

**Warrant Committee Education Subcommittee**  
**December 12, 2022 7:30 PM**  
**Town Hall, Conference Room 1**

**RECEIVED**  
**TOWN CLERK**  
**BELMONT, MA**

DATE: February 13, 2023  
TIME: 8:56 AM

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Members in Attendance**

Bill Anderson, Anne Helgen, Paul Rickter, Laurie Slap, Matt Taylor, Jack Weis

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM

### **Preliminary Discussion**

Jack began the meeting sharing a discussion that he had with Meg Moriarty. He confirmed that the December 13<sup>th</sup> joint meeting with the School Committee and the School Department administration will be limited to special education and out-of-district tuitions. Meg indicated that, although the School Department administration had presented a staffing plan to the School Committee, the School Committee had not yet really discussed a budget yet with the School Committee. She stated that she felt that the School Committee needed time to discuss the budget itself prior to having the Warrant Committee weigh in. She said that the administration would be presenting a preliminary draft budget to the School Committee on January 3<sup>rd</sup> and that she and I would coordinate scheduling a meeting shortly after that meeting to provide an opportunity for the Ed Subcommittee to weigh in with thoughts and reactions on the preliminary budget.

### **Discussion of FY 24 School Department Budget**

Notwithstanding the more limited topic of discussion for the December 13<sup>th</sup> joint meeting, the subcommittee did discuss in general terms the administration's proposed staffing requirements that were presented to the School Committee on December 6<sup>th</sup>. While the subcommittee did not drill down into the individual positions, there was a general consensus and skepticism that all of the 20 FTEs that the administration was suggesting were needed to open the new upper middle school were necessary or justified.

The subcommittee also discussed that just the contractual COLA and step-and-lane salary increases for the existing School Department staff alone exceeded the amount of available revenue that the Town administrator's office presented at the prior budget summit, even before adding in any of the School Department's estimated costs for the new positions.

The subcommittee then turned to a discussion on out-of-district tuitions and the most recent three-year model that the administration will be presenting at the joint meeting on December 13<sup>th</sup>. For the benefit of the new members of the subcommittee, we first walked through the format of the three-year out-of-district tuition model using the FY 23 budget as an example. We then turned our attention to the specific model that the School Department would be presenting on December 13<sup>th</sup>.

The overall conclusion from the group's discussion was that the department's assumptions are dependent on a static enrollment if FY 24 and the percentage increases in tuition expenses increasing consistent with the most recent five-year trend. Given the surge of out-of-district

enrollments in FY 23 and the large approved tuition increases approved by the State for FY 24, it's fair to ask if those are reasonable budget assumptions. The committee will explore that further when we meet with the School Committee and administration on December 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.