

**BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD
DECEMBER 21, 2022
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Brookline School Board was conducted on Wednesday, December 21, 2022 at 6:08 p.m. at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.

Kenneth Haag, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present: Karen Jew, Vice Chairman
 Colleen Micavich, Secretary
 Alison Marsano

Members of the Board Absent: Kelly Zakar

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
 Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
 Donna Smith, Assistant Business Administrator
 Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS - None

CORRESPONDENCE / RESIGNATIONS / RETIREMENTS / NOMINATIONS

Superintendent Corey thanked the Board for participating in the tour of the Richard Maghakian Memorial School (RMMS) renovation project.

The new boiler for the basement/library area has been installed, the electrical work has all been updated and the process of wall boarding is taking place. The hope is a completion date of the Friday before February break so that time can be used to move in to have the facilities ready for use at the start of March.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jt. Mtg. Brookline School Board / Finance Cmte [November 30, 2022](#)

The following amendments were offered:

Page 5, Line 12; replace “session” with “second”
Page 9, Line 14; “piece” should be plural

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO
MOTION CARRIED**

2-0-2

Members Jew and Marsano Abstained

PUBLIC INPUT

Chairman Haag opened the floor for public input at 6:10 p.m.

Chairman Haag noted the period for public input would remain open until 6:40 should any members of the public arrive and wish to provide input.

PRINCIPALS' REPORT

Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy (CSDA), highlighted items from the report provided as part of the [agenda](#) packet.

Noted were enrollment numbers that remain steady; RMMS 330 and CSDA 254.

RMMS recently conducted the Heritage Project, which is a culmination of research done by students on the culture of their families. The project concluded with an international breakfast.

A highlighted recent event at CSDA was the Turkey Trot.

DISCUSSION

- FY23 Revenue and Expense Update

As of 12-12-22, the expense side of the ledger (expended and encumbered) shows a negative balance of \$198,625. The primary area of overage is in special education unanticipated contracted services. On the revenue side, the anticipated balance is \$23,447. The result is an overall negative balance of \$175,178. The budget has been frozen. The hope is that additional funds can be unencumbered as we go through the year.

Superintendent Corey noted there remain unfilled positions for which monies are encumbered (special education administrator and I.T. support). The current situation resembles that which existed last year at this time after which the district was able to remove encumbrances to put the budget back in a positive direction.

The Unreserved Fund Balance (UFB) is not encumbered and would be available as we move further into the fiscal year, if needed. With the UFB, Special Education Trust and other pieces, the Business Administrator is of the belief the budget will work out and is monitoring it closely.

Chairman Haag noted funds expended and encumbered for ADA Projects/Temporary Storage and questioned if that project is mostly complete. Superintendent Corey stated that cost to be associated with ADA requirements and includes items such as the new curb cut for handicapped accessibility in the front of the building, work to the playground, a playground swing that is available to students of all levels of ability, etc.

- Special Education Trust

The current balance in the Special Education trust is \$225,000. Most of the district's unanticipated expenses are in the area of special education. If we move further into the year and those balances remain current, the Administration will recommend the Board conduct a public hearing to consider utilizing funding from the trust. The Business Administrator would identify what she believes to be the appropriate amount, and the Board would be asked to approve an "up to" amount in the event it is needed. To have that on record in the January/February timeframe is good practice for the district and viewed favorably by the auditors. A decision on whether or not the funds were needed would not be made until reaching the point of readying to close the books. The district tends to look first at the UFB and whether there is anything within the budget that could qualify for utilizing the Maintenance Trust as well as any unencumbered funds.

- FY24 Budget Discussion
 - FY24 Draft Budget
 - First Review FY24 Default Budget
 - Attorney's Email on the Tax Cap Calculation; follow-up from attendance at November meeting

At the last meeting, the Board discussed the two Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Paraprofessional positions. There have been two in the budget, which the district has been unable to fill. Rather than put two new positions in the budget for special education paraprofessionals, those positions were swapped with the MTSS positions.

With that change, the proposed operating budget shows an increase of \$758,103 or 7.20% over the current budget. The budget, as proposed, would be within the tax cap.

Attorney O'Shaughnessy has provided a communication as a follow-up to the information provided the Board at the last meeting (attached to the agenda). Outlined in his communication is that the operating budget is what the tax cap is controlling. Special warrant articles such as the teachers' contract, special education trust, etc. are not part of that calculation.

Chairman Haag asked for clarification the teachers' contract being a special warrant article this year would not fall within the tax cap this year but would next year as part of the operating budget.

Superintendent Corey stated that to be correct; it would be the portion of the cost for year two of the contract that would be included as part of the operating budget. Should the Board bring forth a sanbornized contract, each year is segmented into that year's budget. If it is sanbornized then it would be a contractual agreement and would mean it would appear both in the operating and default budgets.

If the voters passed all of the warrant articles for which a cost is currently identified, the result would be a budget increase (over the prior year's approved budget) of \$877,086 or 7.95%.

Noted were special education increases in the amount of \$299,640 (mandated costs).

Chairman Haag commented that number is higher than the delta between the proposed operating budget and the default budget.

In regard to the new items list, the only changes since the last review are the para positions noted.

Superintendent Corey noted the default budget detail provided. The delta between the proposed operating budget and the default budget is \$157,572.97 or 1.4%. The bulk of that is the \$110,000 that is in the budget for the Curriculum Administrator position, which both the Board and Finance Committee have supported.

If looking to identify the other \$47,000, the Administration would look to remove staff laptops at both schools (one-time purchase), power supplies at each school, the mentoring in both buildings, the audiometer, laminator replacement, and classroom flooring.

If the voters passed the default budget, the Administration would come back to the Board. The decision of how to spend the bottom line number is the decision of the Board. Although the Superintendent is making recommendations, the Board may decide that staff laptops should be purchased and the mentoring program continue, which would result in reductions being made in other areas. Superintendent Corey noted the largest piece the district could not afford to do if the budget did not pass, is the administrative position. It may be that a

portion of the cost could be identified to allow the district to do something similar to this year and have a part-time person come in.

The default budget is projected at \$11,752,794.44 and the FY24 proposed budget \$11,909,641.00. The difference is \$157,572.97 or a 1.4% increase.

To assist the Board in understanding the mechanics of the default budget, included with the agenda packet is a breakdown of the budget by accounting range. The largest pieces, under special education, are the \$92,260 for required paraprofessional services or services to support a child's IEP, \$10,295 for contracted services and \$202,020.58 for out-of-district tuition/services. When able to get a new special education administrator on board, the direction of the Director of Special Education is to develop more in-house programming so that students receive our education and are not on a school bus during the day to attend an out-of-district placement, and cost avoidance. There would be more services and costs in the building, but that \$200,000 could easily represent 2-3 staff members on a CBA schedule.

Other large increases include health insurance (4.1% Guaranteed Maximum Rate of increase), the New Hampshire Retirement System cost (up \$36,400.84), and the retirement benefit (\$43,428.60); contractual obligation the district has to staff members who are retiring. Those two areas demonstrate the difference between the default and operating budget.

In terms of one-time expenses that are removed, identified are the FY23 teacher lane changes (\$35,538.00 less in lane changes next year over the current year) and FY23 maintenance expense (\$20,200.00).

Clarified was the \$43,428.60 retirement benefit is the one-time expense for this year for those who provide the Board with a letter of intent to retire by December 1st. Next year, if no one retires, that entire amount is removed.

The default summary provides a line item by line item explanation.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the 2022-2023 school calendar

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO AUTHORIZE THE SUPERINTENDENT TO ADJUST THE SCHOOL CALENDAR SO THAT STUDENTS AND STAFF RETURN FROM THE DECEMBER BREAK ON JANUARY 3, 2023

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO

ON THE QUESTION

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the calendars of other districts have been changing throughout the fall resulting in a level of concern with staffing on January 2nd. The New Year's holiday is recognized by the district the Friday before. The Administration has received approval to permit the Superintendent to authorize the switch in the other two districts and is seeking the same from the Brookline district. The day would be made up at the end of the year.

MOTION CARRIED

4-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding including warrant articles for the maintenance trust and special education trust

Superintendent Corey commented in reviewing the current Expense & Revenue Report, a concern raised is that the district typically utilizes the UFB to fund the Maintenance and Special Education Trusts. As it is uncertain if that will be possible this year, legal counsel was consulted and has advised of the ability to put forth a combination article that addresses the possibility of utilizing unreserved funds, if available, and if unavailable the articles can be proposed as tax articles (would be raising and appropriating, through taxes, the amounts requested to fund the trusts).

The Board was asked to take a position on considering those type of articles during the Public Hearing. Once public input is received, the Board could decide how to move forward.

The public input period was declared closed at 6:40 p.m.

Member Marsano spoke of having reservations given the typical debate over passing those articles. She questioned if there is the possibility of splitting it into two separate articles; funding through taxation versus through the use of UFB. Superintendent Corey responded the way the article(s) would have to be worded would be to indicate if the UFB existed, those funds would be utilized to offset the requested amount (assuming the entirety of the amount is not available) with the remaining balance being raised through taxation. Asked if any sort of hearing would have to be held, Superintendent Corey stated that is the information that would be decided following the public hearing on January 11th.

Chairman Haag remarked he is open to the language. He questioned the current balance of the UFB and was told it is \$140,000 (came over from last year). If that is unspent it continues over to the next year. However, should that have to be utilized for special education or another area, the balance could be less.

Superintendent Corey commented on there being approx. \$155,000 in identified maintenance items. If the available allocation were in the area of \$75,000, decisions would be made on what could be addressed. Noted was that the budget is 18 months out and some of the special education costs could increase or decrease.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug spoke of items currently slated for the Maintenance Trust; Phase II (4) replacement tables for cafeteria at RMMS, end of life burglar alarm at RMMS, updated wiring at RMMS, end of life access points for RMMS, fire panel at CSDA (has been put off for a few years already), and Phase II (3) replacement exterior doors and exterior lighting at CSDA, etc. The real challenge to identify would be the cost of the fire panel at CSDA (\$100,000).

Superintendent Corey noted the Board could decide to address the fire panel as a separate warrant article. However, should the article not pass, that work could not be done.

Noted was that all monies remaining in trusts, with the exception of the Special Education Trust, are returned to the tax base at year end, if not utilized.

Superintendent Corey stated with the UFB, each August the Administration comes before the Board with a communication from the Business Administrator as to the amount that should be retained, if funding is available at year end.

Member Micavich asked for additional clarification. Superintendent Corey stated the UFB exists and is controlled by the Board. The requirement is to conduct a public hearing to expend.

Over and above the UFB, there is typically surplus at year end that is then used to offset the allocations requested through the warrant articles (articles are funded in the order they appear on the warrant, if funds are available and up to the amount available). The concern this year is that there may not be enough surplus to offset those articles.

Member Marsano questioned and was told, during the Deliberative Session, the Legislative body (voters) cannot change the amounts associated with the teachers' contract, but that is not the case with the other articles.

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO INCLUDE IN THE WARRANT, ARTICLES FOR ALLOCATIONS TO THE MAINTENANCE TRUST AND THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TRUST, WHICH THE BOARD WILL REVIEW AT THE NEXT MEETING

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW

MOTION CARRIED

4-0-0

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3, II (a) THE DISMISSAL, PROMOTION OR COMPENSATION OF ANY PUBLIC EMPLOYEE AND (c) TO DISCUSS A MATTER, WHICH IF DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC, WOULD LIKELY AFFECT ADVERSELY THE REPUTATION OF A PERSON, OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE BODY OR AGENCY ITSELF

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alison Marsano, Colleen Micavich, Karen Jew, Kenneth Haag

4

Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

The Board went into non-public session at 6:50 p.m.

The Board came out of non-public session at 7:14 p.m.

MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, SEAL THE MINUTES OF THE NON-PUBLIC SESSION TO BE REVIEWED AT THE NEXT MEETING

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER JEW

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Kenneth Haag, Karen Jew, Alison Marsano, Colleen Micavich

4

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ADJOURN
SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO
MOTION CARRIED
4-0-0**

The December 21, 2022 meeting of the Brookline School Board was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Date _____

Signed _____