

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES
REMOTE MEETING
April 13, 2021

Present: Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Chair
Ms. Catherine Bowen, Secretary
Ms. Amy Checkoway
Mr. Michael Crowley
Ms. Meghan Moriarty
Mr. Jamal Saeh
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

1. Opening Business

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 a.m.

The Warrant Subcommittee for Education – Anne Helgen, Geoff Lubien, Liz Goss, Jack Weis, and Paul Rickter- joined the School Committee Finance Subcommittee meeting.

2. FY22 Budget Planning

The district began planning for a budget reduction of \$2.07M and will use their budget priorities as a guide: increased enrollment, class sizes; equity, access and social emotional learning; district configuration and visioning work; and increase in mandated services (SPED, EL).

Superintendent Phelan presented the FY22 Non-Contingent Budget Framework document. While it will identify positions for reduction, that position list may be fluctuating and will take outside factors into consideration (enrollment, Federal dollars). Discussions with staff occurred with those individuals who may be impacted by the reductions.

The School Administration offered a timeline which began on April 8 with the Leadership Council team for a reduction list review of all FY21 COVID positions and will end with the June 2 Town Meeting budget presentation. By April 30, round one of reduction letters will be distributed to staff and round two reductions by May 15. The Council also met to discuss the process for reduction of co-curricular, extra-curricular, and texts, supplies and materials. The following were presented as possible staff reductions and their rationale:

Elementary: Low enrollment classes 2 (grade 1) and 2 (Kindergarten); aware of potential enrollment bumps.

Middle School: 0.6 Math specialist (Vacant); 0.4 Foreign Language (Attrition); 1.0 Music/Band (Remove Co-Teaching); 1.0 Grade 5 (Reduction). The cuts reduce support of middle school students.

High School: 1 Librarian (Reduction); 0.6 English (Reduction of tutoring class), 0.4 Spanish (Reduction of differentiation); 1.0 Community Service (Attrition).

The district will next conduct a system-wide review of all paraprofessional positions (Unit D) not directly connected to student IEPs, along with administrative salaried positions. The number of Unit D cuts will be kept flexible in order to save teaching positions. Variables still under review include 1 elementary “bubble” class, Out of District enrollment projected increases, SPED increase in services at Belmont High, and results of enrollment survey and class size fluctuation at the High School due to course offering/selection.

After Committee members asked about using cash reserves to lessen potential cuts, Superintendent Phelan communicated the need to review the last 3 years’ increases in Special Education use of general cash funds to stay within guidelines. The group also discussed sending an enrollment survey out to families. The administration felt the survey should only be sent to those families who left the district this year, while some School Committee members were in favor of surveying all families. In an attempt to not over survey families and lessen the administrative need to follow up for responses, it was decided a brief (two questions) survey would be sent to all families within the week.

Committee members discussed risk tolerance for the specific reductions, the priority on preserving academic program, consideration of raising fees, review of compensation and COLA. Warrant Committee members will review the 3-year SPED plan on April 27, with their report due on May 4th.

The Warrant Subcommittee for Education adjourned their meeting at 9:39 am.

3. Review BPS/Belmont Light MOU for Chenery Solar

Superintendent Phelan requested the School Committee members review the Chenery Solar MOU and respond to him with questions or comments at the evening’s School Committee meeting in order to keep the process moving and be able to sign the document in the next day or so.

4. **Approval School Committee and Finance Subcommittee Minutes** – moved to future meeting
- *School Committee Meeting Minutes – February 23, 2021*
 - *School Committee Meeting Minutes - March 9, 2021*
 - *Finance Subcommittee Meeting Minutes – February 23, 2021*

5. Adjourn

On a motion offered by Mike Crowley, and seconded by Amy Checkoway, the Committee voted to adjourn at 9:49 am.

The Finance Subcommittee adjourned at 9:49 am.


Catherine Bowen, Secretary

Respectfully Submitted by: