

Weston Public Schools
 Board of Education Meeting – Budget Workshop #1
 Weston Middle School Library Resource Center
 January 14, 2014

Attendance:

Philip Schaefer, Chairperson	Sara Spaulding
Ellen Uzenoff, Vice Chairperson	Dr. Colleen Palmer, Superintendent
Dana Levin, Secretary/Treasurer	Dr. Kenneth Craw, Assistant Superintendent
Nina Daniel	Dr. Jo-Ann Keating, Director of Finance & Ops.
Denise Harvey	Lewis Brey, Director of Human Resources
Elise Major	

I. SUPERINTENDENT’S OVERVIEW

Dr. Palmer discussed the budget drivers, cost containments, and efficiencies behind the proposed 4.66% increase over the adopted 2013-2014 budget. Historically, our budget has come in significantly lower than our DRG-A counterparts. Currently, ninety-five percent of the major budget drivers are contractually-obligated and/or state mandated, including employee benefits, salaries, and special education. Enrollment is stable and there are no new “game-changing” efficiencies, such as with FY 2014, that can be used to off-set the FY 2015 budget. Ms. Harvey acknowledged ongoing discussions with the Town Boards concerning special education costs, and Ms. Daniel pointed out ongoing safety and security efforts by the district and supported by the Town.

II. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Dr. Craw framed the current proposed curricular budget, which represents a .30% decrease of the adopted FY 2014 budget. Budget priorities are:

- professional development (curricular instructional leaders and innovative teaching and learning institutes);
- curriculum development (reinstatement of Spanish in grades K-1, a proposed addition of .2FTE to support extension of the orchestra program to fourth grade, and new high-interest computer science opportunities at the high school and middle school);
- internal assessment system (Academic Innovation and Measurement will continue, and writing portfolio projects for grades 2, 5, 8, and 10 with external validation will be implemented); and
- mandates (educator evaluation, common core state standards in literacy and math, and the Smarter Balanced Assessment System).

Dr. Craw also reviewed district accomplishments for the 2013-14 school year in professional and curriculum development, and the next level of work desired for 2014-2015.

III. DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Keating discussed the duties, responsibilities, and staff associated with this cost center, and reviewed the proposed changes to non-salary accounts. The budget request for this area is 4.33% lower than the adopted budget for FY 2014.

IV. DISTRICT-WIDE SERVICES

Dr. Keating discussed the categories of expenditures covered in this budget – pupil transportation, the copy center, employee benefits, employee turnover, degree changes, contingency staff, allowance for non-represented salary increases, unemployment, tuition reimbursement, and liability insurance. This budget represents nearly 20% of the total budget, and is proposed at a 9.07% increase from the current adopted budget.

V. INTERNAL SERVICES FUND

Dr. Keating explained the reserve modeling criteria for the internal services fund, which are found on page 142 of the budget book.

VI. TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Haakonsen presented the 2014-2015 budget for technology services, which includes expanding Weston Public Schools’ wireless and mobile footprint; replacing end-of-life equipment; enhancing infrastructure for staff, students, and administrators; and completing preparations for mandated State testing. The total technology budget request is a 5.9% increase over the FY 2014 request.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Jennifer Markov, Board of Education Clerk.

Minutes reviewed/approved by Dr. Colleen Palmer, Superintendent.

Chairman

Secretary

Approved by the Board of Education January 27, 2014.