

Minutes – Advisory Committee Education Subcommittee Meeting of March 3, 2020 at Town Hall

Members present – David Anderson, George Danis, Bob Curley, Evan Sheehan

Also present: School Superintendent Paul Austin, Business Manager John Ferris, and from the School Committee Michelle Ayer, Kerry Ni, Libby Lewicki.

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm

The committee reviewed the latest 3/3/20 forecast from the Town Administrator and discussed the impact of the Town Administrator proposed use of Revolving funds to offset certain FY 2021 school expenses.

			YoY Change	YoY %
Proposed Ed Budget in 1/29/20 Forecast (School Admin Tier 1 requested amount)	\$ 57,661,727	\$ 3,341,900	6.15%	
Eliminate Tier 1 ("Most critical needs") requests	(930,742)	<i>Per Dr Austin 1/26/20 presentation</i>		
"Status Quo Amount"	\$ 56,730,985	\$ 2,411,158	4.44%	
Augment Ed budget with funds from School Revolving Funds	(123,828)			
Proposed Ed Budget in 3/2/20 forecast model ("Adjusted Status Quo")	\$ 56,607,157	\$ 2,287,330	4.21%	
FY 2020 ATM Approved Education Budget	\$ 54,319,827			

From Dr. Austin's 1/26/20 presentation:

- **Status Quo Base Budget**

- The Status Quo Budget keeps all current supports and services, but accounts for increases in salary, supplies, and other required costs associated with the operation of the district.
 - The Approved FY'20 Budget was \$54,319,826
 - The FY'21 Status Quo Budget is \$56,730,985
 - The Status Quo Budget represents an increase of \$2,411,159 –or- 4.44%

School officials indicated that using the Revolving Funds (\$123,828) to augment or offset the "Status Quo" budget of \$56,730,985 (the "Status Quo Amount") would result in a less than "level services" budget as the majority of the expenses the Administration intends to offset with the Revolving Funds were not included in the "Status Quo Amount" budget but instead in the Tier 1 requested amount (included in the 1/29/20 forecast).

Given the Administration's statement about the impact of the proposed budget augmentation using Revolving Funds, ACES discussed the appropriate FY 2021 Budget amount to propose to the Advisory Committee.

Some ACES members believed that the Status Quo Amount budget less the Revolving Funds amount (\$56,607,157, or the "Adjusted Status Quo" budget) should be proposed to Ad Com with the \$123,828 presented as an important additional request. Doing so would leave the Town with a budget surplus of \$190,277 (based on 3/2/20 Forecast) which could then be allocated, by Ad Com, to either the School additional requests or to the Town Administrator's additional requests or both. Ad Com has not yet heard from the Town Administrator about his latest additional request priorities.

Others on ACES believed that if the Revolving Funds are to be used to offset critical expenses NOT included in the Status Quo budget then it would be punitive to the school budget to effectively reduce the budget to the Adjusted Status Quo amount by applying the Revolving Funds as the 3/2/20 forecast proposed.

Recognizing that there are more discussions to be had on the overall town budget and the fact that the Status Quo Amount was an important baseline, ACES voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend the Status Quo Amount of **\$56,730,985** to the full Advisory Committee for consideration as the FY 2021 Education Budget.

It was also acknowledged that the lack of available funding for the Tier 1 requests, at a minimum, leaves critical instructional needs for struggling students unmet. ACES was impressed with the thoughtful budget process led by new Superintendent Dr. Paul Austin and believes that critical educational needs are not being adequately funded in the recommended budget. As such, ACES is supportive of further discussions among town leaders and citizens about ways to augment resources to benefit all Town budgets, including education.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm.

Approved by the subcommittee on 3/10/20