

Whately School Committee Meeting  
Virtual Meeting  
Wednesday, April 7, 2021

**This meeting was held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provision of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c.30A, Section 20 using Google Meet and was live streamed.**

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Chair Maureen Nichols, Robert Halla and Beth Reilly; Principal Kristina Kirton; Shelley Poreda, Director of Business Administration and Superintendent Darius Modestow

Chair Maureen Nichols called the meeting and public hearing to order at 6:01pm.

Public Hearing:

Maureen Nichols opened the public hearing for Whately Elementary School FY22 proposed budget at 6:02 pm. Shelley Poeda gave a summary of the proposed budget, which was already presented to the Finance Committee.

A level-service approach was used in generating the first draft of the FY22 Whately Elementary School budget, therefore, existing staffing, programs, and services were replicated from FY21. COLA (2%) and step increases have been included based on contractual obligations for teachers and instructional assistants. Increases for non-union staff have been captured as well. Non-salary accounts were reviewed and adjusted based on actual data from prior year(s) spending. Additionally, COLA increases were built into operating related expenditures, such as utilities and insurances. Enrollment projections and class sizes were reviewed to determine if additional staff would be necessary. Finally, school choice, school lunch, early childhood, and the special education revolving accounts were analyzed to ensure revenues could continue to support anticipated expenditures.

As a result, the FY22 general fund budget demonstrates an increase of 2.5% (or \$44,602); for a total general fund budget of \$1,829,786. In addition to the general fund, Whately Elementary School will use school choice revenue, revolving funds, and grant monies to fully fund the school's total operating budget of \$2,227,243.

The committee moved to regular session at 6:06 pm.

Shelley Poreda made one correction to the March 2, 2021 minutes under Unfinished Business C., "FY22 Budget Proposal Review". The minutes say "Whately will be getting \$38,858 from the ESSER II fund (new CARES Act funds)", but Whately will actually be getting \$85,841 and about \$30,000 of this will be used in support of the FY22 budget.

On a motion from Bob Halla, and a second from Beth Reilly, the Minutes of March 2, 2021 were approved 3-0-0.

Maureen Nichols	yes	Robert Halla	yes	Beth Reilly	yes
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There were 2 public comments. The first was from Shelley Yagodzinski, a Whately Elementary parent. She agrees that racism in our country is a problem and that children should be taught about this. She does not agree with the anti-racism PD and curriculum in our school district. She thinks it does more to divide than unite our community and said that it is indoctrination. She asked the district to teach the students a “Make America Great” curriculum.

Meghan Ashman gave a public comment. She was concerned because she could not access the joint meeting the previous night to give a public comment. She was also concerned after watching the 4/6/2021 joint school committee meeting recording because Shelley's comment was cut off on the recording. She disagreed with some of the public comments from the 4/6/2021 joint meeting. She does not agree with the anti-racism PD and curriculum in our school district and thinks that it should be taught to the students by their parents.

Maureen explained that the public comment format changed at the beginning of this school year after one of the joint meetings was zoom-bombed with inappropriate material. The change was communicated with the public community several times and public comment access/direction is also listed on the agenda for each meeting. Maureen and Beth also said that at the live joint meeting they heard Shelley's public comment without any issues. Beth said that the anti-racism PD and curriculum should not be political, that it is about community. Beth went to Frontier and said that she never noticed racism there, but had friends who did. She said that anti-racism needs to be taught to the students and this will be a positive thing. The PD/curriculum has just started and will evolve. She said that racism occurred not only with students, but also with staff. Darius said that the Elementary school curriculum has not had huge changes. He said that we are talking about culturally responsive education. He gave an example in a science lesson where an african-american student cannot participate because they could not create static electricity by rubbing a balloon against their hair. He said there are political agendas on both sides, but the schools do not have a political agenda. This is not the goal of the culturally responsive education and curriculum. The PD for the teachers is to teach the teachers about their own personal biases and to keep this out of the classroom. Darius invited families to reach out with specific questions, examples and/or issues to him, the schools, or to the school committees.

a. FY22 Proposed Budget

Roll Call:

Maureen Nichols	yes	Robert Halla	yes	Beth Reilly	yes
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Bob confirmed that public comment is not normally a dialogue, it is an opportunity for a member of the public to give a statement only. Darius said that he made an exception at this meeting because this was an opportunity to address some specific questions.

Maureen said that when talking about the budget, she meant to talk about expectations for full-day Pre-K in the fall. We could talk about this at the May meeting and invite Amy Smith-Zioli. Darius said that the plan right now is to have full-day Pre-K in the fall.

Bob said that he previously mentioned having school committee meetings in-person again. He thinks we should wait until September when everyone feels comfortable. Maureen said that we would have to figure out logistics such as public comment and recording of the meetings. Based on these concerns, we may wait until September.

On a motion from Bob Halla, seconded by Beth Reilly, the committee adjourned at 6:49 pm. Approved 3-0-0.

Roll Call:

Maureen Nichols	yes	Robert Halla	yes	Beth Reilly	yes
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Summary of Documents Presented:

1. Minutes of March 2, 2021
2. FY22 Proposed Budget

Respectfully submitted,

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Maureen Nichols, Chair