

**Joint Meeting
Finance Committee
Selectboard
February 25, 2020
Town Offices**

Finance Committee Attendees: Paul Antaya, Dan Kennedy, Jim Kirkendall, Fred Baron, and Bob Fydenkevez; Selectboard members, Joyce Palmer Fortune, Fred Orloski, and Jonathan Edwards; Town Administrator Brian Domina and Administrative Assistant, Amy Schrader.

The meeting was opened at 6:03 pm by the Chairperson Paul Antaya.

Discuss and vote approve meeting minutes of February 18, 2020

The Committee voted to approve the meeting minutes from February 18, 2020.

Discuss and review proposed FY 2021 operating budgets for:

Schools Budgets -

Whately Elementary School – Kristina Kirton (WES Principal), Shelley Poreda (New Business Manager), and Darius Modestow (Superintendent) appeared before the Board/Committee to review Whately Elementary School's FY21 budget. Shelley (New Business Manager) discussed their FY21 budget increase of 2.15% with specific attention to salaries/wage increases, Union # 38 teacher contract negotiations, and student enrollment. The Committee inquired how many students are currently enrolled at WES? Kristina (Principal) stated there are 127 students, 41 of those students are school of choice. The school's pre-school program is doing well, 18 children are on the waiting list. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the school's overall budget, costs of school supplies, gifted student programs, rock climbing wall, and current/future school of choice funds. Kristina (Principal) stated that on-line learning has significantly decreased the school's text book budget. Katie Edwards (School Committee) stated that the school's PTO contributes to help off-set the school supplies cost. Jonathan Edwards (Selectboard) suggested that it would be helpful to have a list of total grants and donations that the school receives. Shelley (Business Manager) stated that the budget does reflect the total amount grants and donations received however the amount is minimal.

Brian (Town Administrator) inquired what the status is of the School of Choice account? Shelley (Business Manager) informed the Committee that going into the FY20 budget there was a \$38,000 in roll-over funds. The roll-over funds going into FY21 is just over \$200,000. The spending in FY21 will be funded by FY20 revenue. The end of new year should be around \$170,000. In the fall of 2021, there will be 19 children eligible to come to the Whately kindergarten class. If this is a trend, then school of choice money will decline. Joyce

(Selectboard) inquired how many dollars per student does the town get from the state versus school of choice costs for a student? If it is a trend, how bad is the differential? Shelly was unable to obtain that information at this time, but will send it out to the Town Administrator. After much discussion, the Committee decided to take no action at this time.

The Board/Committee is invited to the Whately Elementary School's Public Hearing scheduled for March 4th at 6:00pm.

Frontier Regional –Shelley Poreda (New Business Manager) and Darius Modestow (Superintendent) reviewed Frontier Regional's FY21 budget with specific attention to new staff positions, health insurance increases, retirement funds, and building maintenance. The FY21 budget reflects a 2.84% increase for Frontier's general operating budget. The Committee had a brief discussion regarding the need for an additional English teacher, class sizes, and inquired about the ratio of school of choice students' vs town residents. Darius (Superintendent) stated that there is a total enrollment of 647 from grades 7-12. There are 477 from the four towns in the middle and high school. 27% of the total school enrollment is attributable to school of choice. Darius informed the Board/Committee that, in the near future, there will be a significant decline in class size. The current 6th grade class is 137 students but the 5th grade class is 107 which is a significant decline. The budget for fiscal year 2023, could potentially reflect a staffing decrease due to the smaller class sizes.

The Board/ Committee had a lengthy discussion regarding the school's success rate, student success rates, measures/parameters that lead to success, student honor roll percentages, and building maintenance. Darius informed the Board/Committee that 70-80% of Frontier Regional students go onto further education. The school also looking at the other trends: military enrollment, drop out status, employment status, and college acceptance rates. Darius informed the Board/Committee that there is a guidance report that would provide this information. Darius will send last year's guidance report to the Finance Committee.

The Board/Committee inquired about the status of the track. Darius stated that he is in the process of reviewing bids for designers and that there would be no loan payment due in FY21. After much discussion, the Committee took no action was taken at this time.

The Board/Committee is invited to Frontier Regional's Public Hearing scheduled for March 3th at 6:00pm.

Franklin County Technical School – Brian informed the Committee that Franklin County Technical School officials could not attend the meeting tonight, but they plan on attending the joint meeting scheduled on March 10th at 6:00pm.

Smith Vocational – (none) No students are enrolled at Smith Vocational.

Public Health Budgets – Fran Fortino (Board of Health Chair) reviewed with the Board/Committee the proposed budgets for the Board of Health, Foothills Health District, Solid Waste, Hazardous Waste and the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District.

Board of Health – Fran informed the Board/Committee that the Board of Health FY21 budget remains the same as FY20. No action was taken at this time.

Foothills Health District – Fran reviewed the FY21 budget with specific attention to the salary line item and the services that the Health Agent provides to the Town. The Board/Committee inquired if there is a Foothills Health District detailed budget to review. Fran stated that there was not. No action was taken at this time.

Franklin County Solid Waste District – Fran reviewed the FY21 budget with specific attention to administrative overhead increases. No action was taken at this time.

Solid Waste – Fran reviewed the FY21 Solid Waste budget with specific attention to the recycling line item. Fran informed the Board/Committee that the biggest budget increase is due to the recycling cost going from 0 to \$93.50. Joyce (Selectboard) stated that if you add up the cost of hauling, container, and tipping fees for trash, it's still more expensive to throw items in the trash as opposed to recycling, even with the recycling increase. The Committee had a lengthy discussion regarding recycling costs, bag fees, bags accepted, budget figures, current recycling costs, and potential future increases. Fran stated that he thinks the budget will be below the requested budget amount. The bag fees may be increased to off-set the additional recycling expenses. The last time the bag fee was increase was approximately 25 years ago. The town uses 14,000 trash bags a year. Fran stated that currently recycling is free.

Fred (Selectboard) expressed his opinion that recycling and trash should be for Whately residents only. Fran stated that the transfer station attendants are usual very good at determining who are Whately residents and who aren't, but there have been lapses. The Committee discussed transfer station staffing, the process of disposing of trash/recycling, the transfer station policies, and the potential for a new town sticker program. The Committee strongly feels that the transfer station should only be utilized by Whately residents and having a higher bag fee would deter non-Whately residents. Fran stated that hauling bids should be received by the end of March. Fran stated that he would like to put an article in the Whately Scoop regarding the potential cost increase of transfer station stickers. The Committee took no action at this time.

Continue discussion on proposed capital projects for FY 2021

Brian (Town Administrator) stated that he would like to continue the discussion on proposed capital projects for FY2021. Brian reviewed and discussed with Keith Bardwell (Highway and Building Superintendent) the Committee's request regarding the new excavator purchase. The Committee should have that information shortly. Brian discussed Worksheet 3 of the Capital Improvement Plan, which lays out how these projects could be funded. Brian also reminded the Committee of its past

discussion about wanting to move money into stabilization accounts. The Board/Committee will have a more focused discussion at their meeting on March 10th.

Items not anticipated within forty-eight (48) hours of the meeting

none

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Domina, Town Administrator

Document List on File in the Selectboard Office

Joint Finance Committee and Selectboard Meeting Minutes dated 02/18/2020

FY21 Whately Elementary School Budget Narrative dated 02/25/2020

FY21 Frontier Regional School District Budget Narrative dated 02/19/2020

FY21 Schools Budget (Whately Elementary School, Frontier Regional, Franklin County Technical School, and Smith Vocational)

FY21 Public Health Budgets (Board of Health, Health Agent – Foothills Health District, Solid Waste Disposal, Hazardous Waste Disposal, Franklin County Solid Waste Management District)