

Watertown School Committee

Report of the Subcommittee on Budget and Finance

Meeting Date: March 18, 2015

Location: High School Lecture Hall

Subcommittee Members in Attendance: John Portz (chair), Guido Guidotti, and Mike Shepard

School Officials in Attendance: Jean Fitzgerald, Charles Kellner, Dari Donovan, Brian Rachmaciej, Craig Hardimon, Donna Ruseckas

Other Attendees: Various elected officials and members of the public

The meeting was called to order at 6:30.

I. Discussion of FY16 Budget

The administration presented a grant history report covering the last four years for three federal grants: SPED, Title 1, and Coordinated Family & Community Engagement. Preliminary to presenting the FY16 draft budget, the administration noted several items:

- The governor's proposed budget does not include the kindergarten grant (approximately \$100,000 for Watertown), so that amount to cover 5.5 instructional assistants has been included in the proposed budget.
- Tuitions and attendance at Minuteman are assumed to not change.
- The governor's proposed budget includes circuit breaker reimbursement at 66%, compared to 72% in the current year.

Three documents were presented related to the draft FY16 budget:

- School budget based on town appropriation, by object code. This compared the FY15 revised budget to a FY16 preliminary budget. This includes proposed increases for contractual obligations, curriculum materials, and other projected increases, but not new personnel. The total increase is \$1,553,451, which is a 3.96% increase. Reassignment of expenditures between object codes makes year-to-year comparisons difficult.
- Recommended new FY16 positions. This document includes 21.2 FTE new positions, some of which are restoration of previous positions. This includes teaching, SPED, and other positions. The projected cost is \$1,141,663. The document also includes additional positions that could be phased-in during FY17.
- Curriculum materials. This document identifies \$438,172 in various curriculum materials. These costs are included in the object code presentation.

Combining the object code presentation with the new personnel results in a draft FY16 budget of \$41,927,115, which is a \$2.695 million increase, which is a 6.87% increase over the town appropriation for FY15.

II. Special Education Stabilization Funds Protocols

A year ago the Town Council created a Special Education Stabilization Fund to be used for extraordinary SPED expenses and appropriated \$750,000 to the Fund. A protocol is needed whereby the school department could access these funds. The subcommittee voted unanimously to recommend to the School Committee that the administration be charged to

work with staff on the town side to prepare a draft of such protocols, to be brought back to the subcommittee and School Committee for discussion and approval.

III. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:00.

Submitted by John Portz, Chair