

MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Special School Committee Meeting

Virtual

Thursday, July 15, 2021

Committee Present:

Sean Nicholson, Vikki Ludwigson, Kerry Laurence, Phil DeZutter, Erick Brown, Dorothy Scally

Administration Present:

Joseph Maruszczak, Superintendent of Schools

Maureen Cohen, Assistant Superintendent

Jay Byer, Business/Finance

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by KerriyLaurence.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: On a motion of Sean Nicholson, seconded by Phil DeZutter, to approve the agenda.

VOTED:

Sean Nicholson, yes

Vikki Ludwigson, yes

Kerry Laurence, yes

Phil DeZutter, yes

Sean Nicholson, yes

Erick Brown, yes

II. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion Regarding FY2022 MURSD Operational Budget

Discussion regarding Mendon Selectboard, Sean Nicholson stated Selectboard wants School Committee to determine an amount needed for the school budget. The Town is not 'splitting' their 2 1/2 and new growth and he does not believe they are bargaining in good faith. Sean Nicholson believes the School Committee should determine a budget amount.

Jay Byer added Mendon is waiting for a new number from School Committee before they begin to calculate how to fund the new budget amount. If Mendon does not feel they can fund the new amount with a Special Town Meeting, then School Committee will need to move forward with Joint Town Meeting.

Phil DeZutter stated School Committee should move forward with a school budget amount to present at Joint Town Meeting.

Jay Byer stated there is a willingness in Mendon to fund and can fund \$150,000 without making any cuts. If the amount is higher than \$150,000 then Selectboard will need to determine what cuts will be needed. Jay stated he does not feel the School Committee wants to decimate Town Services.

Phil DeZutter stated to begin to move forward with the School Budget to determine what the amount is.

Selectboard Chair Mark Reil stated the meeting last night was to see if the Selectboard agreed to make budget cuts to fund the school budget. There is a willingness to compromise and avoid a Joint Town Meeting.

Dr. Maruszczak where the School Committee stands today:

- Established a Joint Town Meeting for August 7
- Legal opinion on the imperative to go to Joint Town Meeting and/or broker a compromise with the Town of Mendon.

Dr. Maruszczak presented updated budget number. He noted the final budget from the State showed more funds in transportation than was originally budgeted. Dr. Maruszczak also noted there were many grants available and Dr. Cohen was able to quick apply and granted an additional \$100,000 grant. District was planning on this amount out of the operations budget to assist with learning loss.

A potential recertification model:

With application of additional regional transportation funding would result in an assessment to Mendon of \$721,260 and to Upton of \$1,384,190. If there is an additional \$900,000 in cuts would further reduce the assessment to Mendon of \$320,593 and to Upton of \$881,038.

\$900,000 cut to certified budget would include the following:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| • Summer School Expansion Grant | \$100,000 |
| • SpEd/Transportation Savings | \$150,000 |
| • Application of Previous Grants | \$ 90,000 |
| • Application of ESSER3 | \$230,000 |
| • Non-Staff Cuts | \$ 61,500 |
| Total | \$631,500 |

Thus, a total of \$268,500 of additional cuts would be needed.

Much of the gap would be filled with one time money of grant monies and will start the FY23 budget with a structural deficit and a collaborative approach will be needed with both Towns.

School Committee needs a resolution quickly. Sean Nicholson recommends for the Committee to digest the amounts and schedule a meeting next week to recertify the budget.

Vikki Ludwigson is asking what the \$268,500 cuts would look like. Dr. Maruszczak commented this would be discussed at the next meeting. Leadership team will need to review ideas before presented to School Committee. These cuts would be easier to make vs the current \$2.1 cuts already made. He noted the critical positions with mental health coming out of the pandemic and some priorities may change.

Selectboard Mark Reil commented the timing of the Joint Town Meeting conflicts with planning a Special Town Meeting and may need to be delayed. He personally feels the amount of \$320,593 is a good place to start. Selectboard is prepared to meet as quickly as possible after School Committee recertify the budget.

Dr. Cohen stated the leadership will work quickly to get a picture of the cuts and the School Committee can meet early in the week.

Discussion of the timing of the meetings to ensure resolution as quickly as possible.

III. Other Matters Not Anticipated by The Committee Within 48 Hours of The Posted Meeting

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: On motion of Kerry Laurence, seconded by Sean Nicholson to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, section 21(a), exemption #2, to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (the Interim Superintendent of Schools). (The Committee will not return to open session.)

VOTED:

Sean Nicholson, yes
Vikki Ludwigson, yes
Kerry Laurence, yes
Phil DeZutter, yes
Erick Brown, yes
Dorothy Scally, yes

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.
Minutes by Kelly McElreath