

School Committee Members: Mr. Stewart, Ms. Silvers, Charles Flynn, Art Batacchi, Francoise Lartigue, David Travis, Marcella Bush, Dennis Sears, Bob Law

Absent: Charles Flynn

Administration: Mr. Hastings, Chris Regan

Press: CTSB- Cory Wiley, Berkshire Record

Student Representatives: Nolan Dupont, Angus Kerr

Others: Mark Carson, Laura Allen, Ken Bascer, Terri Licata, Tom Berkel, James Foster, Sandi Hubbard, Mary Turo, Kerry Burke, Marilyn Fracasso, Tara White, Edgar Zukauskas, Vito Valentini, Karen Frighetto, Robert Miller, Dan Weston, Charles Ketchen, Nat Yohalem, Sarah Siket, Jesse Carpenter, Lynn Webster, Jaimi-Lyn Schieb, Marya Makuc, Glenn Devoti

Chairman Stewart called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm and welcomed the town officials and other audience members. He then turned the meeting over to Superintendent Hastings, Chris Regan, Business Administrator and Dennis Sears, Chair of the Finance Subcommittee.

Superintendent Hastings commended Ms. Regan on the wonderful job she had done working on the district budget.

Chris Regan explained the FY18 proposed budget as follows (copy of the budget is attached):

- Foundation enrollment: Foundation enrollment is based on students residing in our 5 member towns. Total enrollment has dropped by 53 students from FY17 to FY18. Monterey and New Marlborough had the lowest percentage decreases -- 5.8% and 3.8% respectively. Highest percentage decrease was Alford, at 17.4%, Egremont at a 10.0%, and Sheffield at 8.1%. Monterey and New Marlborough also had the lowest percentage decreases in foundation budget.
- Page 2 of the budget helps explain historical minimum required contributions and excess effort reductions.
- All five towns have a target share of 82.5% of foundation budget, leaving the state with a target goal of 17.5% of foundation budget.
- Increase in Chapte 70 aid in FY18 of \$13,240.
- Total revenue is anticipated to increase by \$373,142 (2.35%) in FY18.
- The projected assessments on the roof/boiler long-term bond is \$430,000.
- Discussed historical and projected expenditures, by functional area.
- Administration: total increase of \$41,181. \$20,000 of that is due to an increase in the maximum pay for the new superintendent.
- Classroom and specialist teachers: total decrease of \$112,954. This decrease is due to an increase in the use of school choice funds, from \$650,000 in FY17 to \$900,000 in FY18.
- Tuition expense: increase of \$123,041 includes projected increase for out-of-district SPED tuition.

- Revenues other than revenues from town assessments are decreasing in FY18 as a percentage of total revenues.
- Reviewed three different comparisons of FY18 assessments versus FY17 assessments:
 - Compared to Governor's proposed FY17 budget (which was what our FY17 budget and assessments were based on)
 - Compared to Governor's approved budget (which changes the percentage share of assessments among the five towns, and which is the base from which the FY18 minimum required contributions are determined). We are not implementing these percentage shares, but rather are going to reduce the FY17 assessments so that no town pays more than what they appropriated in FY17.
 - Compared to the tentative assessments that would be created to make each town whole (see bullet above).

Ken Bascer stated that this was a tough budget. He asked about the 4.5% teacher raise. Chris Regan explained that this was negotiated as part of the Unit A contract.

Further discussions and questions followed.

Mr. Stewart stated that he wants the process to be transparent. Documentation of the budget is available, if requested. We will provide these documents and try to waive the cost of reproduction.

Mr. Stewart further stated that every school district is facing similar problems. Basically a decrease in student population and an increase in costs. Also the issue of transporting students over greater distances is an issue.

Mr. Valentini addressed the issue of the foundation budget and the formula that is used by the state to calculate what the towns receive in aid.

Ms. Silvers moved, seconded by Mr. Batacchi, to adjourn at 6:10 p.m. It was so voted unanimously.