



TOWN OF HANOVER
550 HANOVER STREET
HANOVER, MASSACHUSETTS 02339

Advisory Committee

Hanover Advisory Committee
550 Hanover Street
Hanover, MA 02339
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 16, 2022 – 5:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Committee Attendees

Emmanuel Dockter
Sandy Hayes
Joan Port-Farwell

Steve Freedman
Jim Hoyes
Greg Satterwhite

Residents At Large

Mike Cianciola

Doug MacLellan

Absent

Steve Kmito
Gerry O'Hearn

Gavin Little-Gill

Other Attendees

Joe Colangelo, Town Mgr.
Matt Ferron Superintendent of Schools

Chelsea Stevens, Finance Dir.
Mike Perrone, Interim Assistant Superintendent for
Business and Finance

Tom Nee, Director of Technology Operations

Chairman Dockter called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM. There were 6 members present and 3 absent.

There were no public comments.

Chairman Dockter asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the February 9th meeting. There was a review of the changes recommended by the committee and the motion was accepted with amendments. The minutes were approved as amended unanimously.

Chairman Dockter asked Matt Ferron, to share the schools FY23 budget. Matt shared that they are in a very different place. COVID-19 has put the budget in disarray. He shared that there is only so much horse trading we can do. We don't have enough resources to trade off. Salaries and services that were paid for with grants are now required. There are mental health issues with staff and students and we have to work toward academic recovery. Matt shared that their budget is in a situation like they have never seen before. This is his 9th or 10th budget and the target is always level service.

Slide 1 – There is nothing unusual with traditional staff positions. Grants are going away (ESSR and ARPA IDEA) totaling \$500,000. - He explained that they are in a place where they don't have enough resources. They can use ARPA funds for facilities and capital but not mental health. The additional needs are autism and mental health.

Slide 2 – Substitute Teachers/ABA Tutors salary needs to be increased \$10 to \$105 per day. It is very competitive with surrounding districts. That increase is \$20,000.

Special Education and Mental Health Support Needs - The Middle School needs a program on Autism. We can't pull it off the shelf. They will be utilizing NECC (New England Center for Children) for this program - \$250,000. They will be buying the service. For a year or 2 we will be using program staff to teach this.

Instructional Support and Administration equal \$299,860

Total Programing = \$774,860

This has been given a lot of thought!

Slide 3 – Strategies to Balance the Budget

- All current positions & resources remain in FY23.
- Chapter 70. We are receiving an increase from the Governor - \$200,000
- Reduced 1st draft budget - \$200,000
- Reduced Special Education to \$350,000

Slide 4 – Strategies to Balance the Budget (cont.)

- Accessing multiple accounts
 - ARPA Funding for mental health counseling
- Utilizing carry-over balances in revolving accounts – especially Circuit Breaker & Special Education Reserve accounts.

Slide 5 – Hierarchy of Funding

- \$35,722,436 Cost to Run the Business
- - 33,571,915 Town Appropriation
- - 600,418 ARPA IDEA Grant for Special Education Tuition
- - 150,000 Carry over from Circuit Breaker

Revolving Accounts – Circuit Breaker	\$667,150
Spend	500,000
Roll Over	150,000

SPED Reserve – this is a last resort. To access SPED Reserve fund requires approval from the Selectmen and School Committee.

To accurately project FY23 is very challenging and difficult. We will know more by April or May how FY22 will land and that will help set the table for more accurate projections for FY23.

- \$322.953 to get to Zero in FY23.

Question – Can you explain the Circuit Breaker Process?

Circuit Breaker provides state aid to cities and towns to help reimburse or prevent extraordinary costs from beyond the capacity for a district.

Circuit Breaker reimburses from up to 75% of expenses that exceed 4 times the per pupil average. The state sets the number.

Example - \$100,000 expense, reimburses \$30,000. We are audited on these expenses.

Slide 6 – Mike shared – Budget 3.0 – FY23 Budget Summary

Projected FY23 = \$33,571,915

Expenses = \$2,050,000

Increase = 6.5%

Question: SPED Reserve Funds Definition

This fund is used as needed to cover unexpected tuition expenses. We call this the funding source of last resort. We are projecting as if we will need it, but we won't know, but we don't want to go down this path if we don't need it. The question is are you using this as operating funds? We don't want to I would say the answer is, no, but we have it as a parachute to get to Zero at the end. We have a \$35,000,000 operation and the budget will fluctuate throughout the year.

Question: Is the reserve balance anticipated to be \$560,000 as of June 29th. Maybe! If I was to guess it is unlikely that it will be \$560,000. We are going to work as hard as we can to be at \$560,000 or as close as we can. The more we have in that account the more we can roll forward and the more protection we have for unanticipated expenses. We have several hundred dollars of pending cases that may results in tuitions and those are not been baked into the current budget.

Question: Can you explain the placeholder for \$120,000 on the SPED tuition line. We are anticipating two tuitions that we know we are going to need this money for... We don't know what school and exactly which students are going to fall into those slots.

There are a lot of challenges that have come out of the pandemic. 2 years ago we had 20 kids in out of district tuition. Next year we will probably have 30 or 33% increase. With an average increase of \$100,000, this is a big deal! If a kid needs this we are going to do it. If we can do it with our own program we will. We do realize there are times we don't have what a child needs. We are disappointed when that happens, but COVID has made situations more difficult.

We do use an all fund approach – We will use every grant, every revolving account before we use the SPED reserve. We will have looked at everything.

Once town meeting approves the budget we go over all 600 lines of the budget to then figure out all the transfers to zero every out; then we use revolving accounts and SPED reserve as necessary to get to zero.

Question: Substitute Teacher Rate – There is no way around this! We are going to \$105. Substitute teachers are really hard to find.

Question: Starting Salary Rates?

1st year with Master degree - \$65,000

HS math teacher - far north of that

Reading, Speech Therapist, Psychologist - we are nowhere near that

We are going to hire good people. Expectation in this community requires that we do so.

Question: 10% Increase for a number of teachers

Teacher's still in step process. COLA and Step Change 8, 9, 10%

If advanced degree or, grad credits. They can change lanes

Some could be more than 10%.

Question: Number of teachers are making above \$100,000

Many teacher salaries are at or about \$100,000. We are competitive, but not excessive and \$100,000 is becoming the norm. Some are capped, but not all.

Question: \$75,000 for teacher degrees Change FY23. It is zero in FY22.

This is a Raabism! Between \$50,000 and \$75,000 or lane changes. We anticipate we will need \$50,000 to \$75,000 for lane changes for FY23.

Question: \$76,000 FY22 for nursing services. That was for a special situation and we don't need it anymore.

Question: Board of Selectmen's presentations and the parents expect excellence. We have an excellent program across the board. The demands are getting higher and greater every year. The budget provides everything we are doing now and strengthens where we are weak. Without this we will survive.

Question: Have we looked at collaborating with other towns?

We do collaborate with other town's programs. I would hope there will be opportunities. Our Middle School program may allow us to accept students from other towns and vice versa. We don't have a formal collaborative arrangement

Question: Carousel Extreme funding is a \$70,000 a year funding for next 7 years. Tom Nee answered this question. Last year we had an evaluation of our high school network and our other schools. The high school came on-line about 10 years ago and there are about 30 switches in that building. The switches are fairly expensive so we came up with a 7 year plan to replace them. That is the cost estimate made last year to replace those switches. Rather than do one big capital item we wanted to get this into the operation budget and that is the source of that line item.

Question: In transportation, you are removing \$30,000 for anticipating increase in fuel costs. Are you concerned that you are removing it? This will fluctuate. In our contract, we pay a certain amount. We

aren't worried about this right now. No reduction. Our relationship with the bus company is great! There is an escalator clause in the contract. We have been hit with this year, but Mike Perrone thinks we will be O.K. Mike came back after some research and the \$30,000 is for this current year. We put in a \$2,500 increase for next year. That matches what we are paying.

Question - High school coaches \$243,000. How many coaches are actually Hanover school employees? This represents at least half. Probably even north of that. The operating budget will cover the coaching salaries. A lot of the other athletic expenses are covered by the revolving accounts. Students pay a fee to play soccer for example. This line item covers all coaches.

One comment – SPED Reserve – we started it to make sure that we don't pit Regular Ed against Special Ed. A long time ago there was something like that back in the early 2000, and we said, never again, it's all our students. We will spend the money wherever we have to. We started this reserve fund so that we were not taking from one fund or another so we built up this reserve. It's great that it is at \$560,000. I appreciate you trying to figure out ways not to go into it, but at the same time, if you need to, I think people will understand it. It's there for us to not take away from other students. I know you will try your hardest, and I just want to be sure every student, Special Ed, Regular Ed get treated the best we can.

Warrant Articles – 24, 28, 41, 46, 48

Support Article 24 – Turf Field and Track – We support that completely. The field is beat and the track is almost beat. The field has reached the end of its useful life.

Article 28 – School Campus Engineering – Administration supports all of these. We presented these to the School Committee. I can't speak completely for them, but they have been aware of all of this; and have been supportive. The school campus engineering is to do an evaluation and design of redoing the parking lots at the Middle School, Cedar School and the High School and building a connector road between the two. There is a path between the middle school and the high school that is used for all kinds of things. It is traversed daily by students. It is very highly used. One of the reasons for it being proposed as making it a road is safety and egress. For example - If there is an 8th grade ceremony you can't even get on that campus. So if there was an emergency of some kind, god forbid, we need another egress. The cost of parking lots could wait another year to do this comprehensive project. Either way the parking lots at Cedar School and Middle Schools parking lots are terrible. Can we go a year more with terrible parking lots, sure. If at the end of the day the project will be too expensive to do the road and do the whole thing, then we can fall back and talk about parking lots again. So do support if that project could go off it would be a great thing for the town, but I have no idea how much the cost would be to build a road through wet lands and protected areas. I can't imagine it is cheap.

Article 41 - B. Everett Hall Park – We have no objection – CPC

Article 46 – Matt asked Tom to address the article. IT Capital – Combination of 2 items on our five year capital plan. One is to replace Master clock and intercom system at Cedar School. It looks like that is going to be rolled into the Cedar School vestibule project, which I think is going to be paid for with ARPA funds. That leaves two items – the Master Clock and intercom system at the Middle School. That is about 2/3 of the \$100,000 and that's a project that the technology department inherited from the facilities department. They are in charge of that

particular technology department component, but it made sense for it to come under technology. The old master clock can't be programmed anymore. I've never tried to hook it up to a laptop. These are just notes I got when I started in the role. Other people have looked at it and it can't be updated as is and it will have to be replaced. The master clock does a series of things – it handles all the clocks in the building, and I believe it handles some other facilities related items possibly building controls, but I'm not even sure about that. The intercom system kinds of works, but fluky and it can be considered a safety issue if the communication system breaks down, so it is something we have to replace at some point. I am also hoping to roll into that the video door system (like a ring video doorbell) where people come to the door, people with the correct phone and see who is at the door and they open it for them. The other component is the phones at the police department, fire department, town hall and council on aging. When we went to voice over IP system VOIP, just over 10 years now; the old polycom phones we have are starting to show their age. They are difficult to program. If there are any programming changes the new phones are much easier to diagnose remotely. At some point we do need to replace the entire fleet of polycom phones. It is in the capital budget; if it has been cut out or pushed out to a future year we can make due.

Chairman Dockter asked Matt – “Regarding any warrant article relating to the schools it is a bigger challenge, where on the town side everything runs up to the town manager. On the school side you have the challenges of having facilities and planning so one of the challenges we have seen over the past couple of years is that you might have facilities say it looks like this upgrade needs to happen. It's not clear if it went through school administration or got to the level of school committee whether it is a priority or not. I certainly don't expect answers tonight, I know you have a school committee meeting tonight, but if you could bring this up to them and if they could take a look and if there is anything that anyone says I don't know why this is here we wouldn't support this or we strongly support this. It would be great for us to hear, so we can consolidate that information to get to town meeting in our commentary. Matt said that would be no problem at all. The school committee has seen the different variations of the capital plan as it has moved forward and to date I don't think there has been any objections to the items that we have discussed. Every year we work with the town manager and his team and facilities and everybody and we go back and forth to try to work some of this stuff out. The answer is, yes, I will make sure the school committee is very well aware of what is going on here and if there is any commentary or strong feedback on any one of these items, I will definitely get it to you.

Does anyone have any questions on these five articles? Questions for Matt or Tom.

Question: Do we have an amount of Article 41. Joe do we have an amount for Article 41? That is a CPC articles. \$22,000 is Joe's recollection.

Question: For the school campus engineering article is part of that artifice going to look at other options for access for the middle school. Or, is it solely looking at the option of trying to connect to the high school through the pathway. That's an excellent question, this is what I believe they will do is look at other options. When the scope of work is done for that RFP for the study, we can certainly build that in and look at all options for access and egress.

Article 48 – Appropriate Funds – Special Education Reserve Fund (\$500,000)

Chairman Dockter asked Tom if he had a separate presentation for IT. Tom shared that it is incorporated into the school presentation.

Chairman Dockter asked if there were any other questions.

Chairman Dockter thanked Matt, Mike and Tom for coming. He thanked them for their flexibility. If you have any additional information you can continue to share, please do so.

Member discussion – Chairman Dockter shared with the committee that starting 2/28 Town Hall will start in-person meetings with a hybrid zoom option. Members were asked if they were OK with this. Members were OK with returning to live and hybrid meetings. Emmanuel asked Carol to update agendas. Another member wanted to be sure for a future meeting, March 9 we have the Transfer Station Sub-Committee attending, could they be at the beginning since we made them wait last time and they were unable to present because they had to leave for another meeting. Also at the 3/9 meeting please, add Cathy Harder-Bernier to the agenda. Chairman Dockter wants to be clear that Transfer Station Subcommittee reports to the Select Board and he doesn't expect that they would be reporting to us like they would to the Selectboard, but any information that some members feel would be helpful to receive that would affect some of our commentary especially regarding the transfer station related warrant articles would be great.

Our next meeting will be next Wednesday, March 2 at 6 PM. The presentation will be DPW and Library

A motion was made to adjourn. The motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:23 pm.