

**Belmont School Committee Minutes**  
**Finance Subcommittee**  
**March 4, 2016**  
**Conference Room of the School Administration Building**

**Present:** Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox  
Mr. Thomas Caputo  
Ms. Laurie Slap  
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent  
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance

**Also present:** Mr. James Gammill, Chair, Education Subcommittee of Warrant Committee

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 a.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

There were no minutes to review.

**3. FY17 Budget**

Superintendent Phelan described the process that he and Mr. DiCologero thought would be most effective for the subcommittee's thorough review of the FY17 budget. For the next 3-4 weeks in March, they would prepare an overview of a subset of the budget and highlight differences from FY16, in advance of a full discussion at each meeting.

Mr. DiCologero first introduced a document that outlined the budget development process for school departments. Superintendent Phelan then described how he, Mr. DiCologero and Assistant Superintendent Darias met individually with each principal and curriculum director in early 2016 to review each of their non-salary expenses, and used a zero-based budgeting approach to construct the FY17 budget. Superintendent Phelan noted that recent budget freezes had impacted many of these non-salary lines repeatedly. While bottom-line subtotals remained largely unchanged, there was some re-allocation among line items. He also explained how the leadership team is developing a multi-year plan to replace outdated textbooks. This plan will be coordinated among all departments and schools, and will be presented to the full School Committee in coming months.

The group reviewed documents showing non-salary expenses for all six schools, as well as most of the curriculum areas. Since it was just before 9:00 a.m. when they reached the page showing SPED expenses (supplies, tuitions, contracted services, tutoring, legal, transportation, pre-K), all agreed to examine these line-items at the next meeting on March 8<sup>th</sup> since not enough time remained to tackle this important area in its entirety.

Ms. Slap next raised a topic that had come up at the end of the joint BOS/Warrant Committee meeting in late February when FY17 budgets were first presented. She explained that there was discussion about potential uses for any 'surplus' free cash (capital fund, SPED stabilization fund, general operating stabilization fund (to extend benefits of override), OPEB funds, etc.). All agreed that the Finance Subcommittee should examine what would be most valuable to the school system in coming years; and the School Committee/School Department should prepare a proposal to share with the BOS and WC as discussions continue through the spring.

**4. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by

  
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Laurie Slap