

Minutes
Town of Lexington Appropriation Committee
February 17, 2010

Place and time: Town Office Building, Room 111, 7:30 p.m.

Members present: Alan Levine (Chair), Glenn Parker (Vice-Chair), John Bartenstein (Vice Chair and Secretary), Rick Eurich, Mollie Garberg, Susan McLeish, Eric Michelson, Joe Pato, Rob Addelson (ex officio, non-voting)

Also present: Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent, and Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 p.m.

1. School Budget. Dr. Ash briefed this Committee on the major items related to the proposed FY2011 budget for the schools.

The School Committee requested that two budgets be prepared – the first was a level service budget that replicates the current level of services and meets legal requirements. The second budget, the so-called “recommended budget,” includes programmatic changes recommended by the Superintendent under the constraint that the total spending not exceed that of the level service budget. The bulk of the blue budget book reflects the level service budget. The blue book also includes a section on the recommended budget towards the back. In the recommended budget there are approximately \$500,000 in each of program additions and reductions (primarily the elimination of FY2010 vacant positions).

One of the additions relates to the reestablishment of the Educational Technology Department which was eliminated in July, 2005, shortly after Dr. Ash started working in Lexington. A vacant Deputy Superintendent position was converted into a position of Director of Education Technology and Assessment, and the latter was filled in July, 2009. This position is proposed to be continued in FY 2011 and, in addition, the plan is to hire two instructors for the elementary schools, one for the middle schools and one for the high school. The technology employees will consult and collaborate with teachers to assist them in improving the effectiveness of the use of technology, i.e., computers and software, in their instruction.

The second program improvement is to add a K-5 math specialist and thereby increase the number to seven. The new math specialist would work with classroom teachers as a coach to upgrade their skills to enable them to be better math teachers while the other specialists would continue to work directly with students.

Dr. Ash briefly spoke about the three-year financial projection which projects annual increases in expenditures (exclusive of COLA) of between 2.6% and 2.8% (see the memo from Mary Ellen Dunn dated January 26, 2010) and anticipates revenue offsets including American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funding (which does not

February 17, 2010

continue past FY2011) and the Avalon Bay Education Trust Fund (which will provide approximately \$250,000 per year from FY 2012 through 2014.

A short discussion ensued regarding the elimination of two speech pathologist positions. There is currently an open position and there is a recommendation that both the open position and one additional position be eliminated. Dr. Ash explained that these reductions were appropriate given current staffing levels and class sizes.

The discussion turned to capital requests and we discussed the purchase and implementation of a KRONOS time clock system for the administrative staff to more accurately track the hours worked by hourly employees. The system would, as a by-product, yield better understanding of the full-time equivalents required to perform the responsibilities of those positions.

It was suggested, and Dr Ash agreed, that Town Meeting would appreciate understanding how the ARRA funds received in FY2010 have been spent.

2. Other items. The Committee walked through the warrant and article write up assignments. Agenda items for the next meeting should include Article 7, financial forecasts, and revisiting the timeline for the completion of the Committee's report to the annual town meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McLeish

Approved August 9, 2010