

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**REMOTE MEETING**  
**May 25, 2021**

Present: Ms. Amy Checkoway, Chair  
Ms. Meghan Moriarty, Secretary  
Ms. Catherine Bowen  
Mr. Michael Crowley  
Ms. Andrea Prestwich  
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. as subcommittee.

*The Warrant Committee Education Subcommittee – Anne Helgen, Geoff Lubien, Liz Goss, Jack Weis, and Laurie Slap- joined the School Committee Finance Subcommittee meeting.*

**2. FY21 Budget Closeout**

FY21 budget discussion focused on Out Of District (OOD) Special Education expenses to provide clarity for the School Committee members on how the Special Education Reserve Fund is utilized, and the possibility of giving back free cash to the Town.

Superintendent Phelan summarized that Out Of District tuitions have always been a volatile part of the budget. Funding comes from the general fund, IDEA grant, Circuit Breaker grant, LABBB credits, and Special Education Reserve funds. FY21 will end with approximately \$8.6M of OOD expenses/tuitions. The FY22 total projected OOD expenses are \$9.1M. There is projected deficit with the OOD tuition general fund accounts balance by FY24. Other points of interest are the state mandates a “maintenance of effort” annual change greater than 0% every year in order to obtain grant monies the following year, and the district has aligned to the Financial Task Force 2 (FTF2) model of expense growth (down to 5% from 5.8%) and lookback (from 7 years to 5 years).

Warrant Committee member Slap recommended continuing to have full discussions with the Warrant Committee/Subcommittee for Education as the School budget ties into the overall budget for Town Meeting. Other Warrant subcommittee members asked about the “flat” Circuit Breaker funding and IDEA grant funding.

Director DiCologero explained detailed numbers for the Warrant Subcommittee on Education to clarify district projections. While they were comfortable with methodology, some questioned the projections or assumptions made.

School Committee members will look to conduct a deep dive into OOD expenses in future years to better calculate projections and communicate the process to the community. This will be the first time since its

inception that the Special Education Reserve fund will be accessed, so it is new for all and would require a vote of the SC. There is a possibility of using Circuit Breaker funds instead of drawing down the reserve fund. The School department prefers to have full funding in place for what the district needs and to reserve funds needed for future projections, instead of focusing on how they can give back free cash to the Town.

**3. FY22 Budget** combine with Fed Funds

Financial Task Force 2 meeting held on Monday, May 24, discussed whether general guidance or details would be communicated at Town Meeting. The group also reviewed how Federal money might be used and determined there seems to be flexibility to use Federal funds in FY22 and FY23 and have COVID related expenses for this year reimbursed to the Town.

**4. Federal Funds**

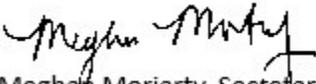
The School department will need guidance from the School Committee with adjustments to the COVID parking lot needs, based on American Rescue Plan details. The Town still needs clarification from the State regarding Coronavirus Aid, Relief, Economic Security (CARES) act funds.

**5. Adjourn**

The Finance Subcommittee adjourned at 9: 47am

**On a motion offered by Meghan Moriarty, and seconded by Jamal Saeh, the School Committee VOTED unanimously to adjourn the meeting.**

Respectfully Submitted by:

  
Meghan Moriarty, Secretary