

APPROVED

February 25, 2020

SCHOOL COMMITTEE/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

The February 25, 2020 joint meeting with the Finance Committee was called to order by Brett Argall at 7:39 PM.

School Committee Members Present: Brett Argall (Chair), Becky Charniak, Kelli Grady (Vice Chair)

School Committee Members Absent: Lisa Brown (Secretary), Julie Moulder

Finance Committee Members Present: Howard D'Amico (Chair), Carol Gogolinski, Michael Hutnak (Vice Chair), Sandy Kuipers, Phil Landry, Heather Morin, Lynne Mussulli, Dick Vanden Berg

Finance Committee Members Absent:

Non-Voting: Business & Operations Manager Cortney Keegan, Superintendent Kevin Maines, Town Administrator Matthew Wojcik, Finance Director Jeanne Lovett, Nealy Urquhart (Superintendent of Support Services), Cindy Socha (Principal Douglas Primary School), John Bell (Principal Douglas Elementary School), Josh Romano (Principal Douglas High School)

Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee

Mr. Argall highlighted how Douglas's school budget and net school spending compares to other districts in the area.

Superintendent Maines and Mr. Romano spoke about how the high school promotes itself to eighth grade students and the programs they have added to keep Douglas competitive.

Ms. Keegan presented the FY2021 preliminary budget and summary sheet. She reviewed the budget preparation process. The appropriation from the Town has not yet been received. This preliminary budget represents an increase of 8.12% over the FY2020 appropriation, which is what they feel they need to properly fund the district and move it forward. To just level fund, would be a 6% increase.

Ms. Keegan stated that they are in negotiations with the Douglas Teachers Association and custodial and cafeteria contracts.

Ms. Keegan reviewed the revolving funds. They plan to spend approximately \$800,000 from the revolving funds in the budget. Ms. Keegan reviewed the budget in detail and delineated the largest increases.

Superintendent Maines explained that the school district has stabilized and has grown in a very pragmatic manner. They have expanded what they can offer their students across all grade levels. He presented the plan for moving forward and bringing some competitiveness to the district. This budget request is the last of the major incremental steps for the design plan to move the district forward.

Superintendent Maines reviewed changes and additions in staff. He explained the new math program, additions to art, music and health programs, DECA Club, E-Sports and community gardens. He presented what has been received for grant support for STEM, 1:1 Chromebooks, and Project Lead the Way.

The district had received \$25,000 from the State to join the Blackstone Valley Education Consortium; they are now asking the State for \$100,000 to continue and expand. Douglas is currently not housing any of the courses for the consortium.

Regarding Special Education, Superintendent Maines explained the benefits of team teaching and unified sports.

The district is looking to add an elementary school STEM teacher, a high school science teacher, a middle school Special Education teacher, and a 1.0 custodian.

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Ms. Grady and Ms. Charniak spoke about the improvements that kept their students in Douglas schools and how prepared they are for life after graduation. These changes are expensive.

The net per student Choice-In is approximately \$5,000.

Ways of self-promotion were discussed, such as a media/photography club for students to create ways of self-promotion.

Adjournment

The School Committee adjourned their meeting at 9:17 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Wright
Recording Secretary