



## **APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

Saturday, March 7, 2020  
Selectmen's Meeting Room  
9:00 a.m.

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Present: George Brenckle  
Robert D'Amico  
Janice Hight  
Richard Nieber

Absent: Elaine Kelly, Chair.  
Anthony Poteete

Also present: John Coderre, Town Administrator  
Gregory Martineau, Superintendent of Schools  
Marie Alan, Director of Student Support Services  
Rhoda Webb, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Rebecca Pellegrino, Director of Finance & Operations  
Susan Lawrence, Northborough School Committee  
Joan Frank, Regional School Committee

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 27, 2020**

Ms. Hight moved the committee vote to approve the meeting minutes of the February 27, 2020 meeting as submitted; Mr. D'Amico seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

### **NORTHBOROUGH K-8 SCHOOL FY2021 BUDGET REVIEW**

School Superintendent Martineau reviewed an information packet with the Committee and proceeded to review a power point presentation, which was provided to the Committee in paper form. The presentation represents the operational budget subcommittee's recommendation. This final version was formally approved by the K-8 School Committee at their February 5, 2020 meeting.

Mr. Martineau reviewed the K-8 School Committee's FY2021 Budget goals:

- Maintain the District's capital assets with a special emphasis on safety and energy efficiencies
- Ensure all students an educational program consistent with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and prepare all students for success in District and State assessments
- Meet State benchmarks and District educational technology and funding goals identified in the Technology Implementation Plan
- Implement the Transition Plan to a tuition-free, full-day kindergarten program (year two)

Mr. Martineau indicated that overall, the K-8 School Budget is proposed to increase \$785,859, or 3.15% , to \$25,714,417.

Mr. Martineau reported that the School Department is currently in negotiations with the Teachers Union and they are in the last year of the five-year Transportation contract. Since they are in labor negotiations, all cash is budgeted centrally under regular education.

Mr. Martineau indicated that due to declining student enrollment, he was able to make staff reductions, while maintaining class size policy. Due to enrollment decreasing by 48 students at the Melican Middle School and 34 students at the elementary schools, he was able to reduce 5 Educational Support Professionals, one at each K-8 school as well as 2.3 Educator positions.

Mr. Martineau noted the difficulty of trying to plan for Special Education costs, as new placements arrive during the school year, creating significant budget impacts of several hundred thousand dollars. He added that the State needs to do a better job funding the Special Education Circuit Breaker program.

Ms. Webb noted the increase in English Language Learners and the need to provide translators for students and family members.

Mr. Martineau reviewed the FY2021 Budget drivers as follows:

• Increased cost of Special Education Placements	\$163,879
• Student Information System Upgrade	22,236
• Digital Resources	25,067
• Contractual Obligations and Line Item Increases	474,677
• Implementing year two of Tuition-Free Kindergarten	100,000

Mr. Martineau indicated that the School Department is in the second year of a four-year transition plan to free full-day kindergarten. Tuition cost will be reduced to \$2,500 in FY2021, \$1,750 in FY0222, and will be free in FY2023.

Mr. Martineau then reviewed the School Department's capital request for FY2021:

Melican Middle School Parking Lot and Walkway Improvements - \$100,000

Mr. Martineau indicated that this request seeks funding to make improvements to the Melican Middle School parking lot and back walkway. The main parking lot will be crack-filled, seal coated and restriped with new ADA accessible curb cuts installed at the main front entrance and cafe entrance. In addition, new ADA accessible ramps will be added at the cafe entrance and exit, as well as off the back of the building where the main corridor exits out onto the athletic fields. Repairs will be made to the walkway in the back of the building, including complete replacement of the tree root damaged section near the pine grove. These improvements will extend the life of the paving, enhance safety and provide improved community access to the facility.

Mr. Martineau reviewed page 80 of the budget book, which is the Central Office organization and position growth chart. He noted that Rebecca Pellegrino's position was split to Director of Finance, and created a new position of Director of Operations. He added the addition of a full-

time psychologist at each of the schools over recent years. This wrap around service provides help to families.

The distribution of central office costs (40-30-30) versus actual District wide student enrollment is broken down as follows:

- Northborough K-8 student enrollment as of 10/1/2019 1,586
- Southborough K-8 student enrollment as of 10/1/2019 1,284
- Algonquin student enrollment as of 10/1/2019 1,398
- 4,268
- Northborough  $1586/4268 = 37\%$
- Southborough  $1284/4268 = 30\%$
- Regional  $1398/4268 = 33\%$

K-8 Budget Presentation concluded at 10:45 a.m.

Break between 11:45 a.m. – 12 Noon.

### **ALGONQUIN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (ARHS) FY2021 BUDGET REVIEW**

Mr. Martineau reviewed the Algonquin Regional High School (ARHS) FY2021 recommended budget, which was provided to the Committee in paper form. The final version was formally approved by the Regional School Committee at their February 26, 2020 meeting.

Mr. Martineau reviewed the FY2021 School Committee Budget priorities:

- Maintain high quality staff, instructional programming and instructional resources, including technology
- Strive to achieve class sizes according to School Committee Policy
- Prepare all students for high levels of success in college and career readiness
- Fund the initiatives of the School Improvement Plan
- Create and fund a short and long-term Capital Plan for the high school

Mr. Martineau reviewed the following Budget variables

- Contractual obligations (negotiations)
- Chapter 70 Funding and new legislation (Student Opportunity Act)
- Legal services renewal (end of a five-year contract – 2019-2020)
- Transportation (end of a five-year contract – 2019-2020)
- Health Insurance

Mr. Martineau indicated that overall, the Algonquin Regional High School FY2021 Budget is proposed to increase \$786,925, or 3.31%, to \$24,562,373.

Mr. Martineau reviewed his December 12, 2019 memorandum regarding shifting enrollments. More students are attending ARHS from Northborough. Based on the shifting enrollment, Northborough's Assessment will increase 4.36% and Southborough's Assessment will reduce by 2.08%. He reviewed the shifting enrollment as detailed on the next page.

YEAR	Northborough Enrollments as of 10/1	Southborough Enrollments as of 10/1		YEAR	Northborough Enrollments as of 10/1	Southborough Enrollments as of 10/1
FY07	61.37%	38.63%		FY17	58.84%	41.16%
FY08	62.10%	37.90%		FY18	58.26%	41.74%
FY09	61.80%	38.20%		FY19	59.59%	40.41%
FY10	61.14%	38.86%		FY20	61.67%	38.33%
FY11	58.68%	41.32%		FY21	63.15%	36.85%
FY12	57.99%	42.01%		FY22	63.58%	36.42%
FY13	57.00%	43.00%		FY23	62.54%	37.46%
FY14	58.39%	41.61%		FY24	62.59%	37.41%
FY15	58.30%	41.61%		FY25	61.58%	38.42%
FY16	57.38%	42.62%		FY26	61.88%	38.12%

Mr. Martineau discussed the need to start funding ARHS Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Liability. The current liability is at \$34 million.

Mr. Martineau noted that the Regular Education increase of 5.42% and the decrease of SPED of 8.15% is not accurate, as all wage increases currently in negotiations are being budgeted centrally under the Regular Education Budget, pending contract settlements.

As with the K-8 schools, Ms. Webb noted the increase in English Language Learners and the need to provide translators for students and family members.

Mr. Martineau reported to the Committee that the ARHS ranked in the top 10% in the State for ACT and SAT schools.

On behalf of the Financial Planning Committee, Mr. Nieber expressed his appreciation with the high level of collaboration between the Town and Schools and thanked Superintendent Martineau and his staff for today's presentation.

#### **NEXT MEETING DATES**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Meeting Topics</b>
3/12/2020	Assabet Valley Regional Technical HS; Police Budget Presentation; Fire Budget Presentation
3/19/2020	Senior Center & Library Presentations & other departments, if needed
3/23/2020	Joint Meeting with Board of Selectmen – Budget Hearing (Charter 6-5)
3/26/2020	Finance Office, Debt Budget; Health Insurance; Economic Development Update; Community Preservation Committee Project Requests; Review of ATM Warrant Articles and Vote on Committee Recommendations
4/27/2020	6:15 PM Pre-Town Meeting @ ARHS
4/27/2020	7:00 PM Annual Town Meeting @ ARHS
June 2020	Wrap-Up; Year-end Transfers as needed

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Hight moved the Committee vote to adjourn; Mr. Brenckle seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Coderre, Town Administrator

Documents used during meeting:

1. March 7, 2020 Meeting Agenda
2. February 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes
3. FY2021 Budget Update
4. Draft Legislative Priorities Letter
5. Northborough K-8 School FY2021 Budget Presentation Booklet
6. ARHS FY2021 Budget Presentation Booklet