



WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Meeting Minutes of March 15, 2021
Special School Committee Meeting
Held at the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School
600 Franklin Street, Whitman MA

Meeting convened: 6:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 7:27 p.m.

Members present: Robert Hayes, Christopher Scriven, Frederick Small (participated remotely), Michael Jones, Daniel Cullity, Christopher Howard, Steve Bois, Dawn Byers, Hillary Kniffen and David Forth, Jr.

Members absent: None

Administrators present: Jeffrey Szymaniak, Superintendent of Schools
George M. Ferro, Jr., Assistant Superintendent of Schools
John Tuffy, Director of Business and Finance

Chair Hayes announced the meeting was being recorded and broadcast live on WHCA's Educational Access Channel 98.

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

The purpose of the meeting was to reconvene and continue a detailed discussion of the FY2022 budget line items held by the Committee at their meeting on March 10. The Committee was provided a highlighted worksheet of budget line items held by the Committee.

Indian Head School

The Committee initiated the review of the held items with Indian Head School teacher salary line items. Teacher salaries are reported by school. Special education teacher salaries are a separate line item. The Committee discussed breaking down the line items to identify grade level, noting it would be helpful to identify teacher/student ratio for class size needs. In addition, is the district able to identify step and lane increases by school. The Superintendent noted instructional materials lines are building-based needs as are the general supplies line item. It was noted the historical budget data for the Indian Head photocopier line was impacted by the closing of Maquan School. It was further noted that although photocopying volume has decreased during the COVID pandemic, there remains an obligation for supply and demand. Mr. Tuffy spoke to comparing pre-COVID copier costs, pay by usage and inflation to explain the proposed good faith estimate of the line item expense for all photocopier line items. Lauren Mathisen explained the bump in the special education teacher salary line which represents staff for the Therapeutic Learning Center (TLC) program. Ms. Mathisen briefly explained there is a procedure for entrance and exit criteria for the TLC program. Preserving and maintaining student confidentiality was a concern discussed in providing student counts in specific special education programs

Conley Elementary School

A number of the similar line items held were answered in the previous Indian Head school discussion (teacher salaries, instructional supplies). Special education teacher, paraprofessional and speech salaries were discussed to

clarify staffing, which is not only based on student need, but also based on itinerant staff that move from building to building, to fulfill student needs. It was noted that occupational therapist needs are supported through North River Collaborative. The Committee suggested scheduling a meeting specifically to showcase all of the district's special education programs and staffing.

Duval Elementary School

The Superintendent noted the assistant principals' salaries are in the school specific teacher salary line items. Ms. Mathisen discussed fluctuation in paraprofessional salaries represent the need for support on case by case basis and building need. There are both inclusion and sub-separate program paraprofessionals. BCBA's or Board-Certified Behavior Analysts, provide behavior analytic services shared throughout the district, which is also based on student need.

Whitman Middle School

The Committee discussed providing equity in related art programs for all students throughout the district, specifically in middle school. Mr. Szymaniak discussed student:teacher ratios in the middle schools. Mr. Ferro provided a historical snapshot of challenges at Whitman Middle School to reduce class size with limited staff in related arts. The Superintendent justified the guidance salary line item and addition of a guidance counselor for the TLC room. The reduction in paraprofessional salary represents the library para.

Hanson Middle School

The Committee briefly discussed continuity between schools in terms of teacher:student ratio, class size and equity in programs. A count of teachers per building was requested. It was noted due to differing teacher salaries, the number of teachers per salary line item would not be fairly represented due to the teacher salary schedule/structure for each individual teacher. The Superintendent alluded to maintaining acceptable class sizes after a brief discussion of equity in staffing and class size in the middle schools.

High School

Dr. Jones clarified line item HS Other Expenses include Community Evening School Salaries, Edgenuity, association members for teachers (SAT's, National Honor Society) NEASC accreditation, some field trips, etc. The Committee discussed moving away from 'other' expense as it is too broad and requires more detail. The district anticipates graduation to be held outdoors again this year and expenses to mirror last year costs for increased work and running electronics outdoors. The Superintendent clarified expenses in the athletics salary line as contractual stipends. Athletic Director, Bob Rodgers, confirmed the athletic salary line item does not include the revolving account. The revolving account covers the cost of the athletic trainer, game officials, bus transportation, etc., as previously presented to the Committee. Dr. Jones confirmed HS Cocurr-Act line item is stipend positions for extra-curricular activities and advisor positions. The Superintendent confirmed the extra-curricular stipends are part of collective bargaining. An audit for each club is required annually for payment.

District-Wide

The Superintendent confirmed the DW- Prof salary line items represents the four teachers added to budget last year, currently teaching in the remote learning module. The DW-BUS-FIN-SUPERINT-CONT line represents for CPI restraint training. Mr. Szymaniak confirmed there are three salaries in the DW-BUS-FIN-CLERICAL-SAL line. Mr. Ferro confirmed the professional development line item covers Simple K-12 program and other augmented items for curriculum and evaluation software for teachers. Mr. Ferro also clarified the instructional materials line. The professional salaries curriculum director line item supports five high school directors and an elementary coordinator. Mr. Ferro reported on the re-organization in technology and acquisition of another level II technician and plan going forward to upgrade technology systems. Mr. Ferro reported a technology lab setting exists at both middle schools for STEAM learning. The district is moving away from stand alone technology to integrated technology. Mr. Szymniak provided the number of staff in the technology/security management professional salary line items. Mr. Tuffy responded to questions regarding the employee health insurance line item, noting that Mayflower Municipal Health Group (MMHG) insurance rate increase is 2.25% for FY2022. Mr. Szymaniak confirmed the operations liaison line supports the public relations firm and secure alarm fire panel. It was confirmed the transportation contract service line item was student bus transportation to be negotiated. Mr.

Tuffy reported the final bid documents will be shared with the Abington Public Schools and then sent out to bid. It was noted that the Facilities Contract Services line includes pest control, Granite City Electric and other like vendors.

Mr. Szymaniak reported after additional work to line items in the FY2022 proposed school budget, the final proposed budget has decreased to \$57,572,579.40. More information regarding the budget adjustments and local assessment information will be presented at the next School Committee meeting on March 17.

Mr. Szymaniak announced he has been invited to the Town of Hanson Board of Selectmen's meeting on Tuesday, March 16 for a budget discussion. The Superintendent has been invited to attend the Town of Whitman Board of Selectmen's meeting on Tuesday, March 23. Members of the Committee are welcome to join in the Zoom.

Chair Hayes anticipated voting on the school budget and local assessments on Wednesday, March 17 and is within the 45-day window notice to notify the towns of an adopted school budget.

Adjournment:

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Michelle Lindberg

Signature of School Committee Secretary

Meeting Handouts:

- Meeting agenda March 15, 2021
- FY2022 Budget – with line items held highlighted