



TOWN OF TEWKSBURY

TOWN HALL
1009 MAIN ST
TEWKSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS 01876

FINANCE COMMITTEE

David Aznavoorian, Chairman
Raymond Lisiecki, Vice Chair
Damin Sutherby, Clerk
Thomas L. Cooke
Bruce Panilaitis
Laurence Sanford

Meeting Minutes for March 1, 2014

1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:38 a.m. by David Aznavoorian, Chairman, at the Pike House. Present were Raymond Lisiecki, Damin Sutherby, Larry Sanford, and Bruce Panilaitis. Also present was Richard Montuori, Town Manager, Karen Kucala, Finance Director, and Melissa Johnson, Recording Secretary.

Tom Cooke was not in attendance.

2) FY15 Department Budget Review

School Department

Present was John O'Connor, Superintendent, Sherry Matthews, School Business Manager, David Libby, and School Committee members Krissy Polimeno, Lisa Pucci, and Brian Dick.

Mr. Lyons noted that the FY15 school department salaries reflects a 2 % salary increase; including all non union employees as well as 6 new positions (2 TMHS teachers, TMHS Social Worker, FT System Wide ELL Teacher, TMHS PT Clerical, Wynn/Ryan PT Special Ed Clerical, and 2 Elementary Literacy Coaches) at a cost of \$296,000. One new FT position and multiple part time positions were added as the result of an IRS ruling that Special Education Service providers may not be paid as vendors. As a result, \$270,541 will be transferred from School Operating to School Salary. Mr. Libby noted that three new aid positions were added in order to attend to the individual needs of several students in the district. As a result, a \$45,360 transfer will be made from School Operating to School Salary. In addition, as the result of a change in the method of delivering behavioral home services, a \$60,000 transfer will be made from School Operating to School Salary. These services were previously provided by from School Operating funds via an outside vendor. School employees are being trained and will now provide these services at \$25 an hour versus \$80 to \$125 an hour via vendor. The 2015 school salary budget also incorporates any known retirements occurring during FY14 or FY15 and accounts for anticipated salary savings; offset against contractual retirement buy back obligations. The FY15 budget also reflects a flat staffing level for grants/revolving accounts, includes an increase in student fees for FY15 and includes an increase for daily

substitute teachers and aides in order to remain competitive with surrounding communities.

Mr. Libby explained that a majority of all operating accounts have been level funded from FY14. \$375,901 will be transferred from School Operating to School Salary as per salary costs: \$270,541 IRS changes, \$45,360 Kelly Services changes, and \$60,000 behavioral services changes for a total of \$375,901. \$20,000 is being added to the library budget from the October 2013 town meeting action. An estimated 2% increase for new TMHS service contracts has been included. Mr. Libby noted that many are currently out for bid or RFP. \$34,000 will be transferred from Instructional Supplies to Copy Center Supplies in anticipation of increased copy center use due to the expiration of many of the copier leases across the district. \$35,000 has been added to Instructional Supplies at school level based on actual FY13 and estimates of FY14 run dates. The FY15 operating budget also adjusts for all out of district special education tuition by 2%, adjusts for all contractual obligations for maintenance of buildings i.e. heating systems, HVAC systems, elevator, etc. In addition, \$22,000 has been added for contractual increase for out of district special education transportation contract.

Mr. Libby explained that at a meeting on January 27, 2014, the school budget was determined to be under the Town Manager's recommendation of \$48,031,619. This was largely due to a change in Tewksbury's Shawsheen Tech assessment; which has decreased significantly. As a result, \$110,436 was added to the salary account as a placeholder for two new teaching positions and \$40,000 was added to school health insurance for those two new positions.

Mr. Lisiecki asked if there are programs offered at Minuteman Tech that are not offered in Tewksbury. Dr. O'Connor explained that they do not offer any technical services at Tewksbury High School with the exception of nursing. The Tewksbury students that attend Minuteman Tech are there as the result of either them applying to Shawsheen Tech and not getting in, or for a program not being offered in Tewksbury. If the program is offered at the Shawsheen Tech, the student cannot go out of district.

Mr. Lisiecki asked if there are any incentives that can be offered that would make the staff want to stay. Dr. O'Connor explained that there really are no incentives to offer and in his experience he has seen the teachers staying longer; which he feels could be a result of the economy.

Mr. Sutherby inquired about retirements and Dr. O'Connor explained that there has been a spike in retirements over the last 5 years and this is expected to continue for another 5 years.

Mr. Sutherby discussed digital books. Dr. O'Connor explained that this is something that the school department has not ventured into. The students at the high school have been using their smart phones and there is currently nothing at the middle school as they just received wireless.

Discussion took place on English Language Learners (ELL). Dr. O'Connor noted that this program will now be full time. There are currently 30 students who participate in the program and this number fluctuates each year. Dr. O'Connor explained that a certain amount of hours is required to be provided by law.

Discussion took place on homeless families who are housed by the State at various hotels. Dr. O'Connor explained that these families make the decision as to whether to attend the Tewksbury schools or their home school and Tewksbury provides the transportation. The State reimburses this cost at 50%.

Mr. Sanford expressed concerns with the medical costs and suggested a way to control these costs be determined as \$1M is not sustainable. Mr. Sanford asked what the total number of SPED students is and the cost. Dr. O'Connor noted that there are approximately 634 SPED students this is 25% of the budget. Mr. Sanford asked if there is any way SPED can be regionalized and Dr. O'Connor explained the Merrimack Valley Collaborative and noted that 27 of the 600 SPED students attend the collaborative.

Mr. Sutherby inquired as to the status of the condition of the elementary schools. Dr. O'Connor explained that the four elementary schools are approximately 40 to 63 years old. A request was made to MSBA to consider Tewksbury as a possible partner in constructing at least one new school. Tewksbury was 1 of 100 schools that applied and were not deemed critical. A request will be submitted again this year. Discussion took place on the various options for the elementary schools such as constructing one large elementary school and combining the North Street and Dewing and the Heath Brook and the Trahan by constructing one new school and renovating the Dewing.

Mr. Sutherby asked if the school department has any short term goals and Dr. O'Connor explained maintaining the four elementary schools with focus on the roofs, preventative maintenance at the new schools (Wynn, Ryan and High School), etc.

Mr. Panilaitis noted that he would prefer to see just one large elementary school constructed due to maintenance concerns and asked if there is any State land available for this purpose. Mr. Montuori noted that he would have to look into this.

Mr. Panilaitis referenced the summary slide for instructional supplies at the copy center and noted that he does not see a savings as a result of the copy center. Ms. Matthews noted that she will be meeting with the copier company on Tuesday and will obtain an analysis of the savings.

Mr. Panilaitis asked if the two new teaching positions that will be added as a result of the Shawsheen Tech assessment have been determined. Dr. O'Connor explained that they are focusing on positions at the high school as there has been an increase in enrollment.

Mr. Panilaitis asked how much is received in athletic fees to cover coaching fees (Appendix B). Mr. Libby noted that approximately \$120,000 is received and between \$80,000 and \$90,000 is spent to cover Appendix B. Mr. Panilaitis asked what the cost to eliminate athletic fees would be. Ms. Sherry noted approximately \$100,000. Mr.

Panilaitis requested this be looked at again as he does not feel a child should not be able to play a sport because they cannot afford the fee.

Dr. O'Connor noted that he has received mixed reviews with the summer program and there are people who would like to see the town take over the program as there are fewer rules. Mr. Montuori noted that he has not received many complaints about the program and explained that either the school or town will run the program, but not both.

Mr. Aznavoorian asked if the school department has seen any impact from the Green initiative. Ms. Matthews noted that she is currently working on this and will provide. Dr. O'Connor explained that the school department was able to update lighting at some of the schools with Green Community grant funds. All of the lighting at the Dewing was replaced and as well as the gymnasiums at the Wynn and Ryan Schools.

Mr. Aznavoorian asked about grants that may be available to the school department. Dr. O'Connor explained that they continually look into grants; however, do not qualify for most. Ms. Matthews notes that she follows this frequently.

Parks and Recreation

Mr. Montuori noted that there are currently two staff members in the parks and recreation department; one transferred over midyear from the DPW. The department focuses on field lining on Thursday and Fridays. There are no animal control calls handled on Thursdays, unless it is an emergency. Mr. Montuori noted that the focus of the parks and recreation department this year will be rebuilding the fields and cleaning up the park. A new playground is expected to be installed at Funway Park in May, 2014 and Mr. Montuori would like to have to 2 town employees trained on maintenance, inspections, etc. The total recommended parks and recreation budget is \$139,090.

Mr. Aznavoorian asked if any of the youth fees are used towards field work. Mr. Montuori explained that youth fees go into the revolving account.

3) Town Manager and Finance Director Reports (as applicable)

There were none.

4) Committee Member Reports (as applicable)

There were none.

5) Approval of Meeting Minutes

There were no minutes presented for approval.

6) Future Proposed Meeting Dates

Thursday, March 6, 2014	7:00 p.m. Pike House
Thursday, March 13, 2014	7:00 p.m. Pike House
Thursday, March 20, 2014	7:00 p.m. Pike House
Thursday, March 27, 2014	7:00 p.m. Police Station
Thursday, April 3, 2014	7:00 p.m. Pike House
Thursday, April 10, 2014	7:00 p.m. Pike House
Wednesday, April 23, 2014	7:00 p.m. Pike House

Adjourn.

MOTION: Mr. Panilaitis made the motion to adjourn at 11:17 a.m.; seconded by Mr. Lisiecki and the motion carried 5-0.

Approved:

**Documents Presented and/or Discussed
March 1, 2014**

- 1) **School Department FY15 Budget**
A copy can be found with the School Department Business Manager

- 2) **Town Manager's Recommended FY15 Budget**
A copy can be found at the Finance Department or with the Town Manager