

Budget Committee
Minutes
January 29, 2013

Present: R. Barnes, T. Beard, J. Burk, B. Cummings, C. Guagliumi, S. Heinrich, G. Krupp, M. Malzone, L. Mooney, C. Skarda, R. Swonger and School Board liaison A. Schneider

Excused: V. Pellegrino

Also present: Superintendent M. Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent Dr. M. McLaughlin, School Business Administrator M. Shevenell and various department heads

B. Cummings called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Prior Minutes

G. Krupp made a MOTION to approve the minutes of November 13, 2012. Second: S. Heinrich. MOTION PASSED 9 – 0 – 2. (J. Burk and R. Swonger abstained.)

Public Participation

There was none.

Department Budget Reviews

Elementary Schools

Principal and Assistant Principal: MES –Emilie Carter and Jay Gratton
TFS – Bridey Bellamare and Sharon Putney
RFS – Kim Yarlott and Nick Coler

Committee Liaisons: C. Guagliumi, R. Barnes and L. Mooney

Liaison Report: C. Guagliumi stated that the elementary school budgets were similar to the budgets proposed last year and that enrollments are only projected to change slightly. She told the Committee about some of the issues discussed during the liaison meeting:

- Gifted and Talented program was cut 25%, but the principals feel this cut will not negatively impact the program.
- State and National Association membership fees are contractual.
- The RFS library carpet has many areas of wear and tear, buckling and water damage from roof leaking.
- The new desks that are gradually being purchased to replace old desks will make all classroom furniture uniform and provide the ability to change desk height.
- The music equipment fee is for pianos.
- Each school is requesting 4 new radios. This budget line also covers radio repairs and battery purchases. The schools use the radios in a variety of ways every day and have found many unexpected operational benefits as well. (Example: during a power outage at TFS.)

Department Head Comments: B. Bellamare thanked the liaisons and stated it had been nice to hold the liaison meeting at a different school, in order to show the liaisons different items that were in the budget.

Discussion included the following:

- Supply accounts
 - These accounts were trimmed based on enrollment projections.
 - The principals feel the budget lines will be sufficient.
- Radios
 - Each school now has a radio with a panic button that goes directly to the police department.
 - TFS has different radios than the other two schools.
 - MES has received several radios via vendor donations.
 - RFS has fewer radios than the other schools and has stationed them strategically throughout the building in order to cover both inside and outside the building.
 - Currently TFS has 47 radios; MES has 48 radios and RFS as 33 radios.
 - The eventual goal per school is TFS: 57 radios, MES: 56 radios and RFS: 57 radios.
 - It was suggested the schools look into local suppliers rather than buying batteries directly from manufacturer.

Upper Elementary School

Principal and Assistant Principal: Marsha McGill and William Morris

Committee Liaisons: R. Barnes, C. Guagliumi and B. Cummings

Liaison Report: R. Barnes stated that the upper elementary school budget was similar to budget proposed last year and that the budget numbers were straightforward. He told the Committee that the upper elementary school also uses radios and uses a different radio frequency than the elementary school. He said that the re-vamped security entrance was discussed at the liaison meeting, but is not actually in the upper elementary school budget. C. Guagliumi stated that the liaison team had requested information about the costs of leasing saxophones. B. Cummings added that, while there is an instrument maintenance budget, the school does request that parents of students borrowing school equipment take care of the instrument.

Department Head Comments: M. McGill told the Committee that the school could lease saxophones for 2, 3, 4 or 5 years. She indicated that a lease would also require purchase of a maintenance plan, which would approximately \$100 a year. Two year lease cost: \$1,667.52 per year. Three-year lease costs \$1,201.60 per year. Four-year lease costs \$962.50 a year. Five-year lease costs \$818.44 a year.

Discussion included only one question about school instruments to which M. McGill replied that typically instruments last longer than five years and the school has had no problems keeping the instruments well maintained.

Middle School

Principal and Assistant Principal: Deborah Wolflein and Adam Carragher
Committee Liaisons: T. Beard, L. Mooney, V. Pellegrino and M. Malzone

Liaison Report: T. Beard stated that a big need at the middle school budget is new computers, which are part of the Library/Media Services budget. He said that some computers are over 8 years old and many have been in place since the school opened. He told the Committee that the level of technology integration into the curriculum is impressive. He noted enrollment is projected to remain level and the proposed budget is basically level funded. He mentioned that the liaison team also discussed field trips.

Discussion included the following:

- World language
 - There seems to be drop in students requesting French.
 - This may be because students and parent are not seeing French as valuable or because students not taking a language take part in the Team Academic Instructional Program (TAIP), which includes educational support activities.
 - New student enrollment, rather than students switching languages, is the reason there are more 8th graders taking Spanish then the number who took the language in 7th grade.
- Individual school budgets (exclusive of salaries and benefits) represent a small portion of the overall school budget.
 - JMUES - 0.26%
 - MMS - 0.23%
 - RFS - 0.20%
 - TFS - 0.19%
 - MES - 0.16%

High School

Principal and Assistant Principals: Ken Johnson, Richard Zampieri & Peter Bergeron
Committee Liaisons: G. Krupp, S. Heinrich and C. Skarda

Liaison Report: G. Krupp stated that the high school enrollment is projected to be down about 105 students next year and the various supply accounts were accordingly adjusted. He indicated that cuts were also made in Technology Education, Music and Gifted and Talented accounts. He said that the principals indicated that there should be no significant impact. He noted increases in the transportation accounts for Vocational Education students traveling to other schools due to loss of some state aid and class start times, and decreases to the athletic accounts due to an assessment of team performance potential. He also stated that usually textbooks are replaced on a 10-year schedule and that the new science texts requested would be replacing 12-year-old texts. He clarified that 3 sets of calculators are proposed, which means 30 calculators each costing about \$100. He noted that athletic equipment, specifically helmets, is inspected and re-certified yearly and that only 10 helmets need to be replaced.

Discussion included the following:

- Challenge Day

- Four faculty members work on raising funds to cover Challenge Day costs over what is proposed in the budget.
- There are discussions with other area schools to “share” resources, which would reduce the overall Challenge Day cost to each school.
- French Teacher
 - The original budget proposed cutting one French teacher.
 - The School Board restored a half teaching position.
 - Fewer middle school students are requesting French.
- Math Teacher
 - A math position is being cut for the second year in a row.
 - Course offerings are not affected.
 - Class sizes will still average about 20 students.

Library/Media Service

Department Lead: Nancy Rose

Committee Liaisons: C. Skarda, R. Swonger, J. Burk

Liaison Report: C. Skarda told the Committee that the liaison team had had an opportunity to see a demonstration with the mimeo equipment, which integrates the standard white board, projector and computers. He said the plan is to purchase ceiling mounts for this equipment in order to use the software to its fullest potential. He indicated some of the funds that had been eliminated from the last budget for bookbinding have been restored. He stated that the liaison team discussed the server upgrade and ways to integrate student owned, rather than school provided, computers/devices. He also mentioned that the District often receives, and refurbishes, computers from various local businesses. R. Swonger stated, besides computers for the middle school, there is a major expenditure for infrastructure. He said all servers are at least 5 years old and there are actually inactive computer jacks in classrooms due to lack of capacity. He noted that, while the bookbinding budget has been increased, it is still low.

Discussion included the following:

- The elementary schools have more mimeo machines than the other schools as they have more alternate ways to obtain them.
- The library collection floats between all schools.
- Building the District’s collection is a continual on-going process based on curriculum needs.

Other

A. Schneider told the Committee that he had made a motion at the last School Board meeting to add \$56,700 to the maintenance repair budget for the purpose of addressing several issues at the Special Services building if the new Central Office warrant article does not pass. He gave the members a handout detailing \$177,400 worth of repairs that could be done to fully renovate the building, but noted that repairs totaling \$56,700 must be done to make the building functional and sound. He indicated that the vote to add the funds was 4 – 1 – 0 and the intent of the School Board is not to spend this money unless the warrant article for the new Central Office fails. He explained that the School Board had voted unanimously to recommend the warrant article for a

multi-year bond to build a new Central Office. He noted that the first year cost on the bond is approximately \$36,000 and that bonded articles have to pass by a 3/5 majority.

Public participation

There was no public participation.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule

B. Cummings told the Committee that reviewing the Maintenance Department budget had been delayed until the next meeting, at which time the Food Services, Special Services and District-Wide budgets would be reviewed. He said the Committee would review warrant articles at next week's meeting as well. He said, if time permitted, the Committee would start its work session on the budget. However, B. Cummings said he expected the Committee would hold its work session before the Public Hearing on February 12th and requested that members thinking of proposing changes should mention them during the February 5th meeting.

Discussion included the following:

- If the Committee needs to meet on February 14th to conclude its work, it can.
- Members thinking of proposing staff/position changes should contact B. Cummings so that he can get the true cost including all benefits.
- The last date for petitioned warrant articles is February 12th.
- The process of Committee members submitting written questions, which were answered during the School Board budget review meetings, seemed to have helped the Committee's process this year.
- The Budget Committee can cut the amount of funds for a particular position, and recommend that a particular position be cut, but where and how the funds in any account are spent is up to the School Board.
- If the Committee zeros or eliminates a purpose from the MS form, the District cannot spend any funds for that purpose. However, eliminating a line within a department budget does not eliminate that purpose of that line, if there is a similar line in another department's budget.

S. Heinrich made a MOTION to adjourn. Second: G. Krupp. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

B. Cummings adjourned the meeting at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Heinrich