

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BUDGET & FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES: February 19, 2019**

Greenfield Public Schools Central Office, 195 Federal Street, Greenfield, MA 01301

Present: Cameron Ward (CW), Chair; Susan Hollins (SH); William Martin (WM)

Absent: None

Also present: Ann Childs, Public Citizen; Susan Eckstrom, School Committee Member; Jordana Harper, Superintendent (by phone); Matt Holloway, Director of Pupil Services; Steve Nembirkow, Business Manager; Adrienne Nunez, School Committee Member

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (CW, SH), CW opened the meeting at 12:07 p.m. (WM arrived after opening)

II. Public Comment

None.

III. Reviewing Superintendent's Budget

CW moved that hard copies of any documents distributed electronically are also made available. SH 2nd.
CW: it is especially difficult to read budget documents online. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Business Manager Nembirkow went over the "Budget Bullet Points" document.

- Current proposed budget 1.4 million above FY19 funding amount, a 7.5% increase
- Chapter 70 likely to increase by 1.1 million, which can be used to offset both operating budget and city's costs
- Cost increases include transportation, out of district, and contractual
- Personnel additions include two grade school teachers, one custodian, one special education teacher, one bcba, one half-time slp, ELL coordinator stipends
- Decreases include eliminating four paraprofessional positions (currently vacant), before/after school care (Wraparound program), two buses (current routes are within walking distance), capping kinder enrollment at Four Corners
- Personnel retirement and insurance costs, as well as water/sewer/utilities, are paid for by the city
- Made comparisons to surrounding districts

CW clarified that the \$800,000 decrease of use from the revolving fund is based on this subcommittee's recommendation to follow policy. SH requested that each revolving fund be discussed separately, and not treated as one large fund.

Superintendent Harper mentioned that the decreases in this proposed budget have been discussed on several occasions, and the \$400,000 decreases are real reductions over last year's level-service budget.

WM noted that 65% of the city's budget goes towards education, resulting in a very high cost per student (relative to other districts in the state). He is also concerned with performance measures and outcomes.

Business Manager Nembirkow stated that there is a plan in place regarding prepayment of tuition.

SH moved to not limit kindergarten enrollment. CW 2nd. Superintendent Harper clarified that the cap on kindergarten enrollment only referred to Four Corners (related to the request for an additional fourth grade teacher). **SH withdrew the motion.**

SH moved to follow GPS policy related to Revolving Funds, additionally recommending that \$200,000 be taken from Choice. CW 2nd. Superintendent Harper informed the committee that this policy is currently being reviewed by the the Policy Committee. WM suggested that “as the accounts exist today” be added to the motion. **[unclear as to whether or not motion was officially amended to include WM’s suggestion.] Motion passed unanimously.**

SH presented four areas in which she would like to see cost reductions:

- Staffing of preschool
- Custodial/maintenance services
- Transportation
- Use of multi-age classrooms (to reduce number of classroom teachers/classroom space needed)

SH also suggested that \$100,000 be added into budget to cover any unanticipated increases in out of district numbers/costs. SH also recommended that items which affect school choice not be taken out of the budget, such as before/after care or capping of kinder enrollment.

Business Nembirkow explained that the food service is self-sustaining to an extent through payment of lunches and federal reimbursements for free lunches.

SH moved to leave the February 19th budget subcommittee meeting discussion with the base budget number of 19.1 million dollars in mind, plus the \$500,000 of intractable costs. CW 2nd. Superintendent Harper cautioned the committee in using terms the public may not understand if out of context (e.g., “base”). CW is open to discussing a budget number less than 19.1 million, realizing it would then not be a level-service budget. SH is not willing to recommend a number less than 19.1 million dollars. **Motion not voted on.**

SH moved to encourage administration to look at every area of the [Recording ended.]

IV. Review Business Manager’s Documents from February School Committee Meeting [Recording ended.]

V. Adjournment [Recording ended.]

Meeting Documents

1. FY2020 Published Budget Bullet Points (emailed ahead of time)