

**HAMPDEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
February 26, 2018
Hampden Town House**

Approved March 5, 2018
Called to order at 6:06pm

Members Present – Carol Fitzgerald & Doug Boyd, Co-Chairs, Heather Turcotte, Matt Fisher and Alan Fritts

Members Absent – none

Also Present – Bill Bontempi, HWRSD SC, Al Ganem Jr, Superintendent of School, Howard Barber, Director of Finance, Operations and Human Resources, HWRSD, Duane Mosier, Rita Vail, Lena Buteau, Mary Ellen Glover, Eva Wiseman, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Registrar

FY19 Budget Process:

HWRSD Al Ganem Jr opened the discussion supplying the fact that the HWRSD is rated number 45 out of 351 school districts. He emphasized that this is the first time we have made the top 50, (prior ratings were 82nd and 83rd).

Doug asked Howie is the school had revolving accounts and Howie replied that they did and gave sports as an example. Overall operational change with increases and decreases in enrollment. Enrollment numbers of all schools reviewed. Chapter 70 funding is up, that calculates to a \$20 allocation per student. Doug mentioned that it is disappointing to see that there is a 3 ½% increase in the state level but less than a 1% increase here as well as the decrease in reimbursement for mandated transportation. The SD is looking at an approximate 8% increase with the SVRHT, although this is still in the initial stages. Carol asked if there was a set percentage in mind for administrative versus classroom expenses. Al replied that they are working from a zero-based budget which has not been done in the past. They asked principals to build their budgets based on staffing, paras and supplies with no presumption of cost. Carol asked is they ended up consistent historically with the administrative vs classroom. Al gave an example of special education and BCBA's being private providers. The district looked at the best way to reduce that cost. Heather asked id there is a different allocation by grade or school and Howie replied that all students received an equal share. Reduction of 8.45 FTE's in staffing reviewed, increase of 28.17 FTE's reviewed. Alan asked why the increase when enrollment remains static. Al explained that there will be a need for an assistant principal at Green Meadows, and additional teachers will be needed at Wilbraham Middle School to fully implement the Middle School Model, Mile Tree School, Stony Hill Road Schools need to decrease class sizes. Al added that other additional staff will be special education staff, behavior staff, school adjustment counselors. The Middle School model will be fully implemented with an additional sixth grade classroom. There will be two sixth grade, two seventh grade and two eight grade classrooms and music, art, health, and tech and engineering will be available. Al stated there will be no middle school model at Green Meadows, but that there will be the same educational offerings. Carol asked is there would be tech and engineering and Al said there would not. Carol asked if there were any way to bring to GM so that kids can have some of that? Al stated there would be the Middle School Model at WMS and that Green Meadows students would have a middle school education, they would be learning the same things. Al mentioned that para professionals could be used as 1:1, 1:2 or even 1:3. Doug asked if there was the physical space within the building and Al replied that they are consolidating and moving. He also mentioned the two preschool program areas at MRHS as well as a building substitute to help keep costs down as they spend nearly \$200,000/year on substitutes. Carol reminded Al that staff over 30 hours are subject to the ACA. Doug asked what the SC cutoff date for transfers is and was told it is open ended at this point. Heather questioned staff decreases and if they were being done by seniority and Al answered yes and added that he is reviewing certifications, too. Alan asked if GM has enough rooms to house as proposed and Al responded yes.

TWB support costs - will these be the town or schools' liabilities? Students services, contracted services show a net decrease of \$163,000 with those aging out bringing the figure down \$292,000 – these funds will return to the district. The governor's budget doesn't include a circuit breaker credit, this will be an anticipated \$475,000 loss - Doug added that it will directly transfer to the towns tax base. Alan asked if TWB was being shut down and Al replied that he will not be putting students there next year. Alan asked if there were insurances to cover the standby of the school with security and monitoring and Al responded that Parks and Recreation keeps the building active, Alan asked about freeze protection and both Al and Howie asked that this be tabled until the facilities director could give a better answer. Doug mentioned internet monitoring and energy management and

Duane Mosier responded that it is not as updated as GM. Alan posed a series of questions to AI was advised by the school attorneys not to answer. Alan asked if the district was planning on asking Hampden to allow the transfers and AI responded that they were waiting for the town to put the question on a ballot. Alan asked if this was approved by both towns would there be a new budget. AI responded that they would definitely look at the budget. Bill Bontempi outlined the three choices – allow sixth grade students to cross town lines, allow seventh and eighth grade students to cross town lines and last to modify the regional agreement. He added that they would teachers with the students, Alan replied in essence that says it not equal opportunity education. AI responded that they were providing equal education and that it just looked a little different. Howie reviewed the savings from rebinding the long-term debt over the next 22 years with a first-year anticipated savings of \$87,000 and subsequent years savings of approximately \$120,000 per year. Carol asked the bottom line 1.14% increase to Hampden, and a 5.74% increase to Wilbraham. Doug asked about the contribution to the high school capital maintenance fund, he added that there was a clear directive from both towns to establish and fund account and stated that it was important that something be allocated to it. Excess and Deficiency account inquired about and Howie explained that is for a one-time use, unexpected, non-recurring and that there was no direct offset for E&D. The school choice revenue is expected at \$600,000. Rita Vail asked for a budget dollar amount and Howie responded that it is presently \$46.4 million, and it will be \$47.9 million, Doug added a \$1.5 million increase to the overall budget. Duane asked of the \$48 million what percentage actually used for education, we have a lot of administrative costs. AI quickly responded all, while Duane referenced a Niche report that broke it down to 59 cents out of every dollar to education and 41 cents from every dollar to administering that education.

Registrars/Town Clerk/Tax Collector There is a big jump due to increase in election activity for the upcoming fiscal year. Eva is looking at the Accountant and Treasurer being added to the Vadar software and the unknown expense of merging. Eva went on to inform the committee that the state is strongly suggestion that records be made available in electronic format. Carol asked who would be doing that and Eva said that it wouldn't be the same person, she would have two people working the position. Election expense increase – Eva would rather shoot for stars than have to come back. There were 743 voters at town election, early voting very costly. Losing her revolving account may be an issue at some point as there will be an expense for new computers.

Transfer Request A request was received from the BOS to transfer \$10,000 into the law and claims account. *Carol made a motion to approve the request, Heather seconded, all in favor 5-0.*

Minutes To be reviewed at next meeting.

Next meeting scheduled for 6pm on March 5, 2018

With no further business, Carol made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:33pm, Doug seconded, all in favor 5-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindi Connors, Clerk