

MENDON-UPTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Multi-Board Meeting
School Committee Meeting
Virtual Meeting
Thursday, April 30, 2020

Committee Present:

Leigh Martin, Sean Nicholson, Phil DeZutter, Vikki Ludwigson, Kerry Laurence

Administration Present:

Joseph Maruszczak, Superintendent of Schools
Maureen Cohen, Assistant Superintendent
Jay Byer, Business/Finance

Mendon Board of Selectmen, Upton Board of Selectmen, Mendon Finance Committee,
Upton Finance Committee, Mendon Town Administrator, Upton Town Manager.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Sean Nicholson.

Chair Nicholson read the following statement: *Consistent with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law MGL Ch. 30A, S. 20 and Regulation 940 CMR 29.10, which allows for remote participation in certain circumstances under the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law Regulations, the Mendon-Upton Regional School Committee will be conducting this meeting remotely. In this particular case, all six members of the Committee are participating remotely and virtually through videoconferencing. This is consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 10, 2020, which eased the requirements of having a meeting in a physical space open to the public and having a quorum of the Committee physically present. Any and all votes will be conducted by roll-call votes. Per usual, this meeting will also be livestreamed and recorded.*

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES

Approval of Agenda

Roll call vote by Chair of Committees to approve Agenda

II. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of MURSD FY2021 Budget

Dr. Maruszczak presented a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights follows:

- Challenging times for everyone
- Last few weeks, District has been reviewing budget possibilities
- On March 9, School Committee passed budget to align with strategic plan
- At this point, MURSD is cognizant of a large override at this time
- District wants the best for the students; Looking at what can be done with the budget for survival and to keep in place what district currently has for students
- Certified \$38,961,160 for 2,546,401 increase (7%)
- There is consideration of \$37,133,486 an increase of \$718,727 (1.97%) to provide level services for all students
- Potential savings include supplies, heat, snow removal, subs, maintenance OT, workers comp & unemployment, athletic transportation, misc accounts and

potential of regular and SpEd transportation savings due to renegotiations for this FY and freeze the rate for FY21 and possible FY22.

- Reductions in FY21- eliminate proposed new positions (4.0 FTE); all supplies level funded; no tech refresh; regular transportation in negotiation; increase school choice appropriation; salary/COLA for all employees-reflective of crisis (expectation of a 1 year rollover vs a full negotiation session for a new 3 year contract); utilize savings from FY20 to offset FY21
- Assumptions – Chapter 70 and Reg Transportation will be level to FY20
- Local operation assessment: Mendon \$10,197,621 (decrease of \$773,214); Upton \$12,223,378 (decrease of \$969,436) for a recertified budget (excluding debt)
- Still many variables but this starts the conversation; important to have and be transparent to continue the best possible education but cognizant of the current crisis.
- Next School Committee meeting will have more of the details.

III. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

After the presentation, Sean Nicholson asked for comments:

Derek Brindisi– override of \$200,000 is more palpable in comparison. Municipal budget anticipated to be adjusted in November for State Aid. Upton has strong stabilization and free cash so feasible to ‘weather the storm’. Upton included the additional monies for BVT in the override. Need consultation with BOS to determine funding sources.

Paul Flaherty – MMA is anticipating budgets not certified until November.

Mendon Finance Committee new override is \$120 on average increase for Mendon taxpayers and will need plan to adjust once the voters have the chance to vote

Steve Matellian – too early to tell what impact COVID-19 will have on our finances. Looking to see how taxpayers are adjusting to the current crisis.

Derek Brindisi – recommending to decrease the ballot question to the new amount. BOS will be reviewing dates for Town Meeting and Town Elections on Tuesday.

Mendon Town meeting is scheduled for June 1 and election is June 9. Notified to vote by mail for the election. Limited Town Meeting with social distancing due to no quorum required.

Mendon Finance Committee meeting next Wednesday. Looking to maintain the dates so know by mid-June what voters are thinking.

Kim Newman want to support school and see if there is any room for the amount and it will probably need an override. Concerned about having Town meeting in June at this point.

Jay Byer asked what is the bottom amount for the schools. Kim Newman is stating the original number is good and looking to pass budget as submitted. Derek Brindisi is looking to pass budget as submitted. Any decisions made in May 2020 will have consequences in May 2021. Need to be mindful of any cuts in May 2020 since cuts will probably be made in November. Derek Brindisi feels comfortable with the original amount of \$300,000.

Jay Byer asked if Towns are realizing any savings: Derek Brindisi states we are not seeing any savings at this point. Small savings in energy cost for library, all other buildings have been opened. Mendon is in similar situation.

Paul Flaherty, we do not want to 'lay off' employees due to only saving 2/3 of salaries due to unemployment. Financial impact for the next couple of years. Jay agrees and concerned that if school can survive FY2021, what the impact could be for Fy2022.

Mendon Finance Committee Heather Hallcock – Jay Byer lots will need to happen to ensure Fy2021 will happen as anticipated. Thus, many unknowns for Fy2022.

Upton is monitoring unemployment numbers for the town. Monies have been appropriated for individuals in need however there has only been 6-10 people looking for assistance. Thus, at this point we are not seeing a true need.

Mendon- it was commented there are residents 'underemployed'

Upton deadline date for ballots – need to print new ballots.

Jay Byer reiterated an override is a good possibility for FY2022. Mendon Finance Committee concerned about override for 2 years in a row.

Brett Simas is looking for strategy to allow best options to support the school. Is there a possibility of taking funds from stabilization?

Dr. Maruszczak – more work is needed to be done to accomplish what is being proposed. Making a decision of what is reasonable given the state of the economy. This could be worse than 2008/9/10 but looking to keep the status quo.

Next steps: School Committee will need a new certified budget – need to post a School Committee meeting to recertify the budget at a different amount. Budget will be posted to website once determined.

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

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: On motion of Phil DeZutter, Sean Nicholson seconded by to adjourn

VOTED:

Phil DeZutter, yes

Sean Nicholson, yes

Leigh Martin, yes

Vikki Ludwigson, yes

Kerry Laurence, yes

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.
Minutes by Kelly McElreath