

# **HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the December 21, 2017 meeting at the Hollis Brookline Middle School

This was the 2017 annual joint meeting of the Budget Committee and School Board.

## **COOP Budget Committee:**

### **Present:**

Darlene Mann, Chair  
Raul Blanche, Vice Chair  
David Blinn  
Tom Enright  
Krista Whalen

### **Absent:**

Brian Rater  
Lorin Rydstrom  
Jim Solinas

## **COOP School Board:**

Elizabeth Brown, Chair  
Cindy VanCoughnett, Vice Chair  
Melanie Levesque  
Holly Deurloo Babcock  
Tom Solon  
Krista Whalen

## **SAU 41:**

Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator

The meeting was called to order at 6:33PM.

## **Secretary's Report**

After a brief discussion on quorum thresholds by the BC, members mutually agreed to address approval of November minutes at the January meetings since only 4 members were present.

## **Public Input**

There was no public input.

## **COOP Joint Budget Review**

The purpose for this annual joint meeting between the COOP Budget Committee (BC) and the School Board (SB) is to conduct a joint review and obtain the perspective and insights from each body. The SB reviewed the BC proposed budget guidance of \$21,280,000 at their meeting from 20 December. As a result, the SB provided an update on several cost savings topics of interest:

- 1) Potential additional future savings in out of district transportation of vocational students can be achieved through a purchase of two vans (there would not be much of a savings the first year, but expected during FY19 and beyond);
- 2) Relining the school's water tank (rather than wait until there is a leak and damage) to avoid a more expensive future replacement. A fix to a damage of the liner is estimated to cost \$20K while a relining is estimated at \$40K (a new tank could cost close to \$100K);
- 3) An apportionment for payment to the School Resource Officer (D.A.R.E. program) from the COOP (100%) to the COOP (70%) and the Hollis (30%) School districts is expected to result in savings of approximately up to \$30K;
- 4) It's been decided for now that at the middle school, the elevator will continue to be fixed rather than replaced with a new one;
- 5) An SB proposal to increase the budget guidance by \$14K as a down payment for a future Lacrosse program at the Middle School for which there is large public interest. Two issues were raised at the meeting: 1) currently there is no available space to implement the program and 2) two members of the BC felt that adjusting the guidance should be postponed to the next BC meeting to ensure an increased or full BC attendance (three members were not present) to vote on a change to the existing budget guidance that had been agreed to by 7 out of 8 BC members. In the end, a motion by Dave Blinn and Seconded by Tom Enright to increase the budget guidance by \$14K to \$21,294,000, passed on a 3-2 vote.

Darlene would like Kelly Seeley to evaluate if there is a \$40K available in this year's budget to be encumbered for relining of the Water Tank and for other items. The tank relining would be done during the summer of 2018.

## **HBMS Priorities and Requests**

Krista Whalen, as representative of the SB (She is both a member of the SB and BC), made a presentation regarding a proposal to upgrade a section of the HBHS building complex and construct a new all-purpose

field. A link to the presentation can be found in the SAU41 web site:

[https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5a59e1\\_fc3781ddd161458380b01968278c9b89.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5a59e1_fc3781ddd161458380b01968278c9b89.pdf)

The goals are 1) to implement a much-improved STEM program focusing on Computer Science and Robotics, and 2) enhance existing fields via construction of a multi-purpose turf field and transformation of the existing weight room facility into a cross training fitness center as well as creation of a private space for the trainer to work with student athletes.

The SB has not yet approved the warrant articles associated with these proposals. The STEM and Fitness Center are estimated at \$1,980,000 while the new Multipurpose Turf Field is estimated at \$1,660,000. The currently preferred funding strategy is for the voters to approve the two warrant articles cited above and for private donations to fund STEM equipment, fitness equipment, and field lights. The total donations required are approximately \$500K (\$100K for STEM, \$100K for fitness, and \$300K for lights.)

Raul Blanche left the meeting at 8:36p.

Krista Whalen discussed the complexity of the HESSA contract regarding the inability to compare the current step table and category definitions to other districts. For example, custodial staff is managed directly by the Superintendent in Milford and increases are not addressed within the support staff contract. Similar inconsistencies exist in comparable districts. The changes within the proposed contract include changes to the list of positions that are included in each category. These changes allow for more clarity around how stipends for certain activities are paid. During the discussion of salary changes, Krista clarified the composition of step and off-step staff based on a question from Darlene. Krista also addressed changes to healthcare caps which occur in the third year of the contract. More details will be available once the SB approves the contract at the next meeting.

Several items were discussed regarding the BC guidance to contract negotiations offered in October. Tom Solon inquired about the process used to determine the guidance percentage for the HEA contract as the recommended percentage is exceeded by normal step table movement. Darlene explained that the BC guidance was based on a 5-year average. Tom S. also requested clarification on the BC's position on Sanbornization. Tom Enright provided input about binding future taxpayers to items of a significant nature like a teacher's contract. Discussion continued.

Darlene thanked the Cooperative School Board for their participation. The School Board adjourned.

Dave motioned to adjourn, seconded by Tom Enright at 9p. Motion carried 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Raul Blanche and Darlene Mann