

Plymouth School Committee

December 5, 2006

A meeting of the Plymouth School Committee was held on Tuesday, December 5, 2006, at Plymouth Community Intermediate School at 7:00 p.m.

Members present were Linda McAlduff, John White, Jane Freedman, Patricia Adelman, Nicole Manfredi, and Dennis Begley.

Present from Administration were Barry Haskell, Gary Maestas, Dr. Carol Young and Robert Gurek.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. McAlduff opened the meeting with an announcement that two-thirds of the preliminary budget hearings had been completed last evening and that tonight's meeting would pick up with Cost Center #59 DW Maintenance Department. Mr. Haskell invited Arthur Montrond to the table to talk about DW Maintenance.

Cost Center #59 – DW Maintenance Department

Arthur Montrond gave a breakdown of the \$1,591,279 budget recommended by the Superintendent, which is approximately 50% salaries; 11%-12% fixed costs; and 38% repair and maintenance services, supplies and materials. A brief discussion of increased and decreased items followed. Mr. Gurek distinguished the difference between cleaning and maintenance in that maintenance items often fall into the capital improvements budget.

Cost Center #54 – DW Coordinators' Services

Mr. Haskell invited Kathy Babini to the table. Mrs. Babini outlined the items contained in the budget covering salaries, leases, office supplies, travel within the district, and professional dues and fees.

Mr. Haskell invited the two high school principals, the vocational high school director, and the four coordinators to the table.

Cost Center #31 – Plymouth North High School

John Siever stated that he was presenting a relatively level-funded budget. He detailed small increases in the music department, self-study, physical science and physical education programs.

Cost Center #32 – Plymouth South High School

Patty Connors indicated that she too was presenting a level-service budget with minor increases in athletic lines and instructional technology.

Cost Center #33 – Plymouth South Vocational High School

Warren Valente presented the budget. Mr. Valente highlighted a sizable increase in professional development due to new Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) safety requirements and the need for vocational training, which involved transportation and lodging, to meet the requirements. A brief discussion on grant money and the Perkins Grant followed.

The presenters addressed additional questions regarding requests for additional teachers and instructors. Mr. Haskell asked the committee to consider that all Cost Centers would like to add staff and programming, address large class sizes, and have materials on hand. He emphasized that the enhanced budget shows the need is there, noting that the Superintendent's budget is an indicator of the resources available from the community to do so. Upon inquiry, no presenter indicated trouble recruiting and retaining teachers on the proposed budget.

Mr. Haskell invited the coordinators to speak on the high school program.

Kathy Babini discussed the social studies framework for world history and U.S. history, noting that the current 7th graders will be taking high stakes testing when they are juniors. She applauded the federal Teach American History Grant for providing professional development modules for teachers to enhance training in U.S. history.

Karen Backman discussed replacing the Algebra 2 text, math labs for at-risk Freshmen Academy students, subscriptions for Larsen Math Software for identification and remediation of weakness.

Lisa White stated that they are always looking at the frameworks and data, reviewing required reading and supplemental texts. She stated that the focus is on writing skills at the high school level, as well as SAT preparation.

Nick Micozzi reported that a lot is happening in high school science due to the new frameworks enacted last December. He highlighted the development of new frameworks and daily lesson plans for biology labs. Mr. Micozzi commented that teacher recruitment is difficult but retaining them is not.

Cost Center #37 – DW High School

Gary Maestas presented the budget noting that it is the high school component for the Advanced Readiness Learners Program (ARL) and includes after-school activities and stipend activities. A brief discussion of the social studies text and foreign language text followed.

Cost Center #36 – Regional Voc/Tech School Tuition

Robert Gurek presented the budget for Cost Center 36 that, as required under state law, provides tuition for youngsters who have an interest in agricultural school, not offered in the Plymouth Vocational/Technical program. Mrs. McAlduff

stated, for the viewing audience, that for seven students the Cost Center is \$147,170. Mr. Gurek added that, also under state law, the Town budgets for their transportation at a cost of \$80,000.

Cost Center #50 – DW Undistributed

Robert Gurek presented the budget and outlined slight increases in salary positions, attendance officer, pupil transportation, including escalation of gasoline prices, and maintenance. Mr. Maestas and Mr. Haskell discussed the function and purpose of the attendance officer who is licensed and mandated by the Department of Education.

Cost Center #55 – DW Central Administration Services

Mr. Haskell presented the components covered under the Cost Center and outlined expenses covered under the budget.

Cost Center #57 – DW Human Resources

Dr. Carol Young presented the components covered under the Cost Center. She pointed out a significant increase on line item 6 due to an increase in the annual license for the database. Other line item increases were discussed and attributed to administrative training, the new Administrative Mentoring Program, and the Commonwealth Leadership Program, as well as building rental for new Teacher Induction Program and the Substitutes On-Line Program.

Cost Center #58 – DW Business Services & Operations

Robert Gurek presented the budget indicating that other than the contingency for special education transportation, the budget is otherwise level funded.

A brief discussion of the terms level funded and level services followed.

Cost Center #61 – Energy Conservation and Education

Robert Gurek presented the budget and indicated that since inception, they have achieved well over a million dollars in cost avoidance. He pointed out that increases in the budget accounted for salaries and training, in light of the concerns over energy. A discussion of uses for '07 reserves held at the district-wide level followed.

Cost Center #71 – Charter Schools – Rising Tide

Robert Gurek presented the budget for transportation costs and highlighted a decrease due to a change in bus routes.

Cost Center #60 – DW Food Services

Robert Gurek announced that Plymouth has historically operated on a break-even basis with no expenditure in the budget, and using no taxpayer dollars.

Mr. VanCott presented the budget made up of lunch receipts and reimbursements from the state and federal government. He noted the two expenses being food and salaries. The budget is expected to break even again. A discussion of a la carte items followed.

Mr. Haskell made final comments about the budget and invited additional questions.

Mr. Haskell discussed the budget for Cost Center 35 – Alternative High School and Mr. Gurek discussed adjustments and the movement of funds to accommodate fluctuations and movement of staff from one cost center to another. Fred Sarke discussed the impediments to the World Language Program, if funded.

Mr. Haskell discussed head count and the prospects of hiring new full-time employees. Robert Sherman commented on the realm of special education, which increases the amount and cost of services for the school district. He commented on the ratio of special education to regular education students. He indicated that the numbers of special education students were not increasing, but severity is upping the cost factor. The average cost of educating regular and special education students was discussed. Mr. Gurek presented data on average cost for Plymouth and the State average.

Further discussion of enrollment and fixed costs followed. A discussion of the protocol of the December 18th meeting and voting on the budget followed. There was a discussion of funding for AP on-line courses at the high school level and goals to promote opportunities for learning in virtual programming.

Mr. Haskell outlined the Capital Outlay groupings and presented the total. He recommended not moving forward with any high school renovations until the Massachusetts School Building Authority (SBA) commits. Mr. Montrond discussed incomplete projects funded by capital outlay last year, as well as the prioritizing of projects. Mr. Haskell discussed SBA's process, protocol, and the bureaucracy. Mrs. Driscoll discussed E Rate. Mr. Montrond discussed the UNIVENT replacement.

Mr. Haskell indicated that there would be no vote on capital outlay at the December 18th meeting.

Motion by Mrs. Adelman, seconded by Mr. White to adjourn. Vote to adjourn was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary