

WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Minutes of March 11, 2019  
Held at the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School  
600 Franklin Street, Whitman MA

Meeting convened: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 7:28 p.m.

Members present: Robert Hayes, Robert Trotta, Frederick Small, Robert O'Brien, Jr., Michael Jones, Daniel Cullity, Steve Bois, and Christopher Scriven, Alexandria Taylor, Christopher Howard

Members absent: None

Administrators present: Jeffrey Szymaniak, Superintendent of Schools  
George M. Ferro, Jr., Assistant Superintendent of Schools

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Chair Hayes brought the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and announced the meeting was being recorded and broadcast live. Chair Hayes thanked the number of community members and staff for being in attendance at this important meeting.

Chair Hayes announced the Superintendent will continue budget discussions and the Committee will vote to set the local assessment.

### **Superintendent's Report**

#### *Budget FY2020 Update*

Superintendent Szymaniak referred to materials in the School Committee packet. A copy of a letter from the Superintendent to Whitman Town Administrator, Frank Lynam, requesting financial information from the Town of Whitman in preparation for setting the local assessment was presented. Mr. Lynam's response letter indicating the current budgetary issues and crises in the Town of Whitman along with email illustrating a Whitman budget analysis was also presented.

The Superintendent presented the following FY2020 budget documents:

- o Reductions as of 3/11/2019
- o Updated Local Assessment Schedule as of 3/11/2019
- o Email from Superintendent of Schools dated 3/11/2019
- o General Impression Level Service
- o List of FY2020 increases and decreases by line item
- o List of FY2020 increases by line item

#### *Reductions as of 3/11/2019*

Mr. Szymaniak presented a list of savings and reductions to the FY2020 budget proposal to assist the Committee in setting the assessment, based on new information as of March 11, 2019. The Mayflower Municipal Health Group met earlier today and voted the medial insurance increase at 1.5%. The proposed budget was adjusted as follows:

- GIC MTRS retirees \$52,000
- Mayflower Health insurance \$125,000
- Substitute line reduction \$20,000
- Reduce chrome book initiative \$53,000
- Facilities General \$2,000
- Instructional Supply Sub line \$5,000
- Superintendent's class NSIP \$10,000
- Legal \$10,000
- ELL supplies \$10,000
- Summer Student Tech Help \$5,000

Mr. Szymaniak reported the savings represents additional revenue of \$292,000. The Committee needed to set a 16.4% assessment to for the budget to provide level services. The noted cuts/savings are from non-personnel line items. This adjustment now lowers the amount of the assessment to 15.1% for a level service budget.

*Updated Local Assessment Schedule as of 3/11/2019*

A revised assessment schedule was presented to the Committee. Mr. Szymaniak reported a 15.1% local assessment increase would provide a level service budget for the students in the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District.

*Email from Superintendent of Schools dated 3/11/2019*

Mr. Szymaniak reported he sent a district-wide email to all staff regarding budget concerns and the impact of unfunded and underfunded state mandates which are required by law. Mr. Szymaniak noted that special education costs are rapidly increasing across the board. Complying with unfunded and underfunded mandates takes money away from the making the appropriate decisions for education, including the students social emotional needs.

*General Impression Level Service*

Mr. Szymaniak presented an outline of potential program and staff cuts at a level funded budget as requested by the Committee and community. Although a level funded budget scenario was requested, Mr. Szymaniak indicated the importance of keeping the potential cuts unidentified, to prevent flight of staff in fear of layoffs and potential students un-enrolling, as parents seek better education programs elsewhere. Mr. Szymaniak indicated the Administration will continue to advocate for level service to the students. Mr. Szymaniak reported he has confirmed movement in student enrollment at the middle school level.

The general impressions of level service cuts would eliminate 54 positions in the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District. Out of those 54 positions, 48 employees would be eliminated. Class sizes would increase in all grade levels. Supply lines would all be reduced. A number of programs would be eliminated at all levels.

Chair Hayes felt it important to highlight the impact of unfunded and underfunded state mandates. The below numbers are from 2018 as the 2019 fiscal year hasn't closed.

<u>Actual Costs</u>	<u>Underfunded/Unfunded</u>	
Special Ed costs	3,001,446	2,048,798
Circuit Breaker	1,323,122	370,474
Spec Ed transportation	897,275	897,275

Mandated transportation	1,124,320	301,036
Homeless transportation	39,011	26,527
ELL staff	159,618	159,618
Ed evaluation	7,500	7,500
School choice out	65,822	65,822
Charter schools	634,405	473,864
Staff PD course reimbursement	90,000	90,000
SIMS/EPIMS	80,000	80,000
Reporting/Auditing	34,000	34,000
ED services for expelled or suspended	12,128	12,128
Admin mandates with costs:		
CPI	12,500	12,500
Integrated PK	650,000	488,000
Total	\$8,131,147	\$5,067,542

*List of FY2020 increases and decreases by line item*

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As requested by the School Committee, a list of FY2020 increases and decreases was provided.

*Setting the Local Assessment*

Chair Hayes announced the Committee will set the local assessment this evening. As previously noted, once the local assessment is set, the Committee may not vote the assessment any higher once voted prior to Town Meeting except at the May Annual Town Meeting on town meeting floor. A 15.1% local assessment increase will provide the same level services to students.

A motion by Mr. Cullity and seconded by Mr. Bois, to set the local assessment increase of 15.0% was rescinded after deliberation to set the assessment to the actual percentage listed on the assessment schedule of 15.1%.

Chair Hayes prompted discussion on transferring funds out of the E & D (Excess & Deficiency) emergency account. Mr. Szymaniak reported the special education line is up \$650,000 this year.

Mr. Szymaniak reported he implemented a budget freeze to the current operating budget effective March 7, 2019.

Christine Suckow reported the current amount in E & D is \$ 961,237.

The Committee deliberated supporting a level service budget.

**VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to set the local assessment at a 15.1% increase for the FY2020 School District Budget. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to approve the operating assessment to the Town of Whitman for the FY2020 budget in accordance with the PK-12 Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Agreement, Section IV, Para. D and E and M.G.L. c.71, § 16B at \$15,273,983 or an increase of \$2,003,798 and; to approve the operating assessment to the Town of Hanson for the FY2020 budget in accordance with the PK-12 Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Agreement, Section IV, Para. D and E and M.G.L. c.71, § 16B at \$10,259,255 or an increase of \$1,345,914. The motion passed unanimously.**

There was a brief discussion on what the impact resident students' enrolling in other districts or private schools has on the District. Mr. Trotta spoke to the current downfall in public education and supported the budget proposal. Mrs. Taylor commented would love to set even higher to bring back programs, will not support less than 15.1%

*Important Dates to Remember:*

- March 13, 2019 – Facilities and Capital Projects Subcommittee meeting – 6:30 PM – HS Library
- March 13, 2019 – School Committee meeting – 7:00 PM – HS Library
- March 29, 2019 – Early Release – PK-12 – Professional Development Day
- April 5, 2019 – Early Release – PK-12 – Grading Day
- March 13, 2019 – School Committee meeting – 7:00 PM – HS Library
- April 10, 2019 – School Committee meeting – 7:00 PM – HS Library
- April 15-19, 2019 – No School - Spring Recess Week

Chair Hayes announced agenda items for the upcoming School Committee meeting on March 13, 2019.

The Committee will vote to accept the minutes of the February 27, 2019 School Committee meetings.

The student advisory report will be given.

The Superintendent will update the Committee on his goals.

The Superintendent will report on North River Collaborative.

Christine Suckow will provide YTD expenditures and revenue reports.

The Superintendent and Committee will discuss the FY2020 Budget proposal and assessment.

The Committee will revisit Hanson Capital Project Warrant Articles.

The Committee will vote to amend a previously adopted authorization to borrow.

The Committee will discuss a Statement of Interest (SOI) for the Whitman Middle School.

The Committee will discuss the 2019-2020 Academic Calendar.

The Committee will discuss the position of Director of Student Services.

The Committee will vote on the acceptance of gifts / donations, if applicable.

The Committee will vote on the approval of field trips, if applicable.

The Committee will have reports from subcommittees.

Mr. Small added the Conley Elementary School will hold its Annual Basket Raffle and Live Auction on March 14 at the Whitman Middle School.

Mr. Small requested the Superintendent research the cost of the math curriculum as a capital item. The Chair cautioned the consequence of the capital request not passing at Town Meetings.

*Meeting Adjournment*

**VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Small seconded: voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Michelle Lindberg

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*Signature of School Committee Secretary*

Meeting Handouts:

- Meeting agenda for March 11, 2019
- Letter to Whitman Town Administrator for financial information dated March 6, 2019
- Letter from Whitman Town Administrator response to financials dated March 7, 2019
- Email from Whitman Town Administrator dated March 5, 2019 with best case budget

analysis for Town of Whitman

- Reductions as of 3/11/2019
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