

January 17, 2012

Minutes of Special Meeting
Marlborough School Board
Marlborough School, 7:00 pm

Present:

Michael Briggs, School Board Chair
Julie Farhm, School Board Member
Kristen Hill, School Board Member
Mitchell Silverman, School Board Member
Tim Ruehr, Business Administrator for Towns
Reuben Duncan, Principal
Laura French, Recording Secretary

Nine (9) members of the public were in attendance.

PUBLIC HEARING
2012-2013 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET/WARRANT

1. Call to Order

Mr. Briggs called the Public Hearing to order at 7:23 pm.

Mr. Briggs reviewed the Marlborough School's Proposed 2012-2013 Budget and Warrant of \$5,219,359, which represents a budget decrease of -7.41%. Mr. Briggs explained that the budget calls for reducing an elementary teacher by one position, adding a half-time Integration Specialist and leaving the guidance counselor position at full-time next year. He also mentioned that the budget shows a large increase in high school tuition due to eight (8) additional students attending high school next year for a total of 64 students.

Marge Shepardson asked if any thought has been given to writing a grant for the Integration Specialist position. Mr. Duncan replied no and Mr. Briggs said that Mr. Duncan is tireless in finding grant money if available.

Ken Kerber asked how many high school out-of-district special education students still attend school. Mr. Briggs answered 2 students remain and 2 students have aged out and left.

Ms. Shepardson asked about purchasing software that governs the solar panels. Mr. Briggs answered that the solar panel software will not be funded from the budget and administration will look to see if grant money is available.

Phyllis Manning spoke on increasing the nurse's position from part-time to full-time for the upcoming school year. She believes that increasing the position to full-time is money well spent by keeping an experienced nurse all day on the school premises for direct care giving, should an emergency occur.

Mr. Briggs thanked Ms. Manning for her comments.

Mr. Kerber asked how many students are currently enrolled. Mr. Briggs said last month the enrollment was at 197 students in K-8.

Ms. Shepardson asked about class size if a K-5 elementary teacher is eliminated next year. Mr. Briggs said the average class size will be well below 20 students. Next year, there are eleven (11) K-5 elementary teachers budgeted, along with 6 middle school teachers who teach by specific subject area.

Mr. Ruehr explained that in the past there has been more than 1 teacher per grade in K-5; the budget will eliminate the additional teacher so that each K-5 grade will have one teacher teaching a class containing 17-20 students.

Mr. Kerber requested that a handout be provided showing the breakout and number of students per grade, along with a staff chart showing each employee's position, years of experience, and their salary and benefits.

Ms. Shepardson asked how much money it would take to make the nurse's position full-time. Mr. Ruehr was not sure, the board remembered \$30,000 to \$35,000 from last year's discussion. Mr. Ruehr agreed with that figure but did not recall this year's figure. Mr. Briggs asked that the actual figure be available at the District Meeting. Mr. Briggs explained the warrant articles being proposed by the Board for District Meeting. There was some discussion on Article 4 authorizing the school board to enter into an agreement with Southwestern Community Services for the sale of the old Marlborough School, with a legally binding agreement that it is for the purpose of elderly housing, with a sale price of \$50,000 and a \$1,000 non-refundable deposit by the buyer. Mr. Briggs explained that the buyer would maintain the building and the District would only keep \$1,000 if the sale did not go through.

Mr. Kerber asked what happened to the old proposal and why the sale did not go through this year. Mr. Briggs said the exact same proposal would be submitted and explained that Southwestern Community Services was applying for grants from both the federal and state government. There is no guarantee these grants will be awarded.

Teresa Horne mentioned that she wants to be certain the final version will contain the same language as the original proposal with housing for people age 55 and older. Mr. Briggs assured everyone that the language is the same, only the Board would keep a \$1,000 non-refundable deposit vs. a \$5,000 non-refundable deposit. The buyer must agree to maintain the property while waiting for the final sale.

Ken Wilber asked if there are any other offers on the building, his concern is that the District might have to hold selling the building for another year while waiting to see if Southwestern can buy the property, which leaves the building sitting empty and depreciating for another year. Mr. Briggs answered no other offers currently exist for the building, but the Board is contacting local realtors on this matter. Kristen Hill mentioned that the Board is looking at the realtor market prior to the final vote and the Board will report any other offers on the building at the March meeting.

Mr. Briggs mentioned that the Marlborough School District Annual Meeting will be held on March 6, 2012 at 7:00 pm.

Mr. Briggs adjourned the public hearing at 8:06 pm and the Board moved to another room. No members of the public followed.

Action to be Taken as a Result of the Public Hearing

Much discussion ensued on making the nurse's position full-time for next year, including concerns that 77% FTE is close to a full-time status. Mr. Briggs indicated that he is not in favor of a full-time nurse, he feels this issue has been discussed many times before and staff nursing as it now stands is more than adequate. The final consensus was to leave the school nurse position as is and make no changes to the 2012-13 budget.

The Board did request Mr. Ruehr bring numbers to the February meeting on what it might cost to offer benefits to certified teaching staff contracted to work less than 80% FTE. Mr. Ruehr had mentioned that certified staff working less than 80% are not covered under the collective bargaining agreement and the board could consider a separate policy offering prorated health insurance. The Board agreed to add this topic to their February agenda and continue this discussion.

There being no further items to discuss, Ms. Farhm moved and Mr. Briggs seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. Vote taken, 4-0, motion passes.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura French
Recording Secretary

APPROVED: 2/9/12