

Wareham School Committee
Budget Public Hearing
Joint meeting

December 1, 2022

The Chair called the joint meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Attendance: Kevin Brogioli, Geoff Swett, Joyce Bacchiocchi Dr. D'Andrea, Ms. Kristin Flynn, and Dr. Andrea Schwamb

Absent: Apryl Rossi and Brennan McKiernan

The Finance Committee was in attendance and called the meeting to order with a quorum. The Board of Selectmen did not have a quorum.

Derek Sullivan, Town Accountant was present.

The meeting was recorded by WCTV and audio recorded by Jamie Wiksten.

Mrs. Bacchiocchi made a motion to open the public hearing, seconded by Geoff Swett.

Roll Call Vote: Kevin Brogioli - yea, Geoff Swett - yea, Joyce Bacchiocchi – yea

Yea – 3, Nay – 0 Abstain – 0

VOTE: 3-0-0

The Superintendent announced there is a budget draft available online and would be presented this evening. The roll of the School District is to educate our students, maintain our facilities, and present a transparent budget to the community.

The Superintendent continued and stated that natural gas, out of district student costs, and diesel gas have an increase, and the remaining budget is a level service budget from FY23, including contractual obligations.

The Superintendent shared student information and cost centers which included personnel, supplies, technology, and all other expenditures.

Ms. Flynn, Director of Finance presented the categories from each cost center and how each is broken down.

Salaries include all personnel, omitting transportation and food service.

Tuitions include out of district and collaborative tuitions.

Transportation includes salaries and expenses for transportation – exams, fuel parts, and anticipating hiring additional drivers.

Utilities decrease for FY24.

Contracted Services legal, copier, medical, and therapeutic services, athletic trainers etc., which does not include facilities.

Other Expenses technology, chrome books, repairs, course reimbursement, field trips, athletic transportation, athletic officials, police details

Operations and Maintenance covers fields and grounds expenses, snow removal, repairs, and irrigations

Supplies office, classroom, human resources, athletic supplies

Insurance student athletic, employee health insurance

The FY24 budget is split in two parts, Salaries are 73%, and Expenses are listed as 27%.

The Budget Summary is as follows:

Proposed budget (before offsets) is **\$37,893,967**. FY24 revenue offsets are as follows:

ESSER III \$1,860,271, Circuit breaker \$1,000,000, 240 Grant \$450,000, IVAQ Grant \$86,310, and School Nutrition \$58,898 bringing the proposed budget to **\$34,438,488**.

The increase from FY23 to FY24 after the offsets is 7.57%.

Dr. D'Andrea recognized that 7.57% is a large number. During the last two years, students experienced tremendous learning loss during the pandemic is a contributor to the percentage increase.

Mr. Bernard Pigeon, Finance Committee spoke to the tax break in Wareham. Mr. Pigeon acknowledged the staff to student ratios. He shared statistics of other town offices, with staff costs down due to municipal funds, and feels the school is overstaffed aside from teachers.

Public Comment:

Deanna Semple, President of WEA, addressed the committees and did not want to see any cuts to the teaching staff. She addressed that the schools pay a salary of \$40,000 to a town HR Administrator. She also mentioned that the school is paying an outside consultant when the School District has both an Assistant Superintendent and District Administrator, and pays for 7 technology workers.

Dr. D'Andrea responded that he does not feel we are overstaffed and noted the school district is not asking for additional staff. The school has 2,000 students and has the staff we need to do the job we need to do.

Alan Slavin, Board of Selectman stated that the Board of Selectmen did not post the joint meeting, an oversight, and stated that they cannot respond.

Jodi Smith, Finance Committee complimented the Director of Finance, because what was stated at the last year workshop, and what actually happened in the budget is different.

Leandra Booth, Wareham Elementary School Paraprofessional, asked about the insurance increase. Dr. D'Andrea responded that it is employee health insurance to help cover some of the cost of insurance and an agreement made between the previous Superintendent and Town Administrator.

Mr. Sullivan explained that the insurance funds the staff members who were hired under the ESSER funds that he was not made aware of.

Mrs. Bacchiocchi thanked Mr. Pigeon for acknowledging that we are all in this together.

The Finance Committee asked if there are any other ESSER funds, and asked if there would be any additional Circuit Breaker funds. Ms. Flynn responded that ESSER will be exhausted, and anticipates that Circuit Breaker could be higher.

Norma Scogin thanked the School Committee, acknowledged inflation, and noted the only way to move forward is by cutting costs.

Mr. Swett noted the transparency of this budget. Unfortunately, the problem is much bigger. There is almost \$2 million in offsets that will not be available a year from now.

Mr. Swett made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Joyce Bacchiocchi.

Roll Call Vote: Kevin Brogioli - yea, Geoff Swett - yea, Joyce Bacchiocchi – yea
Yea – 3, Nay – 0 Abstain – 0
VOTE: 3-0-0

Mr. Swett made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Bacchiocchi
Yea – 3, Nay – 0 Abstain – 0
VOTE: 3-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: _____

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Kevin Brogioli", is written over a horizontal line.