

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES
REMOTE MEETING
NOVEMBER 17, 2020

Present: Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Chair
Ms. Amy Checkoway
Mr. Michael Crowley
Ms. Tara Donner
Ms. Evelyn Gomez
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations
Mr. Michael McAllister, Director of Human Capital

Absent: Ms. Catherine Bowen, Secretary

1. Opening Business

1.1 Call to order

Chair Andrea Prestwich called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m.

2. FY22 Budget Discussion: Contingent and Non-contingent Scenarios

The School Committee reviewed a spreadsheet with information on a non-contingent budget scenario. The School Department is waiting to hear the decision from the Select Board, Financial Task Force II and Town Administrator on the use of free cash dollars to reduce the amount of the override as well as how the free cash will be used if the override passes.

The School Department has been asked to use the amount of \$400,000 for a contingent budget amount for FY22. For a non-contingent budget, it may be \$5 million or perhaps \$3 million or \$4 million that will need to be reduced. Not knowing an exact number affects the district's ability to know and demonstrate what the reductions look like. There is also no information yet on Chapter 70 money.

The School Department has added over 44 Unit A positions since the last override, which has been helpful, although there has only been one override in the recent past. If it becomes necessary to implement \$5 million in reductions, this could include 15 FTEs reduced across elementary schools, 15 FTEs reduced within the middle school, and 15 FTEs reduced within the high school, and/or increased class size at every level and/or reduced programming for music, art and physical education. In FY21, positions were added for one year only. Those positions would not be replaced/continued. At the middle school, level reductions might take place in technology, physical education, world language, and reduced teams. At the high school, entire programs/courses may need to get eliminated. Busing could also be, which goes against Safe Routes to Schools.

The Town will host community forums in January and February to hear input from community members on the FY22 budget.

3. Equity Audit Funding Source

The Equity Subcommittee is looking for ways to fund a third party audit to study any potential inequities in the school district. Tony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations will identify a budget line item for that audit and will determine a line item that would need to be reduced to cover that funding, should the audit move forward. It is important to have an outside observer provide guidance on what the district is doing well and what may need improvement. The School Committee expressed support for the district to look further into how to fund a potential audit.

Amy Checkoway offered to share her notes from a workshop on equity she attended during the MASC Annual Meeting.

4. Adjourn

*On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Michael Crowley, the School Committee **VOTED** unanimously on a roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 a.m.*

Respectfully Submitted by 
Amy Checkoway, Interim Secretary