1. BET Budget Comm. Dept. Reviews Day 1 Documents

   Documents:

   SUB_TO_APP_BET_BUDGET_MTG_DAY_1_DEPT_HEARINGS_02-03-16.PDF
   APPROVED_BET_BUDGET_DEPT_REVIEWS_DAY_1_02-03-16.PDF
Mr. Lash welcomed members of the Board of Education and the audience to the first day of the 2016-2017 Budget Hearings. He invited the BOE to share the rationale behind its requests so that the Budget Committee could understand what choices would make sense to the taxpayer and not have other Town concerns crowd out things they would prefer to do.

SPEAKERS

BOE Budget Review Opening Comments - Ms. Erickson, Chairman of the Board of Education offered an overview of BOE’s proposed 2016-2017 Budget for Greenwich schools citing its objective of achievement, alignment and accountability for its population of 8,900 students, 7,000 of whom used school transportation, and 1,250 staff. She credited the support of the Greenwich Alliance for Education Foundation for BOE’s ability to maintain level services including curriculum nights, summer school and the AVID program.

Dr. McKersie provided details of the Budget showing what it was doing for students and describing the academic, personal and interpersonal metrics used as measurement tools in the growth model being developed for its Strategic Dashboard. Progress in this metrics is partially enabled by the BOE’s digital learning resources.
Ms. Parisi and Dr. Flanagan spoke to how the curriculum was being aligned to State and national standards through shifts in instructional practice and professional development training. They also commented on various tactics for accountability, which included unit-based assessment of students, comparative measurement of students throughout New England administrative classroom observations and on-going best practice research.

Ms. Forde expanded on the Family and Community Engagement topic to show how it supported achieving goals. Robust and systematic engagement with parents/guardians to minimize language barriers, ethnic expectations and employment demands, implementation of Customer Service standards and adaption of the website’s redesign to mobile device usage, are some of the ways being pursued. Student emotional learning tactics based on expanding social skills and experiences to build relationships are being tested as one method to counter risky behavior and build trust and comfort to support development. Ms. Forde remarked that only 3.13% of the 7.4% of the student population needing Special Education status were sent out of the district because of the highly qualified Greenwich teaching staff.

Digital Learning Environment (DLE) - Mr. Dunn presented information about the Digital Learning Education program focusing on how it supports changing teacher instructional practice, personalizes learning and increases potential education outcomes through the Dashboard metric analysis capability. He offered that there were 10,463 Apple iPad and Lenovo Chrome Books in-place throughout the school system and described how his capital plan anticipated replacing or repurposing these devices at a cost of $1.5 to $1.4 million for FY17 and FY18 respectively, with a reduction in cost by FY19 to $1.4 million. Mr. Dunn projected that on-demand content and mastery self-assessment were moving technology education forward rapidly. He assured the Committee that Phase I and Phase II implementation were on time and within budget. Mr. Dunn was asked to provide additional information on the lease arrangements for the devices.

Human Resources – Mr. Stacy spoke further about level staffing despite the increase of enrollment projected for Fall 2016, which might require future adjustment based on class size. He noted that the previous year’s reduction of the Arts Coordinator position had proven that oversight of art, music and theater programs was needed. Ms. Kiernan asked who was responsible for risk management in the schools, to which Mr. Hricay and Ms. Erickson responded that the Director of Facilities worked with the Town’s HR Safety Consultant to manage the responsibility and Mr. Stacy spoke about risk management practices with respect to staff.

The Committee asked that further information be provided on: 1) a Chart of FTEs that would reconcile with the provided BOE headcount; 2) an exploration of possible savings from retirements, conversion of positions or increased productivity; 3) the impact of New Lebanon building on the Int’l Baccalaureate program; 4) whether there was a staffing and operating plan included in New Lebanon “ED specs”; 5) if the 50-seat capacity of the magnet school was planned to meet referrals from eleven schools; 6) whether the enrollment and demographic study was projected out for ten years; 7) staffing model for the new New Lebanon School when completed.

New Lebanon Elementary School - Mr. Lash asked the New Lebanon building committee architect, Richard Szczep, to help the Committee review their options for accommodating the school’s students during the construction phase of the new building. He requested that a single-page comparison of the costs and timeline of modular construction vs busing or remaining in the old school building during construction, be prepared for further discussion before February 29th’s Decision Day meeting to integrate the Budget Committee’s evaluation of the impact to the
budget of the inclusion of the Williams Street field, the potential loss of IB school certification and the optimal intangible factor of keeping the whole school body together during the construction phase.

**BOE Capital improvement Plan FY17** - Mr. Hricay presented several of the BOE’s Capital item requests: a feasibility study of a new Cardinal Stadium at Greenwich High School; and replacement of the Greenwich High School, Field One turf carpet.

Mr. Hricay and Mr. Matten provided the Committee with information about the request for a Master Plan for the 15 schools that would take into account their robust current use vs. changing needs. A Facilities Assessment of all the buildings’ systems, space utilization and demographics plus planning for limited-mobility student access issues would make future decision-making more efficient. It would provide a per-building estimate of the scope of the work needed to plan capital spending. Dr. McKersie emphasized that a comprehensive look at the “ed specs” for each school building would support prioritization of projects.

The Committee also asked for a detailed update on the State reimbursements for the Hamilton Avenue School, Glenville School, and MISA building projects, as well as information on the timing of expected approval for state funding and the range of reimbursement, for the New Lebanon School.

**Capital Open Appropriations** - A review of Encumbered Projects was made to identify open balances which might be closed-out. The Committee discussed the return of the balance of Hamilton Avenue building fund’s settlement from the Risk Fund or an explanation of projects to which it would be dedicated.

Mr. Lash moved the additional outstanding items and discussion of the Food Service to a later meeting date.

**LABOR Negotiation Update**

Mr. Cava began his presentation at 3:10 P.M.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, The Committee entered Executive Session at 3:22 P.M.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Committee exited Executive Session at 4:11 P.M.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:12 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

James A. Lash, Chairman
Mr. Lash welcomed members of the Board of Education and the audience to the first day of the 2016-2017 Budget Hearings. He invited the BOE to share the rationale behind its requests so that the Budget Committee could understand what choices would make sense to the taxpayer and not have other Town concerns crowd out things they would prefer to do.

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