

Southern Berkshire Regional School District
Finance Sub-committee meeting
Sheffield, MA
January 19, 2017

Members in attendance: Art Batacchi, Jr (arrived 5:25pm), Marcella Bush, Charles Flynn (arrived 5:17pm), David Hastings, Fran Lartigue, Christine Regan, Dennis Sears

Others in attendance: MaryEllen Brown (arrived 5:55), Kerry Burke, Sandy Hubbard, Robert Law, Mary Turo, nine additional audience members present.

Media: Cory Willy – Berkshire Record

Dennis Sears called the meeting to order at 5:09pm.

Fran Lartigue made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting, Marcella Bush seconded the motion.

Dennis Sears announced that we are still in the preliminary phase of the budget and it will be finalized in a couple of months. We are still waiting for information from the state.

Mr. Sears introduced Christine Regan.

Ms. Regan introduced the FY18 Preliminary Budget Projection saying this is a more detailed preliminary chart, which only represents the general fund. Ms. Regan explained what income information that she is still waiting for. The expenditure budget is still preliminary – she explained that we need to support what we need educationally but still need to be supported by the towns.

Ms. Regan stated that most changes are related to salaries.

Fran Lartigue asked about kindergarten testing – this was directed to Sandy Hubbard & Mary Turo.

Mr. Sears brought up the issue with Nature's Classroom (pg. 4 of budget). John Freedman explained the teacher's position on this issue and the difficulties involved for the faculty in a five-day overnight trip. Conversation ensued regarding the importance vs. the difficulties of this trip.

Mr. Freedman suggested proposed alternatives to this trip, such as making it a social studies trip rather than a science trip.

It was raised that the school board should have been alerted to this change earlier and that alternative trips should be decided upon soon.

Charlie Flynn spoke of the value of this trip and asked if there was a way to make it work or replace it with a suitable science program.

Mary Turo stated that a trip to Ellis Island was being considered.

Ms. Lartigue discussed options such as Flying Cloud and Flying Deer for science based options. She discussed the benefits of Nature's Classroom but acknowledged the difficulties involved.

Discussion continued and it was stated that there is \$9,000 budget for this trip and that alternative trip(s) need to be decided upon.

Ms. Regan continued going over the changes in the budget.

She discussed that the biggest change is in health insurance. She reviewed special education salaries (pg. 11), the transportation bid (pg.12) which is still out, legal fee spending of school committee (pg. 13), and athletic fees (pg. 15). She also discussed possible savings in fuel & electricity because of contracts.

As it stands now, there is a \$712,000 increase in the budget. Ms. Regan also went over a chart that the administration made up of possible savings – this totaled \$210,962 savings.

Ms. Lartigue asked about the option of co-opting teams in athletics as a cost savings option.

Kerry Burke discussed the complications involved in co-opting teams.

Robert Law asked about a kindergarten grant. Ms. Regan explained that it no longer exists. Conversation continued regarding grants.

Fund-raisers were discussed.

MaryEllen Brown brought up the reopening of the kindergarten program in the Monterey school. Asked why there is no money allocated to school supplies for the Monterey school. Ms. Lartigue made note that there are no children for this program.

Discussion on this continued.

Mr. Sears brought the conversation back to the budget. He applauded Ms. Regan on her work on the budget and suggested that she be allowed to move forward on this. Ms. Regan stated that the governor releases his budget on January 25 and she will have more information then.

Ms. Lartigue moved to adjourn at 6:40. Art Batacchi seconded.

Minutes taken by Marcella Bush