

Southern Berkshire Regional School District
Finance Sub-committee meeting
Sheffield, MA
January 5, 2017

Members in attendance: Art Batacchi, Marcella Bush, Charles Flynn, David Hastings, Christine Regan, Dennis Sears

Absent: Fran Lartigue

Others: Mary Turo, Sandy Hubbard, seven audience members

Dennis Sears called the meeting to order at 5:16 pm.

Charlie Flynn moved to alter the agenda to eliminate number 4 on the agenda as it is repetitive. Marcella Bush seconded.

Mr. Flynn moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Art Batacchi seconded.

Mr. Sears discussed the 2018 Budget stating that it is a “process” also stating that the last date that the budget can be adopted is March 9, 2017. Mr. Flynn stated that the budget must be approved 45 days before the town meetings.

Christine Regan spoke and gave an initial overall picture of the budget, stating that the administration is looking at everything in an effort to reduce the budget. Ms. Regan then went over the budget page by page.

She discussed the still unknown incomes such as Chapter 70 from the state.

She stated that there is an in-district drop of 51 students and that this will impact the assessment. The district will lose foundation enrollment figures. Ms. Regan is still using last years formula for this year and discussed the determinates of the formula that still need to be assessed.

Mr. Sears made note that half of this loss of 51 students is due to families moving out of the district.

An audience member asked about how this will affect the ratio of students who are economically challenged. Ms. Regan stated that it looks as though we have gained more low income students.

Ms. Regan stated that the tuition income from Mt. Washington is also down as the number of students from this area has dropped.

Ms. Regan discussed the change in health insurance. Berkshire Health Group voted to eliminate value plus plans in favor of deductible only plans. This will give the district a savings though the amount is still unknown.

Ms. Regan also discussed the transportation bid which she expect will also save the district money.

Ms. Regan explained how some of the big changes in the budget are due to recoding. She explained how codes were previously being misused and that she is getting everything back on line. She explained how coding has changed and that it will take a few years to smoothing everything out.

Sandy Hubbard asked about a large SPED salary increase on pages 2 & 5 of the budget. Ms. Regan explained that this is because of a reallocation of grant dollars. Ms. Regan also explained how the circuit breaker is being used. Because of our new Level 3 status, Ms. Regan stated that the district will have to allot a certain percentage of grant dollars for professional development.

Discussion continued on how Ms. Regan sorted the 2018 Budget. It was recommended by an audience member that Ms. Regan put an asterisk near each item change in order to more easily compare from one year to the next. She stated that this would be very difficult and time consuming. Mr. Flynn agreed and stated that the budget is still in its preliminary stages and that the mechanics of the budget are of more importance.

Ms. Regan stated that the overall budget is more easily compared from one year to the next but that she will have a narrative to accompany and explain the coding and reassigning issue.

Ms. Regan stated that the way the budget is coded now is the way that it must be reported to the state.

Ms. Regan continued to review and explain the budget. She pointed out that there will be no superintendent search fee next year, thus saving the district money. She discussed that the district legal fees have been higher than what has been previously budgeted and how she has made this adjustment. She reviewed salaries stating that are based on what was negotiated.

Audience members asked questions on specific budgeted items to which Ms. Regan gave explanation.

Ms. Regan stated that she signed an electricity contract at a lower rate than last year, saving the district approximately \$30,000

Ms. Regan will put the budget spreadsheet in a different, more easily read format for the next meeting.

Mr. Flynn moved to adjourn at 6:35pm. Art Batacchi seconded the motion.

Minutes taken by Marcella Bush, Egremont.