

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET HEARINGS - PROPOSED BUDGET FY2019-2020
FEBRUARY 19, 2019**

The Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Monday, February 19, 2019 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Chairman Lema announced the Board was out of recess and reconvened the budget deliberations meeting in public session at 5:35 p.m.

Board Members Present

Brian Lema
Scott Moulton
Lauren Ranges
Joseph Castignoli
Joseph Fitzpatrick

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
Peter Erodicti

Chairman Lema welcomed everyone and stated tonight the Board of Education would be presenting their budget. Chairman Lema provided a brief explanation as to how the Board of Education budget would be reviewed.

Susan Glennon, Chairman Board of Education thanked the Board for the opportunity to share the Board of Education Budget. She Read from a prepared statement. Ms. Glennon recognized Board of Education member Claire Casey as also being present. She discussed the selection process for a new superintendent last year. She discussed the challenges of rising costs and that the budget was develop with sensitivity in mind.

Dr. Ana Cutaia, Superintendent Board of Education introduced herself and Assistant Superintendent Amy Fedigan. She thanked the Board members for their time and discussed how being new in her role she had focused on entry planning. Dr. Cutaia provided information on how she spoke with students, parent, teachers, administrators and other in the course of developing the budget. She believes the budget has been developed by many voices. She discussed how she had heard from many parents and they are pleased with what the schools and are looking forward for what is next. Dr. Cutaia state it is her belief the budget sustains the great history of excellence while taking the next step. She stated that the proposed budget represents a 1.89% increase and that 77.9% is due to contractual wages and benefits and the rising costs for retirees. Dr. Cutaia discussed Budget Recap and Summary of System Improvements and Savings handout. She discussed world language in elementary schools, a pilot program offering junior an interview experience through Ace my Interview in order to prepare for college or career and adding a fitness room at Harborside. She also discussed multi-year planning for large projects. Dr. Cutaia stated that starting tomorrow they would be rolling out one on one Chromebooks starting with grades 5-9, and next year it would be 3-12. She further explained there is no additional cost for this program as they are using the current lease and devices.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the Chromebooks would be only grades 5-9. Dr. Cutaia explained they are being rolled out to 5-9 this and 3-12 next year. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked next year it would also be one on one. Dr. Cutaia stated it would. She also stated that K-2 would not be one on one at this time. They are still researching this for younger children. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they would be taken home and if insurance would be offered. Dr. Cutaia stated they could be taken home and insurance will be offered. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about insurance programs for families that could not afford to purchase insurance. Dr. Cutaia stated there are programs and resources for such families. She also stated that many repairs can be done inhouse except for excessive damage.

D. Cutaia discussed pathways and how they are strengthening pathways in robotics and robotics 2 courses. She also discussed smart boards and interactive usage. Dr. Cutaia stated the budget proposes a full-time security guard at the Academy. She also discussed how they are looking to revamp the college and career centers to be conducive to how students learn today. Dr. Cutaia discussed the offering a new after school sports clinic to middle school students. She stated the clinics would allow students to explore various sports without the stress of trying out for a team. Dr. Cutaia discussed how they looking for savings and efficiencies throughout the budget.

Mr. Moulton asked why girls' hockey was highlighted. Mr. Richetelli stated that girls' hockey is different for other sports as it is a co-op team with Notre Dame Fairfield and Weston High School. He also stated that this supplement certain parts of the fees paid by the team members. Ms. Glennon stated the last year the investment was increased in the girls' hockey team and there are 4 additional team members. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for the contribution to the boy's team. Ms. Glennon stated it is the same for both teams. Mr. Richetelli stated the commitment for participation is \$200 per member. Mr. Fitzpatrick stated they Board of Education should research what other towns are paying.

Mr. Fitzpatrick stated he would like to see mandatory insurance on Chromebooks. He also stated that he is against robotics. He has talked to other schools and they compete throughout the country. He does not understand the worth of the program. Dr. Cutaia stated she knows what he is talking about and those are two Milford based teams, but through the Board of Education. The robotics in the budget is part of the curriculum and is a course offered at the high school level that can used for graduation requirements. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if we are spending money in this are now. Ms. Glennon stated that this program has been in the schools for several years. Dr. Cutaia invited Mr. Fitzpatrick to take a tour with her to see what the program is about.

Mr. Fitzpatrick stated he felt an additional security guard at Academy for 60 students at a cost of \$28,000 or more is an over expenditure. Mr. Richetelli stated that the SRO's are at the 2 high schools and 3 middle schools with time allotted to the Academy. He further stated that the SRO's spend a very small percentage of time at the Academy. Mr. Richetelli state that he Board and the Police Department both agree there is a need at the Academy for additional security. He also discussed that the Academy is next on the list for hardened vestibules. Mr. Fitzpatrick reiterated that the Academy has 60

students out of 5700 district wide. Mr. Richetelli stated that currently there are greeters at the front doors of the elementary schools and security guards at the middle and high schools. He discussed the importance of mitigating threats at the front door. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there had been complaints by the police department. Mr. Richetelli stated there had not, but there is a need for full time security at the Academy just as at the other schools. Ms. Glennon stated security is not just for the children, but also for adults and to mitigate outside threats.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the change in certified positions. Mr. Richetelli provided an explanation as to what to what accounts were impacted. He explained there are 3 less regular education teachers. Mr. Castignoli asked about the 3.4 reduction in non-certified positions. Mr. Richetelli reviewed how the reduction ties back to the accounts. He also noted that it is offset by a certified occupational. Mr. Castignoli asked if this is fulltime. Mr. Richetelli it is for the full year. Mr. Moulton asked about substitutes. Mr. Richetelli discussed how substitute expenses have decreased.

Chairman Leman inquired as to enrollment and current trends. Dr. Cutaia stated the numbers appear be going down, but not as steep as had been predicted or as in the past. Mr. Richetelli stated the numbers are going down at a slower rate but continue to decrease. Ms. Glennon discussed how the numbers are now working their way through the higher grades.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the Academy had tripled. Mr. Richetelli discussed how the numbers can fluctuate throughout the year. He stated that the Academy may begin the school year with 60-65 students and can increase to 80-85 during the year. Mr. Richetelli stated that the Academy is equipped for approximately 100 students. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked were the behaviorist is reflected in the budget. Mr. Richetelli stated under special education and one is under account 1129. Mr. Richetelli discussed how they had posted for the position last year and it was difficult to find candidates with a teacher certification, however, they were able to find a teacher with a behaviorist certification, so they are moving one position from 1129 back to special education. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they are still looking to fill positions. Mr. Richetelli stated they are currently full.

Mr. Castignoli asked Mr. Richetelli to walk him through the increases. Mr. Richetelli reviewed how increases were applied. Chairman Lema asked if a guidance counselor had been eliminated as he sees a decrease. Dr. Cutaia stated the decrease is because of turnover and a new employee being hired at a lower step.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the principal's salary at the Academy. Dr. Cutaia stated it is the same for all principals as they are part of bargaining unit. Mr. Richetelli explained the evening programs offered at the Academy and the principal's responsibility for those programs. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked who is accountable for those programs. Mr. Richetelli directed Mr. Fitzpatrick to the homebound program in account 1112. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many attend the program. Dr. Cutaia stated the number can fluctuate for many reasons such as illness and behavior. Dr. Cutaia stated there are many afternoon

programs offered at the Academy and the principal is responsible for their oversight. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the programs are for problem children. Dr. Cutaia stated the programs are for any child with special need such as social, behavior or just some children need additional programs and this is where they would get those programs.

Mr. Castignoli asked about energy saving programs. Mr. Richetelli stated the funds in account 4104 are used for LED conversion and the funds are leveraged with incentives. Ms. Ranges asked how many schools have solar. Mr. Richetelli stated that once finished with installation there will be 13 schools. He stated that 6 schools are completed, 5 more will be done this coming summer and Foran will be done once the roof is completed. Chairman Lema asked if it will show as a savings. Mr. Richetelli stated eventually it will, but they were conservative in the budget as the first school went online in October so there is no history to base savings on at this point. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there is still an individual who work on energy savings. Mr. Richetelli stated that position is in account 1129, non-union, energy specialist. Ms. Glennon discussed how personnel is utilized to maintain the energy savings programs.

Mr. Castignoli asked how much of a surplus was realized from last year. Mr. Richetelli state the overall surplus was \$997,000. Mr. Castignoli asked for a breakdown. Mr. Richetelli stated he did not have that information on hand, but would provide it to the Board.

1000 SERIES

Chairman Lema asked if there were any questions concerning the 1000 Series. Dr. Cutaia explained that the 1000 series covers all salaries for certified and non-certified employees.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for a breakdown of all schools 3.50 special education. Dr. Cutaia stated the central administration would the superintendent and assistant superintended, all schools pertains to all schools in the district and special education would be all schools throughout the district. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why TBD under teachers. Mr. Richetelli explained that students are placed based on need and it cannot be predicted where those teachers will be needed. He explained the overall number will remain the same. The distribution may change. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there were any unfilled teacher positions, Dr. Cutaia stated they are all filled. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many homebound students over a course of a year. Dr. Cutaia stated they did not have that number with them and would provide it to the Board.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked what is involved in curriculum work. Dr. Cutaia stated it is writing a new curriculum based on new standards.

Mr. Lema asked if new coaches or advisors have been added as the number has grown over the a few years. Mr. Richetelli stated he would check this information and get back to the Board. He stated that it is most likely due the contractual stipends and salaries

increasing. He stated that both athletic directors are certified teachers that receive stipends.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why summertime has the largest overtime expense. Mr. Richetelli stated it is from preparing the middle schools after construction. He explained how the schools need to be put back in shape and most of the custodial staff to get a school ready. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why it has increased \$20,000 for next year. Mr. Richetelli stated that is based on historical trends. Mr. Lema asked if there are any ongoing construction projects. Mr. Richetelli stated this summer will be vestibules, solar and roof at law the following summer. Chairman Lema asked if the middle schools are completed. Mr. Richetelli stated that all but Harborside are completed.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for an explanation of truancy and residency. Mr. Richetelli stated that a security and residency officer had been added approximately 2 years ago. He stated that this position has saved the district money. Mr. Glennon stated that the individual in this position investigates students that do not live in district.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for the number of cafeteria aids. Mr. Richetelli stated he would provide that number to the Board.

Chairman Lema noted reserve for salary negotiations. He asked how many contracts are currently in negotiations. Mr. Richetelli stated there are 4 open contracts and 3 will be retroactive for a full year. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why they are behind. Mr. Richetelli stated they are in mediation.

2000 SERIES.

Mr. Fitzpatrick note risking insurance costs. Mr. Richetelli stated they had looked at options and currently have a 3 year contract with one additional year without an increase. Ms. Glennon stated the workers' compensation had decreased and the Board received an award from CIRMA. Mr. Richetelli stated workers' compensation rates are staying level.

3000 SERIES

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the City pays for the audit services. Mayor Blake stated it is not grouped into the operating budget. He stated it is under educational expenses, but it not a Board of Education line item. Mr. Richetelli stated they pay a portion of the expense.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for an explanation of security systems. Mr. Richetelli stated it is for security systems. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about subteaching services. Ms. Glennon directed the Board to the explanation pages for each account in the budget book. Dr. Cutaia stated this account pays for interns and alleviates the need to substitutes. Mr. Castignoli asked if the interns are paid. Dr. Cutaia stated the students are not paid, but fees are paid to the universities.

4000 SERIES

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if it was expected to go over the amount allocated for electricity expenses. Mr. Richetelli stated they thought they would be okay with the amount budgeted. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the amount was higher than in the past. Mr. Richetelli stated it was because they had not been billed the full amount in the past for central administration and it is now back up to where it should be. He also stated the West Shore had a big jump with the new addition and central air conditioning.

Chairman Lema asked of the \$28,288 under building maintenance. Mr. Richetelli stated that was placed in all district and then will be assigned as spent. Mr. Lema commented that similar to teachers it had not yet been allocated between schools.

5000 SERIES

Mr. Castignoli asked if transportation costs are contractual. Mr. Richetelli stated they are in the third year of a 5-year contract with a 3% increase.

Mr. Fitzpatrick inquired about the gas account for buses. Mr. Richetelli explained this account is also for diesel. Mayor Blake stated a portion if paid for by Durham. Mr. Richetelli stated the amount is based upon the locked in price the City acquires through annual bidding. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the price has been locked in for the coming year. Mayor Blake stated the bid goes out in August. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if we can rebid. Mayor Blake stated it could only be rebid if price is not locked in and we would risk higher pricing. Mr. Fitzpatrick if the 19/20 budget is same as 18/19. Mr. Richetelli stated he forecast for 19/20 is based on gallons used and bid price. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for an explanation of non-public transportation. Mr. Richetelli stated that provide transportation for Laurelton Hall, St. Mary's and Christian Academy.

Mr. Castignoli asked if there is a grant from the State for special education tuition. Mr. Richetelli stated there is, but it is a complicated formula. Mayor Blake explained the cost of placement. Mr. Richetelli stated last year they received \$877,000. Mr. Castignoli asked how many students in the special education program. Mr. Richetelli stated for the 18/19 year there are 50 students. He explained this is for outplaced students and the cost is \$80,000 per student

Mr. Lema asked if there was any indication from Hartford on the education sharing. Mayor Blake stated he budget comes out tomorrow and will work its way through the general assembly. He stated that from an ECS standpoint there was discussing during the campaign that would be held harmless but here could be a reduction in reimbursements for school projects.

6000 SERIES

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if testing will be going down and if they are teaching to the testing. Dr. Cutaia stated it will not be going down and that it is now including science. She also stated that students are not being taught to the testing.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the library books are actual books. Dr. Cutaia stated there are still paper copies. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the schools are involved with electronic books. Dr. Cutaia stated there are digital devices that allows for ereading and it also available on the Chromebooks. Chairman Leman asked if the textbooks are print or on Chromebooks. Dr. Cutaia stated both depending on the course. She stated they need to be in line with the curriculum and she anticipate getting away from printed text books although they may be fewer.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked who provides physical exams. Mayor Blake explained Dr. Carlson is the physician for the Board of Education and City. He explained that part of the Health Department includes a stipend paid to Dr. Carlson a portion of which is paid by the City and Board of Education. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked who provides flu shots. Mr. Richetelli stated the Board of Education pays for the flus shot and they are then provided by the Health Department.

7000 SERIES

Mr. Fitzpatrick noted an increase from \$86,000 to \$133,000 for all school equipment. Mr. Richetelli explained the increase is for touch screen active panels. The next generation of smart boards will be outfitting science rooms in high schools. Ms. Glennon explained this expense is less than if replaced with current technology. High School science rooms need equipment replaced. New technology is less expensive.

8000 SERIES

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for a breakdown of athletics. Mr. Richetelli directed Mr. Fitzpatrick to page 41. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there are only 2 hockey coached. Mr. Richetelli stated that is correct.

Chairman Lema asked if there were any additional questions from the Board. Mr. Castignoli asked to be supplied with a breakdown of where the Board of Education would end up for this year. Mr. Richetelli stated it is difficult to do, but will provide a report. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if 30 robots are being purchased. Dr. Cutaia stated 15 for each high school. She explained that these are not competition robots and will provide Mr. Fitzpatrick with information on them.

Dr. Cutaia thanked the Board of Finance for the opportunity to review the budget this evening. Chairman Lema stated the meeting was in recess at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Toni Jo Weeks
Recording Secretary