FY18 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT
WAYS & MEANS HEARING

On March 13, 2017, the Greenfield School Committee voted an FY18 Budget of $18,699,475.27. The Mayor’s budget, included a School Department Budget of $18,200,000, resulting in a cut of $499,475. The Mayor released a series of useful recommendations regarding the further eliminations necessary under the revised budget. The School Department has reviewed these areas of study in-depth, and provide the following response.

For a closer look and recommendations:

1. McKinney-Vento increases from $120K to $132K

   School Department Response: McKinney-Vento is a state reimbursement, and is awarded based on how many students are impacted under the definition of “homeless,” “transient,” or “displaced.” The cost of the students are compiled from current and anticipated students at the projected rates in FY18. Our anticipated cost for FY18 is in the amount of $136K. State McKinney-Vento funds are distributed to the town and do not offset school department expenses.

2. Step Increases Teach/Para/Custodian/AA is shown as $140,000 but increases appear to be included in cost centers.

   School Department Response: The amount indicated is a fiscally prudent projection that accounts for the gap created by the use of one time funds (Contract Stabilization Account) to partially fund a recurring cost (Paraprofessional Contracts). The specific line is to address a 2-year increase for contract agreements that are under negotiation in 16-17 that will be paid for in the first year by stabilization (16-17), but must be fully funded by School Department funds in 17-18 and beyond. Therefore, the next budget year has to address the two years of increase during the contract negotiation period. Unit C has a tentative agreement but no ratification as of today’s date.

3. Administrative costs at GHS.

   School Department Response: The current configuration of 1 Principal and 2 Associate Principals is considered appropriate for a high school with over 400 students. Newly enacted state-level mandates, including Educator Evaluation (begun in Greenfield in 2014-2015) and changes in the discipline procedures, increase administrative responsibilities. 1 administrator on leave in 16-17 has substantiated the need for 3 full-time administrators. However, 1 Special Education Administrator, currently staffed full-time at GHS in 16-17, has been eliminated in the FY18 budget. School Department proposes reducing Building Monitors instead.
4. The balance of School Choice Receiving Tuition on 6/30/2018 is expected to be $1,135,585.00 plus any previously committed funds dedicated for FY 2018 not used due to pre-payment into FY 2018 using surplus FY 2017 budget monies. Recommendation is to use $500K to offset General Fund expenditures.

School Department Response: The FY18 Budget uses an "All Funds" approach, meaning all revenue sources are accounted for in planning the revenue and expenses in the School Department Budget. The FY18 Budget includes $1,144,916 of offset from School Choice, reducing the projected balance to $425,827 based on estimations. Without keeping some available for extraordinary circumstances, further reduction could put the school department in a financially insecure position. By the end of FY19, if all costs were constant and in balance with the offsets for FY18, the School Choice account would have an estimated balance of negative $123,000.
5. **In Central Office, eliminate one or two of four Administrative Assistants to the Superintendent.**

*School Department Response:* The Superintendent’s office does not have four Administrative Assistants. Two administrative assistants in central office belong to the Administrative Assistants bargaining unit and work under the Department of Pupil Services. Two contractual administrative assistants work in the Superintendent’s office and serve the School Committee, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, and support other departments including Grants and Human Resources. The Receptionist position serves all of Central Office, including services related to Transportation, Facilities, Technology, and Registration. No other central office administrator has any administrative support. Cross-training of all administrative staff enables flexibility and coverage, such as is necessary during the 3 current leaves of absence by central office employees.

6. **Move the Custodial/Maintenance Supervisor to Central Maintenance, a transfer out of $51,000.**

*School Department Response:* This recommendation is under review by the School Committee and Superintendent. Although the line would be eliminated from the School Department budget, since the position is retained, it is not clear if there is a cost saving to the Town in general.

7. **Eliminate Negotiated Salary Increases of $67,000.**

*School Department Response:* This line accounts for the settling of non-union contracts (Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors, Business Office / Payroll staff, non-union Administrative Assistants, etc). This line is not funded through the Town Contract Stabilization fund. Historically, these individuals have received cost of living adjustments only after all bargaining units have been settled and the budget finalized, pending available funds. Many have not received salary increases for several years. This line allows for a modest cost of living adjustment for those individuals with the least protection in their individual contracts.

8. **Reduce marketing district-wide from $23,000 to $13,000 due to only $8,000 has been expended or encumbered.**

*School Department Response:* $8,605.40 has been spent year to date. School department projections and usage should be discussed.
9. Reduce copier supplies district-wide from $20,000 to $10,000 due to only $8,000 has been expended or encumbered.

School Department Response: $8,584.92 has been spent year to date. This line is budgeted at $10,000 for FY18. School department projections and usage should be discussed.

10. Move district-wide Maintenance /Build Cont Service to Central Maintenance, transfer $75,000.

School Department Response: This modest line allows for necessary facilities repairs and improvements outside of routine day to day cleaning. It relates to the School Committee’s responsibilities to maintain safe and orderly environments; “A clean, well-maintained, space-adequate, appropriately-lit, and healthy environment is the Committee’s goal for education services in Greenfield.” (School Committee Policy FA) Regular maintenance prevents extraordinary and unanticipated costs. See also #6, above.

11. Move Extraordinary Maintenance to Central Maintenance, transfer $35,000.

School Department Response: This modest line allows for funds in the event of unanticipated needs related to student wellness and safety of facilities, such as Asbestos removal. It relates to the School Committee’s responsibilities to maintain safe and orderly environments; “A clean, well-maintained, space-adequate, appropriately-lit, and healthy environment is the Committee’s goal for education services in Greenfield.” (School Committee Policy FA) Regular maintenance prevents extraordinary and unanticipated costs. See also #10 and #6, above.

12. In GMS, eliminate one of three Administrative Assistants.

School Department Response: Due to the elimination of one Assistant Special Education Director in the FY18 budget, 1 Administrative Assistant will be reassigned to Student Services. The result is overall cost savings while maintaining the staff MSA and GMS students are most familiar with. Retaining MSA’s administrative assistant position was recommended to ease the transition of the MSA families to GMS.

13. In GMS, eliminate one of two associate principals.

School Department Response: Retaining MSA’s associate principal position was recommended to ease the transition of the MSA students to GMS. School Department proposes reducing Building Monitors at GMS/MSA instead, a cost savings to the Schools and an additional savings on Benefits to the Town.
14. Use Pre K Tuition of $148,000 to offset AEL budget.

School Department Response: The account is used as an offset for the preschool costs with projections for minimal receipt in a future year. If there are discrepancies and the amounts collected are in error, the costs in the future could have a financial impact on the remaining operational costs of the K-12th grade programs.

15. Use $250,000 of Circuit Breaker funds toward Special Education Tuition FY 2018 costs and hold balance plus all FY 2018 receipts for FY 2019 budget.

School Department Response: The FY18 Budget calls for $680,000 of Circuit Breaker. The projected balance at the end of FY18 will be $497,107 based on estimations. The Budget & Finance Sub Committee of the School Committee recommend carrying forward a minimum of $400,000 in this line to guard against volatility in unanticipated Special Education costs and provide a degree of financial stability for the district and city.

16. Use $100,000 of 7/6/2013 “Pothole” grant to offset District’s costs associated with behavioral treatment residential student placement. Originally earmarked for GHS, recommendation is that these funds be used for Special Education costs at GHS.

School Department Response: This is a recommended plan for its use to offset the FY18 budget. Taking into consideration that it is only a 1 time use of funds, which could have a financial impact in the FY19 budget process.