

MINUTES – WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Budget Hearing/Regular Meeting – March 11, 2021

A Budget Hearing/Regular Meeting of the Wayland School Committee was held on Wednesday, March 11, 2021, at 7:00 P.M. broadcast by WayCAM in the Wayland Town Building.

Present were:

Jeanne Downs, Chair
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair
Kim Reichelt
Kathie Steinberg

Absent:

Chris Ryan

Also:

Arthur Unobskey
Superintendent

Susan Bottan
Director of Finance & Operations

Chair Jeanne Downs convened the open session and budget hearing at 7:07 p.m. WayCAM recorded the meeting and it was livestreamed via ZOOM. The meeting was conducted remotely due to the COVID-19 health pandemic and according to the revised open meeting law that allows remote participation. A roll call was taken:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	absent	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Jeanne acknowledge that it has been one year since the schools shut down because of the COVID-19 pandemic. She also thanked the Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Finance Director, and Arthur and Susan for their efforts during the past months on the FY22 budget.

1. **Special Matter – School Budget Hearing:**

(a) Presentation of School Committee Recommended FY22 Budget:

In carrying out its charge, the School Committee is cognizant at all times of its mission which is “to support the mission of the Wayland Public Schools through the setting of policy, hiring and overseeing the Superintendent, and recommending an appropriate budget that delivers a high-quality curricular educational program to the children entrusted to our care.” In addition, the School Committee recognizes the district’s mission statement and its budget goal “to fully support the academic and social/emotional growth of our students, while respecting the fiscal restraints facing Wayland residents and needs of other Town departments.”

Jeanne provided an overview of the FY21 budget that totaled \$43,359,145, including the WTA Collective Bargaining Agreement that was entered into last year. On March 12, 2020, the Governor declared a lockdown in the State of Massachusetts due to the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic across the United States, which resulted in school districts shifting to an all-remote learning mode almost immediately to the end of the FY21 school year. In September, the district continued the remote mode for about a month and then shifted to the hybrid mode, with some students participating fully in the WRAP remote program.

Not only has the budget suffered financially, but there has been some learning loss and mental health issues facing our students. Up to December 2020, the mental health needs were more than in the last ten years here in Wayland. To date, actual and projected COVID expenditures total approximately \$1.7M and was funded by government grants and a reallocation of about \$800,000 from the FY21 operating budget. The expenses included, but were not limited to, PPE, student access to WRAP, increased custodial expenses, outdoor tents, and a health screener. To implement all-in schooling this spring for K-12 will cost an additional \$350,000.

During the budget process, the School Committee followed the Finance Committee’s guidelines in which the School

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Committee was asked to prepare a level-funded budget, a level-services budget, and provide new initiatives. Jeanne described the process starting in August 2020, and in February 2021, the School Committee voted to recommend an FY22 operating budget of \$45,482,116, which was \$2,122,971 above the FY21 operating budget. This includes an FY22 personnel budget increase of \$1,647,505 that contains personnel contractual obligations, enrollment and mandate driven personnel, and non-personnel contractual obligations. The \$475,466 supports long-term innovations (new initiatives) categorized in two tiers. Tier 1 includes a 1.3 FTE elementary assistant principal and a 1.0 FTE WHS clinical social worker. Tier 2 includes 2.0 FTE guidance counselors, 1.2 FTE elementary instructional technology support, and a .5 FTE facilities project manager. This approved recommended budget, however, does not include FY22 COVID expenses.

In response to the School Committee's voted FY22 recommended budget, the Finance Committee asked the School Committee to reduce \$300,000 from the level-services budget and to eliminate any new initiatives. On February 24, the School Committee made adjustments to its recommended budget that included adding \$102,000 given the 27th pay period in FY22 and unfunded salary reserve, reducing maintenance and facilities by \$227,000 and adding the Tier 1 initiatives of \$227,000 to address the critical mental health needs of the students. Moving forward, on March 10, the School Committee reduced the Circuit Breaker by \$50,000, increased the bus fee to \$400 reducing the bus expense by \$102,200, and reduced the short-term space needs capital item by \$247,800. Jeanne further explained these efforts.

Each year, there is an ongoing list of district unmet needs that includes personnel and non-personnel needs. In comparison, the FY22 unmet needs totaled \$1.1M, the FY21 unmet needs totaled \$1.2M, as did the FY20 unmet needs, resulting in the deferment of many given the inability to fund these needs. Finally, there are over \$1.3M of capital improvement requests in the FY22 recommended capital budget that includes, but not limited to, an elementary short-term space study and construction, a Happy Hollow chair lift, elementary schools' student storage replacement, and middle and high school voice lift systems in all classrooms.

- (b) Open Discussion regarding School Committee Recommended FY22 Budget:
There was no dialogue after the budget presentation.

Chair Jeanne Downs closed the FY22 School Budget Hearing at 7:49 p.m.

2. **Administrative/Procedural Matters:**

- (a) Possible Vote on Incoming Superintendent's Transition Agreement:
This item was passed over.

3. **Public Comment:**

There were no public comments.

4. **Adjournment:**

Upon a motion duly made by Jeanne Downs, seconded by Ellen Grieco, the School Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn at 7:52 p.m. A roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>Roll Call</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Jeanne Downs, Chair	X	
Ellen Grieco, Vice Chair	X	
Kim Reichelt	X	
Chris Ryan	absent	
Kathie Steinberg	X	

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Unobskey, Clerk
Wayland School Committee

Corresponding Documentation:

1. Agenda
2. FY22 School Committee's Recommended Presentation