

Budget Committee
Minutes
February 12, 2013

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

Excused: J. Burk and L. Mooney

Also present: Superintendent M. Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent Dr. M. McLaughlin, School Business Administrator M. Shevenell and Chair & Vice Chair of the School District Planning & Building Committee R. Hendricks and G. Perry

B. Cummings called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Participation

George Markwell, (Baboosic Lake Road) stated that there was nothing in statute that required the School Board liaison to the Committee to always vote in support of School Board positions.

Work session

B. Cummings called on R. Swonger to return to the issue he brought up at the last meeting.

R. Swonger made a MOTION to add \$385,920 to operating budget to replace the smaller portion of the high school roof. Second: S. Heinrich.

R. Swonger spoke to his motion by first stipulating that just putting the funds in the budget does not mean the School Board will spend them as the his motion intends or that the funds would be spent at all. However, he said he felt it was prudent and responsible to replace a portion of the roof during the next fiscal year. He told the Committee he felt the District needed to stay on track with its roof replacement plan. He said there are a lot of roof replacement projects coming up in the next 10 years and that the warranty on the portion of the roof he is proposing to replace expired 10 years ago. He said the original proposal in the budget for roof replacement was for over \$1 million dollars. He stated that significant paving projects have also been delayed, but doing this portion of the roof now would help keep the capital project budgetary impact level over the next few years. He also suggested that the District should replace the rest of this year's original roofing proposal next year and then move the remaining projects out a year.

Maintenance Director T. Tousseau was asked to join the discussion, which included the following:

- The School Board will review the Capital Improvement Plan (C.I.P.) after the election.
- The School Board tries to keep the yearly amount budgeted for capital projects as consistent and level as possible while still meeting infrastructure needs.
- The School Board voted 4 – 1 to remove the roofing project from the operating budget.
- Both sections of the High School roof that had been originally proposed for replacement are in similar condition and each did have leaks during the past year.
- The proposed new roof will have a 30-year warranty. The roof installer has to be certified by the manufacturer in order to install the roof.

- It is rare that new roofs leak, but if they do, the installer has to come back and fix the leak at no cost to the District.
- T. Tousseau believes that replacing this portion of the roof can be put off a year, but that it cannot be put off too much longer.

B. Cummings called for a vote on the motion. S. Heinrich reminded him that he requested roll call votes on all motions involving recommendations or money.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED 6 – 5 – 0.

Voting YES: T. Beard, S. Heinrich, G. Krupp, V. Pellegrino, C. Skarda, R. Swonger

Voting NO: R. Barnes, B. Cummings, C. Guagliumi, M. Malzone, A. Schneider

B. Cummings called a recess at 7:25 PM and stated the meeting would resume after the Public Hearing.

B. Cummings reconvened the meeting at 7:35 PM.

Work Session (continued)

B. Cummings asked if anyone had any further modifications to propose.

No one did.

Warrant Articles

Teachers' Contract

B. Cummings called for discussion on the proposed teachers contract.

A. Schneider made a MOTION to amend the warrant article to change the amount to be raised in Year One of the contract from \$ 768,4000 to \$633,753 in both places where it was mentioned.
Second: T. Beard.

A point of order was raised about whether the Committee could amend warrant articles other than the operating budget warrant article.

A point of order was raised that this article needed to be taken off the table.

Discussion ensued about how the Committee should proceed:

A. Schneider stated that the Committee had questioned whether funds were included in the warrant article for teachers who were retiring this year. As a result, the point of the amendment was to eliminate \$100,539 that would have been for those teachers.

M. Shevenell told the Committee that they could vote to remove \$110,539 from the operating budget.

G. Krupp stated he was concerned that removing funds from the operating budget rather than the contract article was the wrong way to deal with the situation.

S. Heinrich suggested that the District get a legal opinion.

R. Barnes suggested that the Committee vote to abstain on recommending the article, rather than vote against recommending the article. He said the Committee could revisit its recommendation after Deliberative Session, during which the article will likely be amended.

B. Cummings stated that the Committee still had to deal with the motion to amend and suggested that the Committee vote against the motion.

S. Heinrich asked if A. Schneider was willing to withdraw his motion.

A. Schneider and T. Beard WITHDREW the MOTION and second.

S. Heinrich made a MOTION to take this article off the table. Second: G. Krupp. MOTION PASSED.

B. Cummings noted that S. Heinrich had made, and R. Swonger had seconded, the motion to recommend the teacher's contract warrant article.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION FAILED: 0 – 1 – 10.

Voting No: M. Malzone

Abstaining: R. Barnes, T. Beard, B. Cummings, C. Guagliumi, S. Heinrich, G. Krupp, V. Pellegrino, C. Skarda, A. Schneider, R. Swonger

New Central Office Building

S. Heinrich made a MOTION to recommend the New Central Office Building article. Second: R. Swonger.

B. Cummings invited R. Hendricks, G. Perry and M. Shevenell to discuss this article with the Committee.

R. Hendricks provided a handout, gave a summary of the proposal to the Committee and stated that the Planning Board had rated the project as urgent.

M. Shevenell told the Committee the School Board would be holding a bond hearing on the article on February 18th. He said the \$30,000 amount listed in the warrant article was a half-year interest payment on a ten-year bond and that the second year payment on the bond would be \$200,000.

Discussion included the following:

- The figure listed in the article is a total, “turn-key” cost.
- Offices attached or part of a school building have to be built to “school construction” standards; as a result renovating any current school costs more per square foot than building a new office building.

- Insurance paid to replace the portion of the roof damaged by Hurricane Sandy. The School Board decided to use funds from the Repair Capital Reserve Fund to fix the entire roof.
- Insurance paid to fix everything damaged by the storm, but there are additional pre-existing conditions that need to be repaired, for example the building foundation and perimeter drainage.
- The School Board estimates that it would cost \$177,000 to totally fix additional problems at the Special Services Building.
- The School Board added \$56,000 to the operating budget to repair some things to make the building fully functional should this warrant article fail.
- Mold is an issue in the vault at the Superintendent's Office.
- A plan and potential costs for the future use of the two current buildings needs to be researched. For example: cost to renovate and sell (privately or to Brentwood?) or the cost to raze and pave.
- School District Meeting approval would be needed if the School Board wanted to sell the buildings.
- Additional future costs for the new office space need to be considered.
- Renting commercial space is costly.
- The District owns the piece of property where the building is proposed. The District would have to buy other property, even if it was town owned.
- There is no room at town hall to accommodate the District staff.
- Sewer construction would have to be coordinated with the high school needs.
- It is expected the new building would be available for occupancy about one year after passage of the warrant article.
- It is possible to locate staff at each of the current school buildings; however, an original objective of the project was to consolidate the staff in one place.
- The Planning and Building Committee looked at renovating a portion of the upper elementary school to house just the Special Services Department and found several issues, including cost, which led it to conclude that building a single building was a better long-term solution.
- Population projections and the economy need to be carefully considered.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 9 – 2 – 0.

Voting Yes: R. Barnes, T. Beard, B. Cummings, C. Guagliumi, S. Heinrich, G. Krupp, C. Skarda, A. Schneider, R. Swonger

Voting No: M. Malzone, V. Pellegrino

Operating Budget

B. Cummings told the Committee that the operating budget, as currently amended, was \$66,266,884 and asked if any member had any other changes to propose.

S. Heinrich made a MOTION to recommend \$66,266,884 as the operating budget. Second: C. Guagliumi.

B. Cummings called for discussion on the motion. There was none.

A roll call vote was held. MOTION PASSED: 10 – 1 –0.

Voting Yes: R. Barnes, T. Beard, B. Cummings, C. Guagliumi, S. Heinrich, G. Krupp, V. Pellegrino, C. Skarda, A. Schneider, R. Swonger

Voting No: M. Malzone

S. Heinrich told the Committee that the teacher's contract article would go on the warrant as "Not Recommended" since M. Malzone had voted against it. He asked M. Malzone if he would be willing to change his vote to an abstention. M. Malzone declined.

S. Heinrich made a MOTION to reconsider the teacher's contract article. MOTION DIED for lack of a second.

Public participation

There was none.

Closing remarks.

Members were reminded of the filing period dates and that the Committee would be meeting immediately after Deliberative Session.

G. Krupp said he wanted to thank the School Board for the new process. He said he felt the process had worked and that he hoped it would continue.

A. Schneider said he thought the Committee and the School Board should meet after election to review the budget process and consider how it would work for the next budget cycle. He also indicated the School Board would look into the proper time and method to change the teachers contract article so that it could be done correctly.

B. Cummings thanked the School Board and the Administration for their efforts to help him during the budget process. He agreed that there should be a debriefing after the election and noted that, while everything didn't proceed as planned, everyone had had the best intentions.

S. Heinrich asked that B. Cummings explain the Committee's vote on the teacher's contract at Deliberative Session. He said he was concerned that, if the article wasn't changed on the floor of Deliberative Session, the Committee wouldn't be able to revisit its recommendation on the article.

Several members noted the Committee would be meeting after Deliberative Session anyway and suggested that whether it was statutory or past practice that the Committee did not revisit recommendations on articles not changed during Deliberative Session should be researched.

S. Heinrich made a MOTION to adjourn. Second: R. Barnes

B. Cummings adjourned the meeting at 9:15PM.