

FINAL

RICHMOND SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING Tuesday April 12, 2022 - 6:00 PM - via Zoom

PRESENT: Peter Dillon, Superintendent; Adeline Ellis; Kimmie Leeco; Dan Weston, Principal; Mary Shook, Special Ed.

Peter called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. The first order of business was a report on the Budget. Peter reported that the total amount of the budget, including Choice money, Grants and Expenditures equalled \$4,02,871.00, which is the amount needing to be approved. The budget was completed on March 11, 2022.

Peter read out the individual budget lines as no copies for the Committee were available at that time:

Secretary and School Cte. Expenses - increased to \$6,000.00 from \$3,500.00 in order to allow the Cte. to attend the Fall School Cte. Conference.

Superintendent - remains mostly flat: Membership in the Superintendent's Organization required an increase of \$750.00. Administrative software \$1,250.00. SPED line increased budgeted vs paid for salaries: decreased in Paraprofessional and increased in Professional Services and fees by \$2,000.00

Principal Expenses: Increases in Printing and Copying

Pupil Supplies: Increased by \$1,000.00

SPED Expenses: Decreased by \$2,000.00

Textbooks: Increased by \$1,725.00

Teachers' Salaries: remain flat

Paraprofessional Salaries: Increased with the addition of a couple more positions

Cultural Enrichment: \$5,000.00

Money for Support Staff: Decreased

Professional Development: Decreased

Technical Services: Decreased

Hardware: Increased but grant monies were used.

Nurse: Increased

Transportation and Contractual Obligations: Increased

SPED Transportation: Decreased by \$40,000.00

Tuitions: Lee decreased, Lenox increased, Monument Mountain increased, Pittsfield increased, Taconic decreased, Special Education decreased by \$175,000.00

Food Services Salaries increased

Custodian Salary increased

Utilities increased

Medical Insurance remains flat

Unemployment costs remain flat

Adeline questioned the teachers' salaries remaining flat. Peter advised her that negotiations have been completed and the budget salary line shows no increase, but there is \$116,201.00 remaining in Contingency for the purpose of bargaining units and some employees who are not represented by a bargaining unit. All increases will come out of that Contingency money.

Peter noted that he had done a lot of work with the Budget Advisory Committee who pushed for reductions, which were made. For example: The school now has one and one-half custodian positions with funding held available for an additional half time position, which the school had hoped would create two and one-half positions. However, the Town's concerns about the size of the budget led to the elimination of the additional half-time position, leaving the school with the two custodian positions. Peter believed that, with the recommendation of the Budget Advisory Cte., the budget should pass at the Town Meeting.

Adeline moved to approve the budget of \$4,022,871. Kimmie seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by roll-call vote: Adeline, aye; Kimmie, aye.

Peter then asked for a motion to adjourn the public meeting. Adeline so moved, Kimmie seconded and the motion passed by unanimous roll-call vote: Adeline, aye; Kimmie, aye.

Adeline then called the regular School Committee meeting to order at 6:18 PM.

Public Comment: None

Principal's Report: Dan reported that the school is in the process of reopening fully. In light of the recent county-wide surge in COVID cases, he noted that the staff are taking various measures to mitigate any dangers. Dining tables have been placed outside so that whenever the weather permits, the children can eat outdoors.

The school is in the middle of MCAS testing and it is in good shape. The staff have been working very hard to move students around to create all the required accommodations.

Field trips are scheduled, contingent on the COVID numbers.

A Mothers' Day Tea was well attended and enjoyed.

Teachers are starting to wrap things up as the end of the school year approaches. There are video projects in classes and this is a good, busy time.

Kimmie asked about the scheduling of the MCAS tests. Peter advised that one or two grades are tested in a day and make-up tests are done at the same time. He noted that the kids are working very hard - some spend as much as four hours on a test.

Pre-School Pricing: Currently, the school charges \$45.00 per day, with a discount of 50% for Richmond residents. Peter suggested that the amount be changed for \$50.00 per day and \$25.00 per day for residents. He added that in cases where families had children close in age and needed to enroll two at the same time, an additional discount be available so that it would be \$40/day for each student and \$20/day for residents. That keeps Richmond's cost to the families still less than surrounding schools.

Adeline moved that the non-resident preschool tuition be raised from \$45 to \$50 per day with a 50% discount for Richmond residents. For families with multiple children enrolled the tuition would be discounted to \$40/day per student for non-resident and \$20/day per student. Kimmie seconded the motion, which was adopted by unanimous roll-call vote: Adeline, aye; Kimmie, aye.

Special Education Report: Mary Shook reported that she has been busy with meetings, including a meeting in person with parents and a specialist, which went well. She has attended Circuit Breaker classes for beginners. Dan and Mary have begun to schedule Special Education for next year and things are generally going very well.

Second Reading of Policies - Section Acab: Concerning sexual harrassment. Kimmie asked that the wording be included that said that sexual harrassment need not be expicity sexual in nature - remarks about a whole gender are harrassment.

A discussion ensued that resulted in Peter offering to take the additional language to the School's attorney for advice and to bring her comments to the next meeting.

Section Ac was determined to be acceptable as it stands and Adeline moved to accept Policy Ac - a Non-Discriminatory Policy - as read. Kimmie seconded and the motion passed by unanimous roll-call vote: Kimmie, aye; Adeline, aye.

Peter noted that Section Fa - Facilities - concerned the retirement of facilities and was clearly intended for large districts. It was decided to eliminate that section.

Financial Report: Some categories are showing negative balances. In the June meeting, Peter will have the corrections made through re-allocations.

Dollar amounts remaining will go down with the exception of Teachers' salaries, which are needed for the remaining weeks of school and Summer School expenses. A discussion ensued about the details of the budgeting project.

Regionalization with Southern Berkshire and Berkshire Hills Districts: The organizing group voted to go deeper into consultant professionals about consolidating or merging the two districts. The plan would be to keep the Elementary and Middle Schools as they are, but create a shared High School housed on the Monument campus. This would entail a new regional agreement.

Structure: Combined South County - 8 towns divide the costs: Capital formula and Transportation. At this point the ongoing need is to conclude and draft a new Agreement. A vote is expected in six to seven months.

Adeline asked what impact it would have on Peter if the agreement went into effect. Peter said that at some point the Richmond School Committee and the subset of the Berkshire Hills School Committee would have to meet and make those decisions. Each District has their own Superintendent and several Principals. One conversation that needs to take place is, "What are the roles in the new structure? What will be the educational vision and what impact will it have on staffing? Peter offered to provide a link to the website dealing with this issue.

Kimmie raised the issue of the Principal's Survey currently in the hands of the staff. Peter noted that he has received 16 responses so far and he will send out another reminder. There was a discussion of the protection of such surveys other than the Superintendent, which will impact the way it can be discussed.

Dan reported that Teachers' Appreciation Week was very nicely done and the staff were very appreciative of the work done by the families that showed their feelings for the staff.

Dan remarked that there are several warrants needing to be signed in his office. He asked the Committee members to stop by.

It was noted that the COVID Pandemic has been very hard on Joy, the Music Teacher, and the band members with so little practice time possible.

There being no further business before the Board, a motion was made to adjourn at 7:08 PM. The motion was seconded and carried by unanimous roll-call vote: Kimmie, aye; Adeline, aye.

Submitted by Phyllis LeBeau