



Town of Medway  
**FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
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Wednesday, March 9, 2022  
Sanford Hall, Town Hall  
155 Village Street

Present: Todd Alessandri, Chair; Jim Sullivan, Vice Chair; Ellen Hillery, Clerk; Chris Lagan; Will Lane; Jeff O'Neill; Sue Segarra.

Absent: Brian Cowan; Michael Schrader.

Staff Present: Michael Boynton, Town Manager; Carol Pratt, Finance Director; Rich Boucher, Director, Information Services; Medway Public Schools: Dr. Armand Pires, Superintendent; Don Aicardi, Director of Finance and Operations; Kristyn DeDonato, Assistant Business Manager.

Others Present: Cindy Sullivan, School Committee.

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At 7:02 PM Chairman Alessandri called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order with seven members present and two members absent.

At this time, Chairman Alessandri announced a slight change to the agenda in that the School Department will be presenting their information first.

**Medway Public Schools FY23 Budget Review**

*The following information was received: (1) Medway Public Schools - FY23 Preliminary Budget Book; and (2) Preliminary Budget Presentation – PowerPoint.*

Present: Dr. Armand Pires, Superintendent of Schools; Don Aicardi, Director of Finance and Operations; Kristyn DeDonato, Assistant Business Manager.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Pires reviewed a number of topics including tonight's goals, 2019-2024 Strategic Plan Goals as well as budget development strategies employed in this budget. He noted that they anticipate a relatively level enrollment for the coming year, pointing out that there are several housing developments under construction right now, and once built out and occupied, those residences could house school-age children. The School Department will address staffing needs as enrollment and class sizes require additional staff.

Mr. Aicardi reviewed historical figures for annual percentage increases for budgets beginning with FY16 through FY23 with the FY23 increase targeted at \$700,000 reflecting a 2.41% increase. Next he turned attention to available funding sources of Chapter 70 Aid, State and Federal Grants (IDEA Grant), Circuit Breaker, School Choice, and Revolving Funds. He emphasized that School Choice funds were not being considered for the FY23 budget; historical information for FY15 – FY22 was reviewed. Mr. Aicardi spoke briefly about Circuit Breaker funds, noting that specialized transportation costs are now eligible for these funds reflecting a recent change at the state level. This would cover expenses for vans transporting students to various schools for programs specified in their IEP.

Many COVID-19 expenses were covered by a variety of sources, based on whether the expense was eligible for reimbursement. These funds were available from a variety of grant and federal funding. Detailed information on these sources is included at the end of the school budget document.

It was noted that many of the level service development considerations include costs that are either locked in to a year in the future or under existing contract. This helped determine level services utilizing assumptions that things like energy use will be of a similar level. As students and staff returned to the buildings, there were energy savings due to boiler use, and electrical use may garner savings as well.

Mr. Aicardi briefly described the step-by-step process of determining a level service budget, noting that the budget is based on three staff retirements with the understanding that this component can change. He itemized additional efficiencies/changes for a total of \$504,119 that will lower the anticipated budget increase. Discussion followed.

Dr. Pires addressed FY23 new budget requests including facilities accounts, summer help in the IT department, and an English Language Learner Coordinator. FTE count would increase to 313.8 representing a 1.7 FTE increase.

Regarding Municipal Budget Support, Mr. Aicardi highlighted things included in the municipal budget that benefit the schools.

Responding to a question from Mr. Lagan on costs per pupil, Dr. Pires stated that, due to the pandemic, potential costs for student needs are increased even if student population has gone down. Staff now needs to deal with student anxiety related to COVID-19, remote learning issues and associated impacts. These needs will continue to change as students become more acclimated to being back in the buildings in traditional classroom situations.

Regarding increase in library expenses, Dr. Pires responded that resources are being shifted around to help bring libraries up-to-date. Some libraries have decades-old books that need to be replaced with more updated materials.

Regarding technology, it was noted that expenses are being categorized a little differently this year. The technology needs during the pandemic hit the budget hard for the additional devices, and this is the first relatively normal budget since before COVID. Items such as software licenses were often considered instructional supplies when they really are not. So it's kind of a housekeeping issue in some respect.

General discussion followed. It was noted that the School Committee will hold its public hearing next week.

Discussion concluded at 7:44 PM. Dr. Pires, Ms. DeDonato, and Mr. Aicardi exited the meeting.

**Review of Information Services (Technology) FY23 Budget**

*The committee reviewed the following information: FY23 Budget Book, selected pages. No other materials provided.*

Present: Rich Boucher, Director, Information Services; Michael Boynton, Town Manager.

Mr. Boucher spoke briefly on general budget items such as permit applications, annual maintenance and licensing. Next year the Town will change from Microsoft Licensing so will reposition those expenses into Office 365 for the schools. This amounts to roughly a \$10,000 savings. This change was made last year for the municipal departments. Within the contract line item, he would like to engage with outside vendors to increase cybersecurity efforts including training staff. Outside factors are putting municipal systems and information at risk, and these vendors can help us eliminate or minimize impact. Discussion followed.

Another accomplishment was the receipt of a grant that enabled us to purchase 350 Chromebooks for remote learning. Funds from a Department of Justice grant was used toward additional building security at various schools, and the school district was also awarded a Community Compact grant for \$45,000.

Mr. Boynton noted that supply chain issues are impacting technology more than other departments. Additionally, Town Hall needs to replace one copy machine and is awaiting parts for another; both orders were placed in December.

Responding to a question from Chairman Alessandri, Mr. Boucher stated that the rotation cycle for the Chromebooks has changed. Pre-pandemic Chromebooks were relegated to specific grade levels, but after the pandemic, the number of available devices was increased significantly. The department now plans to use a four-year rotation schedule for approximately 400 devices a year. A purchase in February 2020 before the pandemic hit hard helped stay ahead a little. Purchases made in August 2020 took a couple months to come in. Discussion followed.

Regarding software maintenance, Mr. Boucher reported that the MUNIS contract goes up annually 5% to cover this type of expense. The payroll system NovaTime has a 7% increase each year. Discussion followed.

Discussion concluded at 8:06 PM. Mr. Boucher exited the meeting.

**Initial Review of FY23 Municipal Budget**

*The following information was reviewed: (1) FY23 Budget Summary; and (2) FY23 Budget Update (DPW).*

Present: Michael Boynton, Town Manager; Carol Pratt, Finance Director.

Mr. Boynton spoke briefly about health insurance coverage which was built into the budget at 10% without knowing the cost. Medway is now a member of a self-insured insurance group with several other communities resulting in a zero increase for subscribers. After a third-party evaluation of our health insurance [claims] history, the resulting FY23 budget was tweaked by the Select Board at the recent budget workshop. The budgeted cost was not dropped down to zero but left a cushion in for

future planning purposes. If unused, those funds historically fall to free cash; this knowledge will help with future budget development. Ultimately there should be a mechanism in place to make the best use of these funds. Discussion followed.

Utilizing the Budget Summary prepared by the Finance Director, Mr. Boynton reviewed some line items currently funded in the proposed budget with occasional discussion:

1	Property Tax Levy	6	Licenses and Permits
2	Debt Exclusion	7	Town Fees
3	New Growth	8	Debt Stabilization Fund
4	State Aid	9	Ambulance Fund
5	Revenues		

At this time, Mr. Boynton provided a brief explanation of how the ambulances are staffed; all ambulances will be used in the rotation. Increase in calls for transport were positive COVID-19 test results [transport to hospital], increase in older population {Salmon facility} and slip-and-fall incidents in addition to regular calls.

Continuing, Mr. Boynton reviewed other line items such as staffing which reflected step increases, legal costs, redefining a couple of positions, unclassified expenses which includes insurances, workers' compensation, audit expenses and others.

Turning attention to the Enterprise Funds in the Department of Public Works, Mr. Boynton explained that there is a bid out for the water treatment plant and the bid has an April deadline. The estimated construction costs are \$17.1M with additional costs for OPM and design construction administration costs. Supply chain issues will impact the costs greatly. Discussion followed.

Mr. Lagan expressed concern that several large line items have the largest increases. Mr. Boynton responded that those increases are due to changes in staffing which will be a one-time hit and not budgeted annually.

Mr. Boynton emphasized that there were no additional staff hires due to the pandemic; existing employees just worked harder if they needed to do so to get the work done.

Chairman Alessandri asked about the big increase in the Solid Waste and Sewer line items. Mr. Boynton responded that there was a price increase in the trash bags and contracts related to Solid Waste. For Sewer, there was a rate increase associated with Charles River. Brief discussion followed on the Snow and Ice budget and FY22 costs.

Mr. Boynton reported that there is a desire to staff the new Assistant Recreation Director position before July 1; an estimated cost is \$10,000 for April through June. As the funding is not in the current budget, the cost would likely come from either the Revolving Account or the Reserve Fund. At present a programming assistant is fully funded by the revolving account, but the revolving account may never be able to fund the salary for the Assistant Director position. The intent is to get a person on board to help with program planning. Discussion followed with the general committee consensus that this expense should come from the Revolving Account as it does not meet the requirements of an "emergency" transfer.

Discussion concluded at 9:37 PM. Mr. Boynton and Ms. Pratt exited the meeting.

**Miscellaneous**

Due to the lateness of the hour, all reports were postponed.

**Other Business**

Review/Approval of meeting minutes

*The committee reviewed draft minutes from February 9, 2022.*

**Mr. Lagan made a motion to approve the February 9, 2022 minutes, as amended; Mr. Sullivan seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 7-0-0.**

**Upcoming Meetings**

A budget review meeting will be held on March 16 at 7:00PM in the presentation room at Medway Middle School with an additional budget review meeting on March 30. The committee will be meeting with Police, Fire, and DPW on FY23 Budgets.

**Adjourn**

**At 9:42 PM Ms. Hillery made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Sullivan seconded. No discussion. VOTE: 7-0-0.**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanette Galliardt  
Night Board Secretary*