

MINUTES  
MEETING OF THE BRAINTREE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Thursday February 25, 2016

6:00 PM

Colbert School

School Committee Present: Cyril Chafe/Thomas Devin/Lisa Fiske Heger/George Kokoros/Kate Naughton/David Ringius/Mayor Joseph Sullivan

Administration: Superintendent of Schools – Dr. Frank Hackett  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools – Ms. Jennifer Fay-Beers (Absent)  
Business Manager – Mr. Ed Cronin

Student Representative: Edmund Bousaleh, Erin McGinn, Sarah Murphy

Recorder: Mary Ann Cuddahy

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Fiske Heger called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm. Ms. Fiske Heger explained had to reschedule to tonight in order to have a quorum and that some members would need to leave the meeting early. We will move right into the Routine Matters.

II. ROUTINE MATTERS

A. Communications and Commendations:

- i. BPS All Town Choral Concert – East Middle School
- ii. Southeastern MA Schools Bandmasters Association Junior & Senior Musical Festivals – BHS Participants
- iii. Invitation to BPS Family Math Night – Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at Braintree Town Hall

III. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Consideration of Gifts to Schools

East Middle School

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Devin and seconded by Mr. Kokoros to accept as a gift to schools a check in the amount of \$503.92 from the East PTO to be used to support the work and vision of East Middle School.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

## South Middle School

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Ringius and seconded by Mr. Devin to accept as a gift to schools a check in the amount of \$863.33 from the South Media Center Account to be used towards supporting the mission/vision of South Middle School.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

## Liberty Elementary School

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Kokoros and seconded by Ms. Naughton to accept as a gift to schools a check in the amount of \$269.00 from the Liberty PTO to purchase a black and white laser printer for Liberty School.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/  
Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

## B. 2016-2017 Budget Overview (No Action)

Dr. Hackett explained that we have been implementing a new accounting software system with the town and through this process have been looking at where we need to put funds to be consistent with the lines. The Maintenance of Effort budget line item detail document was distributed and Mr. Cronin highlighted areas of accounting shifts and changes:

- Page 3 - "Move the Trainer budget to non-salary line" - Mr. Cronin explained that this is a company expense, that the school department hires an outside person and therefore he moved the expense to a non-salary line.
- Page 10 - Highlighted line shows the cost of the additional technician hired this school plus the proposed cost of a new technician position for the next school year
- Page 17 - Mr. Cronin explained that this is the first of some fairly large changes. He explained we moved the reading specialist and materials to the English department from the remedial section. Reading specialists come under the English and Reading Department and the reading specialist line item was moved there as well as the Math specialists being moved to the Math line item. The Remedial category will go away.
- Page 20 - Psychologists are not part of the Guidance Department but had been under there. They come under the Special Service Department and were moved to the Special Education line.
- Page 21 –Supplies were coded to Libraries and have now been moved to an actual supply account. This line had Health and Human Development in the Media Center Account. It was moved to the appropriate line and the proper account.
- Page 22 - Added an Additional 0.5 nurse for the High School Strives Program
- Page 26 – This is where when we did the MSKC budget and looked at the tuition based upon the enrollments that we have for next year. We should be taking in about \$700,000. Right now the FY16 budget had \$350,000 offset because of all of the classes added after the budget session last year. We have applied additional \$300,000 offset by the tuition as opposed to coming out of the operating budget.

- Page 30 - Math Specialist budget moved to the Math Department from the Remedial section. Remedial category will go away.
- Page 34 - Added a new physical education teacher at BHS
- Page 37 - Remedial section has nothing requested for next year because it will be removed. The entire Remedial section is being redistributed to English and Math.
- Page 43 - Additional BCBA added.
- Page 43 - Additional paraeducator for Strives program added
- Page 45 - Moved salary budgets for Psychologists into SPED from Guidance line, plus added an additional 0.2 FTE at MSKC
- Page 45 - Net increase of \$148,000 in projected special education tuition increases for FY17.
- Page 53 - "Moved the budget to a salary line". This reflects the costs of transportation Braintree students to in town private schools/programs. We have to report this separately to the DESE. This was under an expense line but it is a salary as we pay the bus drivers.
- Page 54 - Added 1.62 ELL teachers for this school year and 1 additional ELL teacher for the next school year.

Dr. Hackett explained that in the packet there is the blue book. The only difference is the first overview presentation. There have been some changes since it went home to members. Everything else, all the executive summaries of all the departments and schools have not and will not change. He explained the presentation overview and that he would go over the definitions, the overview of level service and maintenance of efforts budgets, as well as the overview of Priority Groups: I, II and III. He explained that this budget is a work in progress and that it will continue to be adjusted in terms of priorities. Numbers are approaching a good draft for adoption down the road.

#### Definitions:

#### REVENUES

- Chapter 70 State Aid - Money from the state that the Governor distributes and the Town, to date, puts directly to schools. At this time this figure is unknown.
- Local Aid With Additional Offsets - Dr. Hackett explained that the additional offsets are, for example, the kindergarten tuition, offset we use to covers the cost to hire staff for the kindergarten program

#### BUDGETS

- Level Service - what is needed to roll over to the next school year, everything we are doing currently and rolling forward, what is the cost for that.
- MOE (Maintenance of Effort) - This is Level Service plus what we are projecting the expenditures to be to meet our required obligations (sped, ELL, enrollment shifts).
- Priorities and Future Planning
  - Priority Group I High - MOE + our highest priorities
  - Priority Group II Moderate - Level I + Moderate Priorities
  - Priority Group III Future Planning - Level II + Multi Year Planning and Priorities.This is very much under development and will continue to be worked on not only through the rest of this year but through the summer.

The goal is to produce a budget document that expands over a number of years. Eventually we will get down to a recommended budget.

Capital budget – will be divided into two categories; Technology and Facilities. The funding for the capital budgets is provided by the Mayor, separate and apart from the operational budget.

#### BUDGET COMPARISONS

Dr. Hackett explained the slide on page two regarding the Budget Comparisons. He compared the Level Services, MOE, and three levels of Priorities for the FY16, FY17, the financial change, the percentage change and the notes that go along with the comparisons

#### MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT

Dr. Hackett explained this slide. Obligations that we know and have to meet.

- Sped Tuitions, \$148,000 is projected mainly for Out of District Placements that we can currently project.
- New schedule allows us to offer more sections and need a PE teacher at BHS which would allow the specialist schedules to work smoother and there is a cost avoidance
- 1.0 Teacher STRIVES program @ BHS. Projecting no additional cost here as the population from South Middle School is shifting and will be transitioning to BHS next year. Believe we will cover it from a position that has not been filled out of the current budget. Pointing it out as it is a new position in the budget.
- 1.0 Para STRIVES. There would be an additional para to support the STRIVES program.
- 0.5 Nurse at the high school to service both the STRIVES program and Preschool program
- ELL Teacher districtwide. This would service our increasing ELL population and keep us in compliance with state regulation. ELL is a growing population in Braintree.
- BCBA district wide. This allows up to support district-wide programs. Dr. Hackett stressed that clearly having kids in our district in programs within our district is the right thing for the student and family, as well as for the district. It is necessary and makes economic sense.
- 0.2 School Psychologist at MSKC would bring the current position to a full-time position
- IT Tech. By adding one additional technician this would bring a full complement of staff to the department. This would support the over 3,000 devices out in our schools.

**PRIORITY GROUP I - HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR FY17**

These items, in our view, would make us better. Shared staff between the middle schools makes it difficult and really locks down the schedules. Not having shared staff will allow us to more evenly distribute the students across sections.

- 0.6 foreign language at South would eliminate shared staff between South and East, would lower class sizes and would allow for better and easier scheduling for students. Shared staff between the two middle schools makes schedules difficult to develop and are ultimately inefficient. This would benefit both South and East staff and students.
- 0.6 PE/Health @ South would again eliminate shared staff between South and East, lower class sizes in both schools, provide options for more wellness instruction for students. This would benefit both South and East staff and students.
- 0.6 Guidance @ South. This is enrollment driven and would keep caseloads at a workable number and give the students what they deserve.
- 0.38 Reading specialists @ MSKC. This would bring the reading specialist at the kindergarten center to a 1.0 This will benefit students for reading skills and investment for long term learning.
- 1.0 Reading Specialists at the elementary level. This would increase the reading supports across the elementary level, shared among the schools, with a focus on literacy.
- 2.0 FTE Reading specialists @ elementary level. This will increase reading supports and student literacy skills. This will bring us to a full complement at the elementary level.
- Social Studies @ South MS - this would lower class sizes across the entire schedule.

**PRIORITY GROUP II - MODERATE PRIORITIES FOR FY17; PREPLANNING FOR FY18 & Into FY19**

- 0.5 Math at MSKC. Currently do not have any math specialist at MSKC.
- 0.4 Mandarin @ BHS. This would pilot a couple of classes at BHS and introduce Mandarin to students.
- 0.4 Art Teacher @ BHS. This would expand this elective, introduce AP Art.
- 1.4 MS Health & Wellness - this would offer a full implementation of well-being, drug and alcohol and anti-bullying programs. It would give us a full-time additional person at both middle schools. This would allow us to get into a full wellness curriculum.
- 1.0 Science @ East would allow us to expand the science sections
- 1.0 Custodial at BHS.
- 1.0 Guidance @ BHS. This is enrollment driven and would help with the caseloads and allow the guidance department to provide support that is needed.
- 1.0 Computer Science @ BHS. This would allow for us to expand offerings in both the business and computer sciences. It makes sense for us to look in this direction.
- 0.8 Instrumental @ BHS. We are in need of an additional support. This priority may change as it also has an impact on the middle schools as this is a shared position in the middle schools. Would allow us to increase sections and offerings.

PRIORITY GROUP III - PREPLANNING FOR THE FY18-19

Dr. Hackett did not go into detail on this group as it is preplanning for the future of the schools - it is an ongoing discussion and needs to be linked to our strategic plan.

Dr. Hackett asked if there were any questions on the different levels that he had explained.

Student Representative, Sarah Murphy, asked Dr. Hackett "What do you think the chance of finding a 0.4 Mandarin teacher working on a rotating schedule where one of her classes might only meet once a day"? Dr. Hackett agreed with Sarah that it will be a challenge to hire a part-time teacher to teach just Mandarin, yet it would be harder to find a teacher to teach, for example Mandarin, Spanish and French. The challenge is that we would not have need for a full time Mandarin teacher at the pilot stage.

Dr. Hackett explained the next steps: continue with the administrative review and the budget subcommittee, continue to develop the different levels, review the revenue projections and continue to develop the capital plans. He explained that the Governor had already put his budget out and while we do not know all our numbers yet, he feels it is better to plan on the low end of a projection and make adjustments up. He stated that he is hopeful to see more in Chapter 70 funding through the Legislature.

Dr. Hackett shared that the state will be reporting on Per Pupil Expenditures (PPE) for FY16 soon. He also explained that the additional capital funding that has been provided by the Mayor over the last few years has not historically been included in the State End of the Year Report (EOY). These additional funds were included by Mr. Cronin on the FY16 EOY and will likely increase our calculated PPE as reported by the State. has been about \$1 million that has not been reported to the state as part of our end of the year report.

Dr. Hackett reviewed the Timeline for the budget with the committee. The March 7th meeting will be at South Middle School and at that time Dr. Hackett will present the updated budget after completing additional review with administrators and the budget subcommittee: principals and directors will be in attendance on the 7<sup>th</sup> to answer questions. March 21<sup>st</sup> will be the Public Hearing on the recommended budget at the BHS auditorium and the School Committee will vote to adopt the 2017 budget.

Ms. Fiske Heger asked the members if they had anything to add.

Ms. Naughton inquired re: page 38, line item description "Do Not Use -- Supplies for Math". Mr. Cronin explained that there was something wrong with that line, so it was noted not to use it but it has been left in for now due to show historical budget numbers.

Mayor Sullivan stated that the public is seeing a lot of work going on since the beginning of the school year. He thanked Dr. Hackett and Mr. Cronin for working with the town and for his first budget. He also thanked Mr. Cronin for working with the Town in terms of the implementation of the new financial software. He also believes that the addition of capital expenses in the EOY report will more accurately reflect Braintree's financial support of schools and added that people will be pleased with the amount of per pupil expenditure we have been making as a town.

In terms of the FY17 budget, the Mayor feels this is a great start. He explained that this is a process. He is pleased with the way in which Dr. Hackett and his team have begun to forecast multiple budgets. This allows us to continue to plan and strategize. The Governor filed via Chapter 70 a strong budget. As in the past, Chapter 70 is specific to Education and has always been directed to the schools. The Mayor pointed out that there was a lot of information presented and encouraged the committee to absorb and look at all the elements of the budget. The Mayor stated that he presents not only the School Department budget, but all of the town budgets as part of the full municipal budget on May 2nd to the Town Council. The budgets he presents include a lot of needs we have to be attentive to; for safety; police and fire, roads, recreation, library, which all improve the quality of life for Braintree residents.

Mr. Devin explained that he feels we are witnessing a new philosophy from Dr. Hackett and Mr. Cronin based on economic conditions and that he sees it almost like a layering. Mr. Devin appreciated the great discussion with the differences of high/moderate level and is looking forward to future planning. Mr. Devin explained that it is important to remember what the equation is when we go into budgets: there are two unknowns. We don't know what our state support will be, or the number of students we will be educating at the start of each year due to move-ins. He feels it is important for people realize the work that goes into this process with two variables that are unclear during budget development. He thanked the members of the budget subcommittee, the full committee, the administration and the Mayor for the work that goes into this, describing Mayor Sullivan as "the education Mayor."

Ms. Heger also wanted to thank Dr. Hackett, Mr. Cronin and the Budget Subcommittee members. She reiterated that budget development is a fluid process and believes that we are in a good place from a planning perspective. She looks forward to hearing from the principals and directors at the next meeting.

Mr. Ringius also thanked the budget subcommittee, Dr. Hackett and Mr. Cronin. He expressed special appreciation to the budget subcommittee and feels that they have established themselves in a very short period of time since their formation. He explained that the budget is the heart of what the School Committee does and that the budget is a working document that is ultimately refined through a process that is now much more transparent.

#### IV. SCHOOL COMMITTEE

##### A. Subcommittee Updates

Budget Subcommittee - Mr. Kokoros spoke on the budget subcommittee and that they are still working through the different levels. He reiterated what the other speakers had said, and emphasized the different lens with which the subcommittee is looking at the budget this year. He stated that March 3rd at 4:30 is the next meeting of the subcommittee.

Policy Subcommittee - Ms. Fiske Heger informed the committee that the new subcommittee, the policy subcommittee, would be meeting for the first time directly after this school committee meeting. They will review existing policies, and modify and establish new policies. Tonight's meeting will include review of a search and seizure policy.

## V. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Jen Dolan, Flaherty parent, discussed a documentary screening on Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 6:30 p.m. at the Thayer Hale Theater. She wanted to ask the BHS student representatives to assist in getting the word out to students. It is important for the students to participate and hear what is being said about the culture of high achievement, over-testing and standards, which are part of the documentary. She shared that the public can learn more on the two Braintree Facebook sites, Citizens for Better Braintree Schools and Braintree Parents Discuss Common Core and PARCC.

Ms. Dolan also requested that she be on an upcoming agenda regarding East Middle School and the additions. She has identified an idea and would like to present them in the proper manner to the school committee.

Ms. Naughton informed the committee that BASHY will be meeting on Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> at South Middle School at 7 pm, "Helping Your Student Develop Healthy Coping Skills for Life". Ms. Naughton also informed the committee that BASHY will be hosting the "Amazing Healthy Race" (which is like a scavenger hunt) on Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m., location to be determined. There will be a \$20 entry fee. She encouraged the School Committee to be part of this exciting BASHY event.

SEPAC will have a workshop at the Thayer Public Library titled, Effective Communication for the IEP, on March 2<sup>nd</sup> from 6:30 to 8:30 pm and a parent workshop on Anxiety, March 10<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Inclusion Awards: the committee is seeking nominations. The information for nominations is on the schools websites. Deadline for submittal is April 15<sup>th</sup>.

## VI. ADJOURN

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: Upon a motion by Mr. Devin and seconded by Mr. Chafe to adjourn.

ROLL CALL: AYES – 7

Mr. Chafe/Mr. Devin/ Ms. Fiske Heger/Mr. Kokoros/

Ms. Naughton/Mr. Ringius/Mayor Sullivan

Time: 6:52 P.M.

George Kokoros  
Recording Secretary