

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES
REMOTE MEETING
April 8, 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 8:03 a.m.

2. FY22 Budget Planning and Preparation

The override ballot question from April 6 did not pass, necessitating the review of reductions in the amount of \$2.07M. A budget timeline has been established for the process beginning with a Leadership Council review of staff reductions (April 8) and ending with the Town Meeting budget presentation on June 2, 2021. The following have been identified as current variables to the budget process: amount of State Aid, allowed use of Federal Aid, and allocation of ESSER II and III funds.

The district 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.

At a meeting scheduled for April 8, the Leadership Council will:

- Break out in Level-based groups to review data and make suggested reductions
- Identify and reduce all FY21 COVID related positions
- Assume all FY22 additional staff will not be hired and reduced, dollar value of \$870,500
- Reduce current staff salary line by proposed \$634,740 across all levels of the district
- Discuss process for reduction of proposed \$418,800 in Co-Curricular, Extra Curricular and Athletics
- Discuss process for reduction of proposed \$145,960 in Text, Materials, Supplies and Equipment

The School Department timeline will begin with a reduction list for all FY21 COVID positions and by April 30, round one of reduction letters will be distributed and round two reductions by May 15.

The School Committee members asked clarifying questions on budget items and enrollment numbers for next year, and voiced their preference for reductions to have as little impact on student learning as possible. Discussion on whether a survey to parents regarding their intent to enroll in the district next year was discussed and the timing of a survey, if any, was questioned. Discussion of the equity audit and its implications for the budget formation is pending. Other topics discussed include the need to unpack the revolving accounts more thoroughly, appreciation for the guiding principles of the reductions, need to look at administrative positions as well, possible options for partial FTE reductions and any hiring out of services.

Surrounding the budget cuts, Superintendent Phelan wants families to know school will happen in the fall, and students will be given a good education. He does not want the community to get a sense of panic over the cuts, as the district has been in this position in previous years. Belmont teachers are capable and teacher assignments can be readjusted to make school a good experience. More adjustments will be made once definite Federal funding amounts are known likely in May and June.

There are some positions the district may not want to give up and may increase existing position cuts instead, trading off different positions if needed. While specific FTEs may change, the overall dollar amount will be met. Non salary reductions and revolving accounts will be looked at with Directors to make determinations.

3. COVID Parking Lot Update

The administration is awaiting guidance from the State regarding acceptable use of grant funding and Superintendent Phelan reiterated the parking lot mandates of summer programming for academic support and recovery and possible mandate of a remote academy for the following school year

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*
- *Finance Subcommittee Meeting Minutes – March 23, 2021*

Jack Weiss from the Warrant Subcommittee on Education requested another joint meeting with the Finance Subcommittee before April 28, in preparation for the Warrant Committee meeting.

Acting Chair Bowen took questions from the community:

Joe Bernard- Asked how and where school resource officers fit in next year's budget. – Resource officers sit in the Town-side of the budget.

Superintendent Phelan recapped for all audience members: The District knew there was a possible yes or no vote on the override question and had a list of possible reductions in the event of a “no” vote. Seeing as there will be no override, the administration will get feedback and make decisions one step at a time and plan for the upcoming one year reduction. Next Tuesday's Finance Subcommittee meeting will include a Leadership Council summary of reductions.

Follow up items included Meg Moriarty reviewing the survey format and timing, walk through Q3 on April 27, list of capital requests and improvements, solar and health MOUs (economic benefit), data on students being served by enrichment programs.

5. Adjourn

On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway and seconded by Mike Crowley, the School Committee approved to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 am (4-0-1).


Catherine Bowen, Secretary

Respectfully submitted by: