

FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 26, 2017

5:00 p.m.

Spencer Borden Elementary School

1400 President Avenue

Fall River, MA 02720

A roll call at 5:00 p.m. showed:

Mr. Coogan: Present

Mrs. Panchley: Present

Mr. Martins: Present

Also present were Mr. Kevin Almeida, Mr. Robert Correia, Ms. Janet Doyle, Ms. Melissa Fogarty, Ms. Jocelyn LeMaire, Principal Maria Pontes, Principal Brian Raposo, Principal Magdalana Reis, Mr. Tom Rose, and Mr. Andrew Woodward

Ms. Casey read the Open Meeting Law. A salute to the flag followed.

MOTION: Mrs. Panchley-Mr. Coogan: To refer the FY18 draft budget to the full School Committee.

Discussion:

1. Budget for Durfee High School

Principal Pontes stated that Durfee was in its second year of redesign which included the addition of some positions. The only request they are making is to add a Special Needs Department Head. Currently, they have 32 special needs teachers. It is the largest department and the only one without an administrator to support the evaluation and development of teachers. They have 361 special education students which make up 17% of their population. They plan to add one ASD room next year as well as two community-based rooms so they will have 35 special needs teachers. Due to budget cuts last year, they eliminated the librarian position. They would like to bring that position back this year. They are up for NEASC accreditation and they would like to have their library/media specialist in place. They have an office para position that used to do clerical work with the special needs department. The special needs clerk moved back to the special education side and that person is retiring. Because ELL numbers have increased, they feel that they need another bilingual person to support students in classes. They would like to hire a para and an ESL para to support their ESL population.

Mrs. Panchley asked Mr. Almeida where Gateway was on the budget. Mr. Almeida said that Gateway is no longer in the budget. Principal Pontes explained that it was phased out. They kept the kids who were on track to graduate this year. They cut half the program last year and this year it will be phased out. Mrs. Panchley said that she would like to have a conversation with Superintendent Malone as to why it's no longer in the budget since she was under the impression that he thought it was a bad idea to cut the program.

Mr. Martins was concerned because they received extra money for Gateway students. Mr. Almeida confirmed that this was true. They were getting Chapter 70 money for those students. Mr. Martins said that that added to their total enrollment and they received additional Chapter 70 funds. It was his understanding that the amount of money received offset the entire cost of sending the student to BCC. Mr. Almeida said that it was pretty close. Mr. Martins asked why they cut the program if it wasn't a cost savings. Mr. Almeida said that the

assumption is that the kids are going to go back to Durfee or somewhere else within the district to continue their program. Mr. Martins said that that was the hope scholastically but financially it was to offset the cost. Mr. Almeida said that the hope was to keep the kids in district and not lose the Chapter 70 money. Instead of housing them at BCC, they're going to be at Durfee or RPA. That was the intent. If the cost is \$10,000 per kid, instead of paying BCC \$8,000, they're able to retain the \$8,000 and keep the student as being enrolled in the district. Mr. Martins pointed out that the students left the district for some reason and went to BCC to the Gateway Program. The district gets the money as long as the students come back. Mrs. Panchley said that the students wouldn't be coming back because everyone in that program has graduated. Mr. Almeida confirmed that to be true.

Mr. Coogan said that he'd like to see some dual enrollment opportunities open up at RPA. He also thinks that there is a demand for Gateway. He knows that when Superintendent Malone was at Brockton he exclusively took students in the Gateway program who were not enrolled. The Fall River Public Schools were transferring students from Durfee to Gateway. It's a problem that they need to look into as far as recouping students who are not engaged anymore. Mr. Martins pointed out that dual enrollment was a different story because it was on a space available basis. Mr. Coogan said that they have zero so it's his position that they work on that with BCC to make up for the Gateway slack. Mr. Almeida said that anything they can do to get kids who are not currently in school back to school is a benefit.

Mr. Martins asked Principal Pontes if all the positions she spoke of were included in the budget. Principal Pontes said that they were. He asked where they were. Mr. Almeida pointed out the two new positions and the one conversion. Mr. Coogan asked if the positions that she is requesting are within her budget and that she's not asking for any additional funds. Principal Pontes confirmed that was correct. Mr. Coogan said that he had no problem with the budget. Mr. Martins said that he had no problem with the budget except that the budget is \$14 million. Principal Pontes said that they have 177 teachers. Mr. Martins added that there are 2,000 students. Principal Pontes agreed and said that they need to make sure that the building is staffed in order to support the students. Mr. Martins noted that there are quite a few 1:1 paras. He asked what CB stands for. Principal Pontes said that it was community based. Every special needs para is assigned to a student or the Bridge program or ASD room. Mr. Martins said, in looking at the data, Durfee is on target for ELA but needs some work in math and science.

Mrs. Panchley asked how the schedule will impact the budget. Principal Pontes said that they are at the tail end of the schedule piece. They formed a committee that had representation from every department as well as administration. They've been working all year on researching and creating teacher schedules and student schedules and they presented this to the staff. They are recommending a six-period schedule because it opens up more options for the kids. The staff will vote on it next week. They will then turn it over to the Superintendent. If they choose to adopt it, it will be part of the new contract. If not, the negotiation team will take it from there. Mrs. Panchley asked Mr. Almeida if he had any idea how that would impact the budget. Mr. Almeida said that he knew there was a savings but he didn't have the exact amount. Principal Pontes added that there may be some reallocations such as when Durfee went from a seven-period to a five-period schedule. They had to reallocate three History positions to ELA positions.

Mr. Coogan asked why they had to go back to negotiations if they vote to not change the schedule. Principal Pontes explained that it was because they're negotiating a new contract.

2. Budget for Resiliency Preparatory Academy

Mr. Almeida explained that there was one change on the RPA Middle School portion. It previously said Grades 6-8 but it's supposed to say Grades 7-8. He provided the revised handout to the Committee.

Principal Reis stated that the administration had an opportunity this year to look at alternative education to see what worked last year and what didn't. They looked at implementing different programs to engage the kids. One of the biggest tasks was the middle school. They implemented a 45-day transition program for the students. It worked for some students but not for all. The students may be asked to write a paper or go to counseling and receive services. They would then do a presentation to the staff. The middle school did a quick turnaround. This all ties into the new positions that they are requesting. They want to work with the parents to help move the students along. Vice Principal Edwards has implemented an MCAS Prep Program and character training. Ms. Doyle was helping with curriculum instruction. They've implemented school culture activities. Because of those new options, students are wanting to come back to school. Alternative education needs Re-engagement Specialists. These people go out into the community and learn about the kids and convince them to go back to school. They are requesting an addition of two Re-engagement Specialists. They would also want the Re-engagement Specialist to work with kids at Durfee who are nervous to go to RPA and to help them transition from Durfee to RPA. They are also requesting two Community Field Coordinators. That person will take care of the discipline issues. They don't believe in suspension. In lieu of suspension, they do Saturday school.

The Re-engagement Center has been a success. They have 48 students in the middle school. Their goal with the redesign is to incorporate the 7th graders and the 9th graders together. Mr. Martins asked if she had the resources to do the restructuring. Principal Reis said that they are working with the staff that they have now. Mr. Martins said that it cost \$40,000 to educate a student for four years but it costs \$40,000 a year to house an inmate. Principal Reis said that that is why it is important to have a Re-engagement Specialist. They don't want kids to end up in jail. If they have the Re-engagement Specialists and Community Field Coordinators in place, the way an alternative school should run, they will be able to reduce the dropout rate. They want to build relationships with kids as well as with families. They also want to build a relationship with the police department. Their students need to learn to respect authority.

Mr. Coogan asked Mr. Almeida if they receive money if a student from Taunton is sent to Deaconess Home and they enroll him at RPA in January. Mr. Almeida said that they would get credit the following October. They get nothing for kids enrolled in January. Mr. Coogan asked if Deaconess gets money for educating that student. Mr. Almeida said that they currently have a couple of special ed students that go to Deaconess that the school department pays for. Mr. Coogan asked if Deaconess gets money from Taunton for educating the student. Mr. Almeida said that he believed so. Mr. Coogan asked why the Fall River Public Schools wouldn't get money for educating the child. If a student gets sent to St. Vincent's Home from Brockton and St. Vincent's Home sends the kid to Durfee, he asked if the Fall River Public Schools received money from St. Vincent's Home. Mr. Almeida said that Brockton would get credit for that child on October 1. Their enrollment would reflect that student. Mr. Martins said that if the parents remained in Brockton then it would be considered an out-of-district placement that Brockton pays for. Mr. Coogan feels that any money for educational services should go to the system that is educating the student. Mr. Almeida asked if the student at Deaconess was being educated by Deaconess or by the Fall River Public Schools. Mr. Coogan said by the Fall River Public Schools. Mrs. Panchley stated that it seemed that Mr. Coogan felt that the Deaconess Home was getting money to educate when the Fall River Public Schools was doing the educating. Mr. Almeida assumed that Brockton covered the cost if the parents live in Brockton.

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Mr. Coogan said that he worked with People, Incorporated, and the Re-engagement Center and they do a nice job at RPA. Picking up dropouts with the help of the Re-engagement Specialist will make the school stronger.

Mr. Martins asked when the name of the school was going to be changed. Principal Reis said that they want to change the name of the school. Mr. Martins said that Resiliency has a negative connotation to it. Principal Reis said that the kids want to change the name to College and Career Readiness Academy.

Mr. Martins knows of a program in another state where students who are troubled are given an assignment that they have to turn in. This seems to work. He asked if this would be something that Principal Reis would be interested in. They could also come in if they needed tutoring.

Transcriber's Note: At 5:40 p.m., Superintendent Malone entered the meeting.

Principal Reis said that they have tutors in the Re-engagement Center and that has been very successful. When kids need help, they can get 1:1 academic support. Mr. Martins also mentioned Youth Build. Principal Reis said that they tried to build a relationship with Youth Build but students would have to drop out of high school to participate.

3. New Business

Transcriber's Note: At 5:44 p.m., Principal Pontes, Mr. Woodward, Ms. Fogarty, Principal Reis, Mr. Correia, and Ms. Doyle left the meeting.

Mr. Almeida explained that there were a couple of updates based on some stuff that had transpired. He handed out the revision to the Budget by Object report that was on Pages 2 and 3 of the budget summary. There was a change in the SROs. They will be covering seven SROs through the operating budget. Originally, there were three under the operating budget and four through the indirects. However, now there will be seven on the operating budget. Mrs. Panchley asked if it worked out to be the same amount. Superintendent Malone clarified that the bottom line would still be the same. Mr. Almeida said that the appropriation to the City changes. Superintendent Malone said that it was a communication error from him to Mr. Almeida. They've always had seven SROs on the operating budget. Within the last month, they've received additional money in Chapter 70 so his request of 1% over net school spending is less than what he proposed because of additional monies. Mr. Coogan asked if that was finalized. Superintendent Malone said that it's gone through House One and House Two but it has not been approved yet.

Mr. Almeida said that he also added the Behavior Therapist to Henry Lord to Page 4. Mrs. Panchley said that she thought that the position was supposed to be an interventionist. Superintendent Malone said that she was right. The position was for a math interventionist. They moved around grant dollars to be able to fund this position. There are limited funds in grants. They also have some positions in SPED that they have not assigned yet. Mr. Almeida said that, at the last meeting, Mr. Coogan had asked about the telephone line so he included that in the correct budget. He provided the Committee a handout of the revision to the Security budget.

Mr. Martins noted that substitutes were decreased by \$100,000. Superintendent Malone said that they would be reducing the daily subs at the secondary level so there are going to be more study halls next year. That's going to force more subs to work at the elementary level where the need is at. There is no value in a sub at the secondary level. Mr. Martins asked if there will be enough money for the subs that they actually need. He asked if this will change for teachers who are calling out sick. Superintendent Malone said that they are

currently working on the issue in bargaining. They're trying to tighten up the language to reduce an excessive use of subs. They have hired a sub at every building so each elementary school has one sub. That's something that they implemented this year. He thinks that that will help with the overall daily sub cost since there is a person there. They are also trying to improve morale so that will hopefully decrease the number of teachers that are out. They are hoping there will be a cost savings there but they will have to continue to monitor it.

Mr. Martins asked why they were cutting worker's comp by \$182,700. Mr. Almeida said that that was Unemployment. Superintendent Malone said that they made that cut because they are not planning on laying anyone off. Mr. Almeida said that that number has come down a bit over the last few years. Superintendent Malone said that they cut \$200,000 out of Professional Development. Those are the line items that they reduced so that they could get to a proposed budget that was manageable. They wanted to protect the employees so they had to live without other things.

Mrs. Panchley asked if there was any news about the indirect cost agreement. Superintendent Malone said that they are finalizing an indirect cost agreement now. Once they finalize it, it will go to the Committee. It's up to the Committee to agree to it. They had a good meeting via phone with the City. He brought up the issue of Medicare. He still needs to write a letter to the City and will do that by Friday. Fall River Public Schools agree to pay their fair share but they want to get their fair share, too. The cost savings agreement can't be a one-sided document. He wants a fair agreement. If the Fall River Schools didn't do their job with Medicare, the City would not get any reimbursement money. He hopes to have a final draft of the agreement for the Committee in about a week or so.

Superintendent Malone asked what the next steps of the process were. He asked if there was a public hearing scheduled. Mrs. Panchley said that it's potentially scheduled for May 23. Superintendent Malone asked if they would also have a special meeting that night. Mr. Almeida said that the School Committee will need to approve the draft of the budget before the public hearing.

Mr. Martins recommended that the Public Hearing start at 6:00 p.m. so that it allows the public time to get to the meeting if they get off of work at 5:00 p.m. Mr. Coogan asked how many people usually show up for the public hearing. Mrs. Panchley said that she doesn't anticipate a ton of people because they're not talking about any cuts. Mr. Martins said that copies of the draft budget will need to be made available to the public. Mr. Almeida said that he plans to have the advertisement done next week and discuss the draft at the May 8 meeting that will be released to the public. After that meeting, they will release the draft budget to the public. The public hearing will be on May 23 and the special meeting will follow and that's when the Committee will vote on the budget.

All were in favor None were opposed Motion passed

**MOTION: Mrs. Panchley-Mr. Coogan: To adjourn.
No discussion**

All were in favor None were opposed Motion passed (6:04 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,



Administrative Assistant

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Documents Referred to:

- Proposed FY18 Budget for Durfee High School
- Proposed FY18 Budget for Resiliency Preparatory Academy
- Revised Resiliency Preparatory Academy Middle School Dashboard
- Revised Budget by Object Report
- Revised Security Budget

ADA Coordinator: Gary P. Howayeck, Esq.- 508.324.2650

Please note: A videotape/DVD of this meeting is on file in the School Committee Office and is available for review by contacting the Administrative Assistant for the School Committee Services