

Gardner School Committee

FY14 School Budget Public Hearing – May 11, 2015 Elm Street School Auditorium 160 Elm Street, Gardner, Massachusetts

Members present: Mayor Mark Hawke, Chairman; James S. Boone, Vice Chairman; Carol J. Bailey, Melody Phelps, and Jennifer LaRoche, and John LaFreniere

Members absent: James Abare

Others present: Denise L. Clemons, Superintendent of the Gardner Public Schools; Mrs. Christine Caisse, Recording Secretary; Mr. Robert O’Keefe, Director of Technology; Ms. Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer; Ms. Susan Hui, Grants Administrator; Dr. Christopher Casavant, Business Administrator; Mr. Mark J. Pellegrino, Principal Gardner High School; Ms. Deborah Langlois, Principal, Gardner Middle School; Dr. MaryAnn Pour-Previti, Principal, Elm Street School, Ms. Janet C. Smith, Principal, Helen Mae Sauter School; F. Daniel Hill, Principal, Waterford Street School; Timothy J. McCormick, Principal, Gardner Academy for Learning and Technology; Mitchel Aho, Assistant Principal, The Gardner News; and other interested persons

Call to Order

Mayor Hawke, Chairman, called the Public Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget to order at 6 p.m. The meeting opened with a roll call and the pledge of allegiance. The meeting was broadcast live on cable television.

Budget Highlights – Gardner Public Schools Fiscal Year 2014

A Power Point Presentation was presented to show the highlights of the Budget and further explained by the following Administrators.

Denise Clemons, Superintendent of Schools reviewed her goals for the upcoming School Year. She stated that the 2016 budget was faced with approximately a \$600,000.00 deficit. That the Budget was based on needed School; Improvements. “Thus, the District Reorganization has allowed us to streamline resources, transition students in order to create learning environments that will lead to needed 21st century skills and most importantly, endure that there are equitable resources across the District for our 2,505 student population: “She further explained the three goals for tiered instructional growth in area of social/emotional and behavioral growth, targeted standards based instruction and transparent communication. And that the Budget is balanced and accountable to student learning.

Ms. Clemons further stated that the net school spending increase over FY 15 is \$640,578. However, the monetary number will not be validated until the Legislative budget process has been completed.

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At the Administrative Level they focused on Instructional Core. It is made to help students' transition from one building to another. The presented budgets were developed and based on needed resources for 21st century instructional strategies.. Ms. Clemons assured the Board that the instructional needs for equitable funding throughout the District were met.

Dr. Casavant stated that there was a slight increase in the Fiscal 2016 budget. Stating that 80% was salaries and 20% was expenses. He also stated that the student numbers were starting to climb back up.

Factors that effect the budget are enrollment, indirect costs, contracts and utilities.

Ms. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer, spoke on curriculum initiatives included in the proposed budget. The Curriculum/Instruction will be focused on meeting the learning needs of all students. Many different techniques and testing methods will be implemented. The New 2011 Massachusetts Common Core Standards in all subjects at all grade levels will be implemented.

An overview of the Districts' request based on Chapter 70-New School Spending, Indirect Costs and other data collection on April 22, 2015 and May 5, 2015. The Finance Subcommittee voted on May 5, 2015 that FY16 Budget developed by the Superintendent and her Central Office Administrators be presented to the full School Committee.

Dr. Christopher Casavant, Business Administrator, spoke on continuing ways to reduce the cost of utilities through conservation and energy-saving measures.

Dr. Catherine Goguen ,Chief Academic Officer spoke of the curriculum initiatives. That the Budget provides for Professionals learning community that analyzes and uses data to inform instructors. She also spoke of sharing best practices, mentoring and the support of the social/emotional health of the students. She also stated that the Budget needs to support RETELL, and WIDA training.

Dr. Goguen stated that the District has received a 2 year grant from DESE that supports the emotional and social health of the students. She further mentioned that the curriculum and instruction focused on meeting the needs of all on-line mapping. Next, training for Understanding by Design (UbD) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) should be available for Elm Street School and Central office. Hopefully there will be a 2 year grant that will help with these expenses.

Balanced literacy (balanced reading, writing and listening) is still being done for K-8 even though it is not funded. Dr. Goguen further stated that it is important to have consistency in instructional that all students have the same level of instruction and give more power to the students to see their level of understanding. She mentioned Mr. Neil Albiero is working on problem solving with the elementary grades and Michael Lawrence practices this with middle and high school students.

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Lastly Dr. Goguen mentioned that they are working on standard based report cards. That the teachers have worked hard and are ready to test out next year I order that they work out the bugs. Hopefully, they will be ready to be completely electronic by FY17.

Ms. Joyce West , Director of Pupil Personnel Services spoke about working with the Administration to develop tiered instruction, to build teams for both Regular Ed and Special Ed to increase help to struggling students. She further spoke of working with the Principals to improve scheduling for the Regular Ed and Sped students.

Robert O’Keefe, Director of Technology spoke of his plans for FY16. His first item was to have WIFI in all learning areas. His next item was to transition to the Rediker Suite, with the third being to replace the current website to integrate Rediker and Gradebook.

Mr. O’Keefe further mentioned upgrading the Microsoft Server 2003 throughout the District. Also he would like to start a 1:1 tech initiative with the Gardner Middle School. His sixth item for FY!^ would be to support the use of BYOD (Bring your own Device). And lastly, he would develop a report template using Rediker Suite and Office /Google to support Principals and Teachers.

Dr. Christopher Casavant, Business Administrator spoke on the facilities and how they can reduce spending through conservation and implement energy saving measures. And that the District needs to create a viable, sustainable and fiscally sound department.

In summary Dr. Casavant stated that we need the final State Budget numbers, and Grant numbers. The District wants to create transparency with the state funding formula to be adequate, equitable and predictable. They will also work to meet the state requirements for Student Activity Accounts.

Open Time for General Public

There were no comments from the general public on the FY 2016 Budget.

Questions

Melody Phelps asked about the 1:1` at Gardner Middle School. Mr. O’Keefe explained that it would mean passing out devices to each and every student while BYOD would mean they could also bring in their own device in addition to the 1:1 device.

Mayor Hawke mentioned that the city would be giving additional \$ according to Proposition 2 ½.

ADJOURNMENT

**Mr. Boone moved to adjourn.
Vote – so voted.**

Seconded by. Mr. LaFreniere

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:39 p.m.

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Jennifer LaRoche, Secretary

C. Caisse, Recording Secretary