

DRAFT MINUTES

Greenfield Public Schools Budget and Negotiations Subcommittee

Date: Monday, March 7, 2016

Time: 4-5:30

Location: Conference Room
141 Davis Street

Attendees:

Subcommittee Members:

Adrienne Nunez, Chair

Nate Tripp

Susan Hollins

Administrators:

Adam Garand

Howie Barber

Also present:

Member Ward

Supporting Documents Received:

No new supporting documents

Call to order:

4:00 pm

Agenda Items:

1. Public Comment-None
2. **Review and discussion of Superintendent's proposed budget for recommendation to full committee. (Goal of offering amendment to previous recommendation.)**
 - a. Opening comments by HB. Notes new format of all-funds budget as change from past practice and responds to previous inquiry about GHS Electives cost center of \$250,000 dedicated for elective program (positions and materials.)

- SH-in favor of having a GHS Electives Program Cost Center in the budget, citing 2008-9 Town Council unanimous vote to restore GHS elective program and increase the voted GPS budget by \$250,000. The \$250,000 cost center became a solution to reinstate funding for electives. Notes this recommendation is based on a desire to ensure no less than \$250,000 in funding for GHS electives program.
 - AN-in favor of current reporting of costs NOT using a separate cost center for electives. Discussion noting administration still has freedom and flexibility to respond to the needs of students through elective class choice/availability. AN prefers clear reporting on costs over vague cost-center grouping; considers reversion to previous cost-center grouping to be a move would be out of fear of response from Council and/or mayor. Notes district's continued work and zero-based budgeting to better understand district spending.
 - **Unanimous support expressed for maintaining strong electives programming.**
- b. SH-Follow-up on \$70,000 CIP funding for large replacement vehicle/s. HB notes current inquiries and specifications review taking place, estimates possible \$30,000 savings, Jesse is working on more information to be available in approximately one week. Driver shortage and other issues noted briefly, possible driver rate adjustment needed. SH supports letting DPW help locate quality used vehicle/s.
- c. SH-Professional Development follow-up. Total of PD noted as \$94,000. Title 2 grant (PD for educators) noted to be total of \$120,000 offset. To be used as an offset for PD costs.
- d. SH-question to confirm district program stability. No programs removed from FY16 to FY17. However, two positions will be removed from Essential Skills and Transitions programs due to staffing review. Noted that there will be a slight increase in clubs available for students.
- e. NT-clarity on Volunteer Coordinator (part-time) position. HB noted that removal was at start of FY16. Position is not included in FY17 budget. HB notes new position of T1 Liaison (\$10,000) helping with some of the duties of the previous position. FY15 budget for Volunteer Coordinator (part-time) was \$18,000.
 - **Unanimous interest expressed for reinstating VC position.**
 - AN expresses desire to create larger, 1FTE position that has greater involvement in communication coordination/management in

district. No disagreement. Some concern expressed about not losing what has already been established with previous VC position.

- f. SH- Davis move cost savings question. Clarity on custodial services currently at Davis. HB notes approx. \$15,000 savings possible, but not necessarily. Possible savings is unknown and too early to predict.
- g. Reading/Literacy services: SH shares observation of SPED and english/reading data, partly in response to request from Donna Woodcock for Literacy Support at GHS. SH estimates 5-7% GHS students in need of reading instruction support. Notes intervention as important for literacy in general and cites reasons for support. Notes that SPED at GHS is reported at 28%, all other schools below 20%. GHS is only school without reading services for students in the mainstream. Discussion on possible ways to approach literacy support at GHS and district-wide reading services coordination: Stipends, school coordinator, district coordinator, site based-specialist, tutors, etc. Notes S.C. policy priority to improve literacy of all students. HB and AG discussion on current reading intervention procedure, proactive approach to focuses resources on elem and mid levels, need noted at GHS.
 - **Unanimous support expressed to address this need for reading support at GHS.** Discussion on amount of funding. Noted that district-wide coordination needed. FY17 could be starting point to address these needs. Suggestion for \$40-69,000 addition to FY17 budget.
- h. AN-Follow-up on S.C. Budget, specifically, funding for Collaborative membership. HB notes that FY17 funding is consistent with FY16. Collaborative is not a line item under SC. Notes funding for MASC.
- i. Additional preschool staff: SH-Expresses desire to hold off on building monitor at AEL until comparative study on preschool programming. Notes current staffing at 3 FTE per classroom. Notes that position could be added later if there are other cost efficiencies.
 - NT-agrees, noting that this funding could be used to fund literacy support.
 - AN-Does not agree. Expresses support for building monitor at AEL. Notes that Superintendent and principal are not present to give details on why this position was considered a priority. Given lack of info, cannot make this judgement. Advocates for addition rather than trading building monitor for literacy, simply adding on funding for literacy.

- j. Clarification on use of offsets and sustainability of heavy use of offsets, in response to SC meeting comment. HB notes heavy use of choice funding in this cycle to offset impact of two years of new teacher contract and other needs for FY16. States that next year the impact of teacher contract will be lighter. Choice is not getting used up fully. AN-questions responsibility. HB responds that true that not sustainable to rely so heavily on these offsets but approach is responsible.
 - k. Discussion on recommendation to full committee. Although the subcommittee supports the careful review of the budget by administrators that resulted in reduction from previous draft of budget, a unanimous desire to recommend additional funding to Superintendent's Proposed FY17 budget was expressed. Brief discussion on specific number to suggest. Suggested:
 - \$15,000 for reinstatement of part-time Volunteer Coordinator
 - \$45,000 for literacy support/reading services at GHS
3. Next meeting noted. Discussion ends due to time.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, March 30, 4-6 pm (Paraprofessionals Negotiations discussion with Att. Smith.)

Regular meeting: Monday, April 4th, 4pm (Agenda yet to be established.) Possible items noted in discussion today:

- unfinished business
- discussion on budget format
- Desires for ongoing study--Preschool staffing, vehicle replacement, ways/research into handling large cost centers (SPED, Transportation), other
- Budget SC Calendar

Final Committee recommendation:

After much discussion and review, the Budget Subcommittee recommends that the district add an additional \$60,000 to the Superintendent's FY17 proposed budget to begin to address the need for reading literacy support at the High School level and help with coordination of district-public programming by reinstating a part-time, district-wide Volunteer Coordinator position.

The subcommittee suggests the addition of a \$15,000 line item for part-time Volunteer Coordinator and \$45,000 to be used for reading support at Greenfield High School.

Members believe that the reinstatement of a Volunteer Coordinator position will support a strong and healthy relationship with volunteers and the general public. We recognize that volunteers play a key role in the education of our students and this request has come from a desire to sustain, grow, and coordinate volunteer efforts at GPS.

In addition, we believe that providing funding for reading support at the high school level will help to provide the necessary support to students in need.

The Subcommittee feels passionately about following through with the School Committee's commitment to making literacy a top priority for our district in effort to set up ALL students for success.

Adjournment time: 5:40 pm

Unfinished Agenda items:

1. Overview and discussion on next steps in budget process and action items