



## **TOWN OF BERKLEY FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Meeting minutes of Monday, February 6, 2023**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING FOR FEBRUARY 6, 2023, AT 6:00PM**

**IN ATTENDANCE: CHAIRMAN JOE FREITAS, VICE CHAIR MATT CHABOT AND MICHELE HAMILTON**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by chairperson Joe Freitas, followed by an introduction of Superintendent Melissa Ryan and Director of Business and Finances Andrea Porter of the Berkley K-8, who are also in attendance.

**The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Budget.**

Ms. Ryan spent a few minutes going over those with whom she would like to recognize for their involvement and support for the K-8 school system. Also, the proposed budget will be presented to the School Committee at their next posted meeting for approval.

Going over the historical budget review as a guide to ease the proposed budget for fiscal year 2024 gave us an insight into a period over the last 5 years and included Chapter 70; actual budget; FTEs; School Choice and Grants. This outline supplied a picture of the increases over the 5-year period and how the state funds in chapter 70 revenue increased \$60.00 per student over the past 5 years.

Ms. Ryan shared with the committee a letter that was sent to Governor Healy urging her to implement the Chapter 70 formula in a manner that reflects the actual costs of inflation.

The contractual Obligation for fiscal year 2023-2024 is 2% increase. The contracts for the school systems, years 2025, 2026 and 2027 will be under negotiation. The plan is to start talking in the fall and work through the year 2023-2024.

The goal of the Fiscal year 2024 is to integrate the current knowns and future unknowns to support a level of service for all students and continue to address the needs of the district. This includes the contractual obligations, overall budget reviews; enrollment and caseloads within the Berkley Public Schools.

Ms. Ryan showed that they are assuming chapter 70 will continue to be funded at the minimum per student rate; fuel and utilities will continue at an inflated rate; Special Education costs will increase; revenue from Surround Care will support the cost of a custodian outside of the operating budget; revenue from the Cafeteria will support salary and contractual increase for associated staff; and School Choice, after the offset of sending students, will prevent staff reductions.

Ms. Ryan is recommending a budget at a rate of 4.086% more than last year. The cost factor is \$9,381,698 total for fiscal year 2023-2024 and increase of \$368,270 from fiscal year 2022-2023.

51% or 2.086 of this budget includes fixed costs, such as, fixed costs, transportation, collaboratives, and utilities at a cost of \$188,218.00. All other costs are 49% or 2% at a cost of \$179,829.00. Which totals the \$368,270.00 increase.

Ms. Ryan supplied information about a breakdown of percent increase by line item; 2024 budget comparison; budget allocations; revolving accounts; grant analysis and a 5-year plan for expected capital requests.

In conclusion Ms. Ryan made a recommendation to the Town of Berkley and the Finance Committee to set up a Special Education Stabilization Tuition Account to supply the security needed to support the unanticipated cost of special education.

Any remaining funds from the annual appropriation should be placed into this account.

In conclusion, the Finance Committee thanked Ms. Ryan for all the information (both current and future information) provided. It is highly informative and gives the Finance Committee a thorough vision of the needs of the schools.

Next on the Agenda, Chairman Joe Freitas shared with the committee:

- that he received an estimate of free cash for 1.3 million.
- Out Standing bills equal \$181,000. (Bristol Plymouth Vocational High School Bill)
- Dept Exclusion of \$269,000.

Out of taxes is a debt exclusion of \$269,000 and the outstanding bills of \$181,000 equaling to \$450,000.

APRA - \$700,000, storm water of a cost at \$138,000 can be taken out of this fund.

- Projected growth funds of \$49,000.


Also, in addition to the above information, the Finance Advisory Board discussed and approved the following for the extra hours worked during the shortage of personnel in various departments.


- Assistant Town Account and added \$750 – May to August.
- Tax Collector Account and added \$1,000 – May to August
- Town Clerk Account and added \$1,000 – for election hours
- Selectmen Account and added \$1,000 – May to August

The FAC is currently looking at other departments that may be affected by the shortage of personnel.

Recap of our fiscal year budget calendar and decided to add to our list the Planning Board, Board of Health, and Veterans department on the Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> schedule for presentation of their budgets. Also, inviting the library on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February for a presentation of their budget.

A motion was made by Michele Hamilton and seconded by Matt Chabot to approve the adjournment of the meeting for February 6, 2023. The motion was approved unanimously by the committee

 2.27.2023

 02/27/2023  
Michele K. Hamilton 2/27/2023