

SCHOOL BOARD NEWS

May 6, 2019

BUDGET:

On Wednesday, April 24th, the School Board presented the CESD FY20 budget to the Town Council with an emphasis on process. In particular, the highly collaborative nature of this year's budget process required input from many and spread across a long period of time. In fact, this year it not only started much earlier, but also included a much larger number of people.

At the end of last year's budget cycle both the School Board and the Town Council stated a wish to begin a dialogue on how to improve the overall budget process. Indeed, both groups engaged in joint workshops throughout the Fall of 2018 that fostered communication and a trusting relationship by exchanging ideas and sharing perspectives. Stemming from these workshops was the creation of a new, joint subcommittee made up of both Chairs & Finance Chairs, the Superintendent, Town Manager, and Business Manager. To date, this subcommittee has met three times and plans to continue holding meetings on an ongoing basis. It is without a doubt that the joint effort by the Town Council and School Board to collaborate has made a positive impact and that it will continue to make our town more cohesive and our schools better off. This year alone, both the Town and CESD will be see significant cost savings by combining facilities' projects and grouping leasing plans for various vehicles.

Included in the FY20 budget is a proposed Needs Assessment Facilities Study by Colby Company & Engineers. Much attention was devoted to a similar proposal during last year's budget, but was ultimately removed — in part — because there was a wish to involve a larger circle of stakeholders. As a result, the School Board launched a renewed effort to improve the school's facilities at the beginning of the Fall by forming a Committee composed of a broad scope of stakeholders. In all, there were over 45 people on the committee — including the Town Manager, and two Town Councilors.

As explained in prior updates, this committee met on four different occasions to gather information and firsthand knowledge of the challenges the schools face. The process was thorough, transparent, and informative. As a result, the entire Town Council was able to follow the findings of the committee; understand the School Board's conclusion to include the Needs Assessment Study in the budget; and ultimately, arrive at the April 24th meeting with clear support.

Further collaborative efforts were highlighted by Dr. Wolfrom, who praised the Administrators for working as a team of *one* district — rather than making decisions based on individual

buildings and/or departments. For example, when the School Board asked that the original request budget be reduced by 2%, it was essential that the Administrators approached this together and as a whole. Dr. Wolfrom also commented that the School Board's process of sending budget questions to the Administrators in advance of budget workshops was not only new to her, but also very helpful to the district.

New to the both the Superintendent and School Board was a suggestion made by Town Councilor, Valerie Randall, that the Board consider sharing these same questions with the Town Council. The School Board realized the value in sharing the questions and agreed to do so. As a result, the Town Council was kept abreast of the deep level of questioning between the School Board and Administrators and arrived well informed for the April 24th meeting. This allowed for a very concise and highly cordial presentation — and proof that the joint efforts by Town Council and School Board to improve the budget process were significant.

Up next, the Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, May 6th and then on May 13th, the Town Council will vote on both the Municipal and School budgets. While the School Board expects that the FY20 budget will be approved by the Town Council, we encourage citizens to communicate their own support directly — either at the Public Hearing or in writing the [Town Council](#) in advance of the May 13th meeting.

The final opportunity for collaboration will come on Tuesday, June 11th with the Cape Elizabeth Citizens Referendum. The School Board hopes that voter turnout will be high and welcomes all comments or questions prior to the vote.

FUTURE DATES:

Monday, May 6th, Town Council Public Hearing on Municipal and School Board Budgets, at 7PM, Town Hall Chambers

Monday, May 13th, Town Council Vote on Municipal & School Board Budgets, at 7PM, Town Hall Chambers.

Tuesday, May 14th, Regular School Board Business Meeting, at 6:30PM - 8:30PM, Town Hall Chambers.

Tuesday, May 28th, School Board Workshop, Food Accessibility, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, CEHS Library.