

Dover Warrant Committee Minutes of the March 7, 2012 meeting

Members in attendance: Andrew Waugh (presiding), James Stuart, John Cone, Kathy Gill-Body, Maureen Arkle

Non-members in attendance: Jim Dawley (Dover Selectmen), Mary Carragon (Personnel Board), Valerie Spriggs (Superintendent), Lauren Doherty, Carolyn Ringel, & Dawn Fiore (Dover School Committee), Shelley Poulsen & Robyn Hunter (Regional School Committee).

Location: Dover Town House

Andy Waugh called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Mr. Stuart made a motion to approve the minutes of February 29, second by Ms. Gill-Body. Approved 5-0.

Personnel Board: Mary Carragan gave an overview of the history of the compensation studies done in Dover between 2000-2012. These include salary studies done in 2000, 2008 and 2012 and classification studies done in 2002 and 2005. Salary studies collect compensation information from area towns for the various town jobs, while classification studies review all jobs in the town, create job descriptions and validate positions to comparable jobs in other towns in addition to collecting compensation information. The overall goals of both types of studies are to match similar jobs in the marketplace and ensure fair wages. The Personnel Board feels that it is time to perform another classification (validation) study in FY 13 as the prior one will soon be 7 years old. 35-40 jobs will be reviewed involving approximately 50 town employees. Estimated cost for the classification (validation) study is \$45,000 (high estimate).

Chickering School Budget Review: Mrs. Ringel distributed 4 packets of handouts (Chickering detailed budget, Historical Per Student Cost Composition packet, Chickering Spending by classification packet, and Full Day Kindergarten packet) which she then reviewed. The proposed FY 13 budget is \$8,355,454, which is 1.33% over the FY 12 budget. Factors which influenced the FY 13 budget include the following:

1. There will be one less second grade classroom in FY 13 compared to FY 12 due to declining enrollment. The DSC's plan is to continue to cut one classroom per year as the current first grade class moves up each year, maintaining the policy of 17-22 students per classroom, to address the declining enrollment. Enrollment was 550 students in Sept 2011, and 513 students in Sept 2012.
2. Due to excess funds related to SPED expenses for the last few years, the estimates for FY 13 Sped related expenses were done less conservatively in the FY 13 budget.
3. Transportation expenses were able to be more reliably planned in the FY 13 budget due to several years experience with the current transportation contract.
4. A Language Learning Classroom now exists at Chickering with 3 students currently enrolled (a maximum of 6 students may be enrolled). This makes use of an empty classroom and also allows some students with similar educational needs to stay at Chickering rather than attend an out of district school or collaborative.
5. There was a 1.0 FTE reduction in personnel (teacher) at Chickering this year due to declining enrollment. When there is a reduction in personnel, non-tenured teachers are reduced first per the teacher's union contract.

6. In an effort to keep students with special needs at Chickering, and to endure successful differentiation of learning and a model of inclusion, the DSC has adopted a policy of staffing teacher aides at a level of one aides for every 2 classrooms.

7. There were no announced teacher retirements at Chickering for FY 13.

8. Full day kindergarten proposal – The DSC has voted to moved to full day kindergarten at Chickering which essentially means adding 6-9 hours/week of instructional time for kindergarteners (every other Wed will remain a half day similar to the schedule at Pine Hill). In the packet provided are data to support this change, a curriculum analysis based on the new educational standards that have evolved over the last 10 years, and information about other towns (2/3 towns in MA have full day kindergarten). The cost to implement is \$71,000 (\$68,000 for teacher salaries and \$11,500 for transportation).

Mrs. Ringel and Ms. Spriggs responded to questions throughout the presentation. The WC will follow-up with any additional questions that may arise.

2. The presentation slide showing the FY '13 use of E&D showed an "estimated deficit balance CDC" of \$304,630. There was a question as to what this relates to, how does/has that number change/d from year-to-year - since the CDC is no longer operational as part of the school system. Would you provide more information on this component of the E&D account?

Regional School Committee Budget Review: Mrs. Poulsen distributed a packet (DS RSC FY 13 Operating Budget presentation) and then reviewed the packet information related to the proposed FY 13 Regional School Committee budget. The RSC just voted to accept the proposed FY 13 budget at their meeting last night, and a detailed copy of the budget was not available for review by the WC. The proposed FY 13 budget is \$20,591,795, which is 2.26% over the FY 12 budget. Dover's assessment for the FY 13 budget is \$9,810,253 and Sherborn's assessment is \$8,256,128. \$500,000 from the RSC's Excess & Deficiency fund will be used to fund the FY 13 budget. Some aspects of revenues and grants to support the FY 13 budget are up 3.28% over FY 12 (transportation aid, fee income, miscellaneous) while Chapter 70 state aid is down 1.31%. Factors which influenced the FY 13 budget include the following:

1. There is a \$600,000 excess in the FY 12 budget due to the following: an additional \$45,462 was received in state aid, \$27,494 was received for distribution of Part D drug subsidy, \$210,000 excess in salaries is due to child rearing leaves, \$100,000 excess is the result of teachers migrating to lower cost health insurance plans (rate saver plan implemented and offered for the first time this year, negotiated as part of the teacher's union contract 2011), \$30,000 savings in utilities is related to a warmer winter and lower heating costs, and \$189,047 savings is related to a combination of other operational line items savings. This \$600,000 excess led to the RSC decision to use \$500,000 of E&D funds towards the FY 13 budget, and to use another \$75,000 to fund the engineering study to get specific bids and costs to air condition DSMS to address the heating issue.

2. The use of E&D funds was reviewed. The E&D fund balance is projected to be \$800,855 as of 6/30/12, which is 3.89% of the operating budget.

3. Enrollment trends were reviewed. Enrollment (total for DSMS and DSHS combined) was 1141 in 9/2012 and is projected to be 1174 in 9/2013. There are no specific increased costs associated with the growing enrollment in the regional schools.

4. The FY 13 reflects a 1.0 increase in a SPED aide over the FY 2012 budget to meet student needs. The employee was actually already hired in FY 2012, even though not part of the FY 2012 budget, but this FTE was added to the FY 2013 budget.

5. There were no announced teacher retirements at DSMS or DSHS for FY 13.

6. Mrs. Poulsen Ms. Spriggs provided an update about progress made on the WWTF project. Phase 1A was completed in Nov 2011, and testing following completion demonstrated the need to proceed with Phase 1B which was completed in Feb 2012. Test results performed after completion of Phase 1B should be received soon, and if the tests show that compliance with the standards has been met, there will be no need for Phase 2. Phase 2 will be required if the tests show non-compliance.

7. Capital budget items included in the proposed FY 13 budget include asphalt resurfacing (\$12,275), high school court yard roof repair (\$14,850) and middle school gym floor resurfacing (\$9950). The RSC has many additional items in their 5 year capital budget plan, and explained that they need to consider a long range plan for funding deferred items.

Mrs. Poulson and Ms. Spriggs responded to questions throughout the presentation. The WC will follow-up with any additional questions that may arise after the detailed budget is available for review.

Being no other reports or business before the Committee, Mr. Waugh made a motion to adjourn, second by Mr. Cone. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2012 at 7 PM in the Dover Town House.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Gill-Body