



Town of Harvard
Finance Committee
Minutes for January 4, 2020

Location: Upper Town Hall Meeting Room - 13 Ayer Rd

Present: Mark Buell, Jennifer Finch, Siko Sikochi, Ray Marchica

Absent: Don Ludwig, John Seeley, Richard Fellows

Others: Members of the Select Board - Rich Maoire, Kara Minar, Lucy Wallace

Tim Bragan - Town Administrator

Marie Sobalvarro - Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director

Members of the School Committee - John Ruark, Shannon Molloy, Susie Allen, Sharlene Cronin,
SusanMary Redinger

Linda Dwight - Superintendent

Aziz Aghayev - School Business Manager

Josh Myler - HES Principal, Dori Pulizzi - HES Associate Principal, Scott Hoffman - TBS Principal, Robin

Benoit - TBS Associate Principal, Marie Harrington - Director of Pupil Services, Chris Boyle - Technology
Director

Jennifer Finch (Clerk/Acting Chair) called the meeting to order at 9:06am.

This was a Finance Committee meeting where the Select Board and the School Committee were invited to present their budget and ask questions.

Minutes for approval: None presented.

Public Commentary: None.

Superintendent's presentation: Linda Dwight and Aziz Aghayev presented the school's budget by cost center:

Document 1: Print out of slides presented.

There are about 1100 students in district's school system.

80% of budget goes to salary, and \$398k of the \$582k increase is just from salaries, this includes teacher negotiations and contractors for FY21 only as the contract has not yet been signed.

- Central Office:

- TSA match at central office - increased per contract.
- Professional Development (PD) has to be greater for new teachers, less for more experienced teachers
- Bus contract was renewed this year, it's up \$32,940. Devens contribution increased by \$25k to help offset the increase.
- Facilities:
 - Facilities Director salary increased by roughly \$7k.
 - Electricity and water increase - \$38,000. This is more in line with actuals of past years.
- TBS:
 - Small Cap increase \$36k - offset by Devens and Shaw Trust. Only the increase is offset.
 - Devens salary offset increased by \$100k.
- Pupil services:
 - Retirement savings \$58k, salary increase of \$47k.
 - Out of District (OOD) tuition increased \$383k.
 - School Committee agreed to increase the Circuit Breaker contribution to \$800k from \$510k. CB increase by \$290k from \$510k to \$800k.
- HES Preschool:
 - 2nd preschool class opened 2 days ago, budgeted in for next year.
 - Classrooms are 50/50 Special Education students to more neurotypical students.
 - Neurotypical acceptance is by lottery, pay, district pays for SPED students.
- Tech:
 - Part time to full time hire for HES support - \$40k
 - PD decrease \$10k
 - Increase overall of \$73k
 - Other \$23k is mostly software.
- Food service:
 - Salaries increase \$29k
 - Needed to hire 2 part time paperwork staff to assist the Food Services Director.
 - Benefit cost increase \$63k.
 - Anyone under 20 hours gets no benefits, unless it's 9/12 of the year.
 - Overall \$86k up.
 - \$10k that was paid to district from food services was removed after audit findings.
- Athletics:
 - Now offsetting \$95,680
 - Increase of \$30k is offset.
 - User fees haven't increased. \$319 average.

- \$25k offset from town omnibus budget.

LD: we get about \$1.5M, \$900k to salary, \$300k for debt, \$400k for tech

Lucy: So you spend it all?

LD: There's a reserve, but we are using that for the debt for the new school.

John: Projected Devens balance is around \$1.5 at the end of year.

Jennifer: Will there be space at the new HES for a second preschool classroom?

LD: Health and language will probably have to move.

Siko: Can we meter the water and electricity into food services?

LD: Not sure if it's worth it.

Siko: Any other areas where cost allocation is an issue?

LD: After school, before school and community ed, \$80k + for rental and cleaning.

Mark: same questions as last year: Technology and MacBooks/Ipads, and Excel format with formulas in email requested.

Siko: There will be retirement savings, if you're losing someone that is experienced for someone less, PD will go up, are there other things you have to compensate. Is it better to aim for someone with experience for less PD?

LD: Teachers required to get a masters within a certain number of years. Mentoring cost goes up with new hires if there are a lot of retirements. Like to balance staff with new people and experienced employees.

Lucy: Food service workers that now qualify are now paid for by lunch costs?

LD: Yes.

JF: is \$800k certain for Circuit Breaker (CB)?

LD: No, we won't know until spring.

Kara: What's the process for salary increases for tech, etc.

LD: Across the board, hourly is going up 2%, they also go up step if they're not at the top step, teachers are different, they have COLA, columns, and steps.

Kara: How do you do the increases for others (like Jon Snyder?)

LD: I bring it to the School Committee (SC.) Jon already changed.

Ruark: For Aziz, the job changed, so it's a different position really.

Kara: Benefits eligible?

Ms: Yes.

Lucy: You've mentioned twice, workloads that have gone up, CORIs, etc. I'm assuming with the building it will disappear, and costs for the new school, do you expect once you're in the new school and those hours will decrease, or just a permanent step up and we're stuck with it.

LD: Business manager needed to happen. For technology, we are understaffed, HES needs a tech person of it's own.

Aziz: The tech director goes to HES fixing things, with a new person, the director could focus on security.

JF: Can you put in the hourly chart?

LD: We put it in last year but it's not set yet because of the contract. We have agreed on next year's COLA, but not beyond that.

Rich: How do we start putting lunch in the budget but avoid sticker shock?

LD: As retirements occur in our system, we'll look to move those costs into the budget, starting with Paul, and the coaches, that's the incremental step that we're talking about.

Kara: Have you asked parents about sports fees, what's the make or break for parents to pay?

LD: There are fewer kids in TBS so there are fewer in sports, but the costs are mostly fixed.

JF: So we're looking at \$238k over 2.5%?

LD: Salaries are \$400k of the \$609k. The teachers agreed to 1.4% this year, in addition to the .6% agreed to for this year from last time.

JF: The devens offset is up \$400k this year?

Aziz: \$100k from Devens and \$290k from CB.

Josh: HES math textbooks are a 3-year subscription, not paid annually (higher costs), annually is about an extra \$6k over 3 years vs individual.

Kara: Can we increase choice costs?

LD: It's designed to help poor districts, so poor districts don't save \$14k by losing a student.

Kara: In 1995 it was \$5000 that hasn't increased.

LD: There has been no impetus to increase that at the state level.

Ruark: When we want to add a school choice student, it's only in open spots in existing classes.

Shannon: We asked Jen Benson and Jamie Eldredge about it, it's a huge funding overhaul, they told us that it wasn't going to change this (era) - basically.

LD: The SC does have a liaison to state reps.

JF: If you needed to cut \$238k where would that come from?

LD: Personnel.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 10:24am.

Supporting documents (1 Total):

1. Print out of slides presented.

Upcoming meetings:

January 8, 2020 - 7pm - Upper Town Hall Meeting Room

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Finch