

**Warrant Committee Education Subcommittee**  
**Joint Meeting with the School Committee Finance Subcommittee**  
**March 8, 2022 8:00 AM**  
**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

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

DATE: June 21, 2022  
TIME: 9:08 AM

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Members in Attendance**

**Warrant Committee Education Subcommittee:** Anne Helgen, Paul Rickter, Jack Weis

**School Committee:** Mike Crowley, Meg Moriarty, Jamal Saeh

**School Department Administration:** Superintendent John Phelan, Finance Director Tony DiCologero, Assistant Superintendent Janice Darias

**Others:** Geoff Lubien, Roy Epstein

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM.

### **FY 23 Budget Discussion**

John began with a presentation proposing \$2.0 million in reductions to the FY 23 General Fund budget, comprised of the following:

- An additional \$1.3 million utilization of Circuit Breaker funds for out-of-district tuitions.
- The utilization of \$400,000 in projected staff turnover savings.
- A \$150,000 reduction in supplies.
- A projected \$100,000 in LABBB credits.
- A \$50,000 reduction in SPED contract services.

Mike and Jamal both commented that the reductions carry risk. In particular, Mike noted that COVID is still a risk and that there are no COVID-related expenses in the budget other than those geared towards addressing academic recovery and mental health needs associated with the system's return to full-time in-person learning. Mike also pointed out that these are proposed reductions and that they have not yet been voted on by the School Committee.

Anne replied that the budget risk is somewhat mitigated because the increase in the FY 23 budget is relative to the FY 22 budget, not the most recent projected actual expenditures.

Jack commented that the Ed Subcommittee had really only had one meeting to substantively discuss the FY 23 budget and that that discussion focused on big-picture observations. That said, John's presentation had preemptively addressed some of our general concerns about the proposed overall increase in the budget and the seeming underutilization of accumulated reserves to cover SPED tuitions.

Anne raised the Ed Subcommittee's concerns about FTE growth in the General Fund budget in face of declining enrollment and the anticipated overall fiscal pressures on the town in future years. Regarding the first point, John pointed out that the positions in the General Fund budget that are being rolled over are support positions addressing various student needs; they are not driven by enrollment.

Paul shared the Ed Subcommittee's concerns about needing to look beyond just FY 23. Mike responded that we needed to have a longer-term view of revenue, but that we can't simply gut the School Department budget.

The discussion then turned to reviewing answers that Tony had prepared in response to some of the questions and concerns that were voiced at the full Warrant Committee meeting on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 AM.