendor (First Student)
- Illustrate update of Maquan School Closing savings
- Send budget questions/suggestions/recommendations/inquiries to [michelle.lindberg@whrsd.org](mailto:michelle.lindberg@whrsd.org)
- Provide salary percentage increases by school that exclude health care costs and any fixed costs
- FinCom plans to have a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen on January 8, 2019 to keep lines of communication open.

#### *Meeting Adjournment*

The School Committee left the Town of Whitman Finance Committee meeting at 8:09 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Michelle Lindberg

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*Signature of School Committee Secretary*

#### Meeting Handouts:

- Proposed Draft FY2020 School District Budget
- Preliminary 2020 School Budget Explanation Key
- WHRSD Areas of Focus
- What is Circuit Breaker?
- State Report Card by School Based on FY17 Expenditures
- MASC Special Message to Membership Regarding Equity Lawsuit
- MA DESE Chapter 70 District Profile for Whitman-Hanson Regional School District