

Record of the Marblehead School Committee Meeting
Friday, March 1, 2019
School Administrative Offices

Members Present: Meredith Tedford, Jennifer Schaeffner, David Harris
Sarah Gold, Meagan Taylor

Members Absent: David Harris

1. Call to Order

Ms. Tedford called the meeting to order at 8:15am.

2. FY20 Budget

Ms. Tedford and Ms. Schaeffner noted that they have been sidelined by the FY18 budget deficit, and therefore are behind in discussion on the FY20 budget. This deficit has been discussed at multiple meetings and we asked what we could do to close but were only given one option and that was to find it within our budget. Ms. Schaeffner noted that we did not received any advice on any other options.

Ms. Tedford stated that she and Ms. Schaeffner would be meeting with the Finance Committee. We generate documents to see if the number provided is sufficient or if we will need to ask for more than was given but generally this meeting takes place between the Superintendent, School Finance Director and the Town Administrator. Since we don't have anyone in that role at this time, how are we to handle this? In other towns, the School Committee presents their own budget to the Town but not here in Marblehead. Our challenge is that our legal counsel is providing us with advice but the Finance committee has not. Ms. Tedford stated her concern on how the school district is going to present on March 18th. Ms. Schaeffner stated that perhaps we present the Finance Committee with a one page memo that is read by the Finance Committee or maybe by Ms. Nieto, the Town Accountant, presents the budget request from the School Committee. Ms. Tedford stated that she would like to know what the different scenarios are between now and town meeting.

Ms. Taylor noted that hopefully the finance liaisons, town administrator and school committee will work together for suggestions on how to handle our budget.

Ms. Tedford reminded the Committee that the District has set priorities and when we say we are going to cut a huge line in curriculum and district initiatives we must remember that this will impact many of our programs such as PBIS, Socio-emotional, and Inclusion initiatives. We now have a changing student body, with higher per student costs, and this means staffing to service the needs of all of these students. We need to analyze and monitor these programs as they grow and change since we've had a significant increase in students on IEPs.

Ms. Tedford noted that she and Ms. Schaeffner will be meeting with the Town Administrator today and hopefully after this meeting we will have an idea of how we can proceed with our budget. We will continue to monitor enrollment and depending on those numbers, there may be additional classes we can cut which would be helpful but this information might not be known until after the budget is done. We have already accounted for one reduction in kindergarten class and there may be a potential for a first grade but again these numbers change during the summer and after budget season.

Ms. Tedford noted that the reserve fund is not part of our operating budget. Chapter 70 money goes to the Town's general fund and the Town appropriates it. We need funding sources for increased special education tuition and for increase in transportation. Ms. Maniaci forecasted a \$300,000 increase in our of district costs next year and we need to discuss how we work with Alison Nieto for short term as she will be working with our business clerks until we hire an interim business manager. We have cut so tightly this year that if anything comes up we may not know it unless we have someone as a business manager. If we go through our appropriation, Meredith said, and we still have bills coming in, then those bills that couldn't be paid would go to "unpaid bills."

Ms. Tedford noted that she has to speak to Jason Silva about the new out of district placement for \$18,000 which we just received.

If our budget doesn't meet our needs we will need to consider raising funds other ways. Some options could be:

- Raise student fees
- Bring to town meeting to raise revenue
- ask for free cash-one time (free cash can only come from a vote at town meeting vote)
- an override
- Cut expenses more

Ms. Schaeffner noted that the Committee needs to discuss the Capital Outlay as well as the Fleet requests as we feel these repairs have to be done or the repairs will get worst and the increase in costs will be more. Ms. Tedford noted that it is important that we inform the community the difference between regular maintenance and capital outlay repairs however we seem to only have two options and that would be to make cuts and not make repairs or raise taxes. Ms. Tedford noted that the suggestion to lease a plow truck or mini bus is one that should be pursued. We will try to get costs for renting busses for athletics/clubs versus owning our own 14 passenger van.

Ms. Taylor wondered how do we address the \$1 million SPED budget over level fund? Her thoughts were that:

1. That is the bigger issue to the budget
2. It's not going away and we need to build new programs in order to make a change in that in the future.
3. We will have fresh eyes on the situation with the new SPED director

It was agreed that these are ongoing conversations with FinComm, the community and the School Committee and we need to see what people are saying at every level.

Ms. Tedford and Ms. Schaeffner stated they will take notes at their meeting with Jason Silva and send it in memo form to the rest of the School Committee.

It was agreed that everything is on the table at this point and the School Committee needs to continue to talk this through this in order to decide.

Discussion about Building Committee

It was noted that the School Committee can vote to approve the transition plan

Ms. Schaeffner stated that we could also vote to affirm that we are going to the 2019 Town Meeting with this building proposal.

It was suggested that the School Committee writes a letter to the Building Committee addressing this.

The letter to the Building Committee should include these facts:

- The transition plan is approved.
- The warrant article is passed and will not be removed.
- It will be necessary for Building Committee members to step forward and help educate the public on the building.

Ms. Schaeffner made a motion that she will draft this letter to go to the Bell/Coffin/Gerry School Building Committee from the School Committee regarding our support of the school project to be voted at our March 7, 2019 School Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gold. The committee VOTED unanimously, 4-0, in favor. The motion passes.

It was noted that the vote to approve the new school building by the School Committee needs to be added to the agenda for the March 7, 2019 School Committee meeting.

4. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made and the meeting ended at 10:34AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Gold
Marblehead School Committee