

**PROVINCETOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
PROVINCETOWN HIGH SCHOOL
ELMER I. SILVA LEARNING CENTER
12 WINSLOW STREET
PROVINCETOWN, MA 02657
TUESDAY, December 17th, 2013**

Members Present: Kerry Adams (until 6 pm), Cass Benson, Anthony Brackett, Shannon Sawyer, Liz Lovati

Members Absent:

Others: Dr. Beth Singer, Superintendent

1. The meeting was called to order at: 5:20

2. Roll Called: (See above)

3. Public Comments: None

4. Minutes December 3rd, 2013

Motion to accept the minutes of December 3rd as printed.

Motion: Cass Benson **Seconded:** Shannon Sawyer **Vote:** 4-0-1

5. Public Hearing

5.1 FY-15 School budget discussion/review

We've separated one traditional budget into two – that will be two articles at town meeting one for high school students (who no longer attend Provincetown Schools) and one for grades Preschool through 8, although we've seen a significant increase in number of students in FY14, and predict a continued increase, the PK-8 budget does not correlate with that increase.

PK-8 budget

The budget does not include budget salary increases which are in the process of negotiation, it does include step increase and longevity increases. i.e. Bachelors to masters, step 6 to step 7.

On Page 1 the important change since last meeting is that we've increased the advertizing line item to \$7500, at the suggestion of FinCom and supported by PSC. This includes advertising done for vacancies and is intended to support advertising for the school district as an entity. Page 2 is personnel – classroom teachers, at PSC suggestion and vote, we've increase 3 positions by .1 FTE each: The School Social Worker. The Speech/Language Pathologist - (already increased to .7 this year, the money for that increase came from choice money because the increased demand is from a choice

student), and the position will be increased another .1 next year to .8. The school psychologist position is also being increased from .5 to .6

Shannon Sawyer: Question, one of the positions last year you recommended decreasing, correct?

Beth Singer: Yes, the school psych, and this year I recommended increase it by .05, now it will be increased by a total of .1

Anthony Brackett: That was also because the school population is increasing and we would like to increase the positions gradually.

Beth Singer: On Page 3 is the addition of receptionist at VMCC to answerer phones and doors, and some other finite tasks, will be paid out of early childhood ELE. There is also a personal attendant – new position this year paid entirely out of choice, because it is due entirely to a choice student.

In food service, there was a half position that was unfilled this year, and has been removed from FY15

SS: With the growth in numbers, will the removal of that position be okay?

BS: It's been working this year - we changed how food is handled for VMCC, so it's less work for them there.

There are also small changes in line items related to supplies and services, but it balances out. Under stipends on both pages we are not filling position of MCAS coordinator, it was posted and nobody applied this year, as we go forward with negotiations I'm suggesting we eliminate the position.

Liz Lovati: Is there a need for that, what were they doing that needs to be done?

BS: Initially they spent a lot of time analyzing MCAS data, now we do that in a different way, with different resources, and all that's left is the administration of the test, and it's done mostly during school time, so doesn't require an outside of school time stipend, the administration will take care of this.

I increased professional conference budget for professional staff by \$1000 as suggested by PSC

Under technology we have a new lease agreement for 15 MacBooks to begin the process of replacing old ones. We will probably do that this year and in the future make that part of a capital improvement plans because that's how other departments in town upgrade technology.

Last page of budget is in special education, which will see a leave in decrease next year, particularly because we're not filling the position of SPED secretary, and will instead be increasing the Human Resources Secretary position.

We're also anticipating lower Occupational Therapy need, so anticipating fewer payments to CCC, which is who we contact with to have an OT here.

AB: We have a way to meet a greater need if it arises for OT?

BS: Yes

BS: Overall our budget has a 40kish increase from last year which is 1.513%

High School

Tuition rate will be \$16,235 per student to Nauset. It's still a large increase, but it makes sense, it's founded in a rational method that's easily understood, and is a lot lower than the ~\$18,000 we started at. We're also talking about a 5-year contract with a limit of a 2.5% maximum increase per year.

AB: That 2.5% would be year over year?

BS: Yes

LL: Does every town pay the same?

BS: Good question – we're not a member of Nauset regional school district, the members are Brewster, Orleans, Eastham, and Wellfleet – who each pay the same rate per student.

Truro and Provincetown are not members, so we pay a tuition rate. The objective of the regional school committee and Nauset superintendent is for us to pay around the same amount as the member towns – because if we paid a lot less, their members would have a problem, and if a lot more, we would have a problem.

This number, \$16, 235 is based on last year's net per pupil assessment in FY14 with a 2.5% increase, and doesn't include transportation and SPED Costs.

SS: Does Truro pay that as well?

BS: I asked, they said it would be similar. They are still talking.

What's still being worked out is long term plan. I asked for a 5 year agreement, they said a minimum of 3, it's still being worked out

AB: It's worth reiterating Truro wasn't interested in negotiating jointly

SS: Do we have the option to opt out of that agreement?

BS: There has been previously, and we've talked about adding very similar language

LL: If we opt out, what would the alternative be?

BS: They're building a new high school in Monomoy

LL: Why can't we petition to be part of the region?

BS: We can, but it's complicated because the member towns have to agree to open up their agreement, and then they're open to a lot of changes. It would require approval at each town meeting; the member districts would all have to change ratio of representation, etc.

CB: What would the benefit of being a member town be?

BS: A seat at the table, you'd have a voice on school committee, and you would pay member town rate, which would be slightly higher than the rate we're talking about today, because you would be paying for transportation, out of district placements, etc.

KA: So there are benefits of being tuitioned.

BS: Provincetown school committee members are welcome to be at Nauset meeting, just not to vote. For example, because they changed their day schedule we now need a second bus and driver, possible it could have been different if we had a voice on the committee. So it's nice to have someone there.

CB: How many students are included in the high school budget?

BS: There are 38 we know of living in Provincetown and we budgeted for 40I think 2 is conservative, and what FinCom asked for.

SS: I think we should have 3 extras, 2 sounds too cautious,

BS: We also pay only by the day – so if they come in half-way through the year we only pay half the year

AB: Also FinCom wants departments to get as close to number as we can. And 2 is the number they recommended.

BS: For instance, this year we had an unexpected SPED placement that for FY14 is a substantial amount of money – about \$65,000 that's not in FY14 budget – decided at town meeting we'll move money into that line item. I expect the process will be the same – a transfer of funds at town meeting, rather than going to FinCom every time to ask for more money. Since it's not a choice, we need to pay that money.

AB: We can also see after a few years, especially after possibly getting verified for IB, we can see what they trend is – if people are moving to town with older siblings, etc.

KA: We will also have a harder time selling it at town meeting if we have more students.

LL: What happens if we exceed the budget?

BS: If money is left over for the high school budget it goes to free cash for the town. We give back money every year, last year we gave back about \$60,000. Sometimes we move money with line item transfers to cover expenses that went into the red with line items that were in the black – and then what's left goes to free cash.

LL: Is that at your discretion?

BS: It's at school committee's discretion - the School Committee manages, adopts budgets, hires/fire superintendent, and makes policy decisions. We'll meet with FinCom and Board of selectman to go over budget – they can make recommendations on adding, taking away money, but only form the total, not specific line items

LL: How does the total cost of the budget compare to other districts

BS: Our Per Pupil Expenditure is high. It includes a lot of things not in this budget, for example, our employees insurance coverage – where the town pays a higher rate than most other towns, and also includes all grant money, revolving accounts, pension money, Also because our PPE from the state is so high, what we pay charter schools, is also high.

CB: Tech is also 31k per pupil, Sturgis is 36k,

All that expenditure is divided by number of Provincetown kids –

AB: So if we have 120 kids but 40 of them choice in, then we divide by 80 not 120.

LL: What do students pay to come in here?

(Kerry Adams leaves at 6 pm to attend another meeting)

BS: The state sets that rate, it's the same of every town, for choice. If a Wellfleet kid comes to Provincetown Wellfleet's state aid is reduced by \$5000, which is sent to the receiving school district – then there's a formula for increasing the rate based on needs of child, so if they have major special needs the number would go up.

BS: The school committee decides every year if they're open to receiving choice students and for which grades – 5th grade is full now for instance.

SS: But we don't have any say about students leaving for choice.

CB: We lost a few in recent years when there was a lot of uncertainty about the school.

BS: It doesn't work equitably; school choice is not an equitable law, when they come into a district, the school gets the money, when they leave it comes out of state aid to the town.

If you offer the grade and a child chooses to go to a different school, it's choice.

If you don't offer a grade, it's tuition.

Towns are required to educate all their children – there is an exception stated in law, if you meet certain criteria for high school aged students, you are allowed to send them to a neighboring town via tuition or regionalization

There is no provision in Mass law that you can send younger children to other towns.

A statute also limits amount of time students can spend on bus – 1 hour.

To apply to the state to not offer middle school probably wouldn't be approved.

SS: What would the situation have to be to start adding grades?

BS: Good questions, the IB MYP program is flexible but only goes up to 10th grade.

There are two IB high school programs, one is a diploma program, the other is a Career Certificate Program - it would be nice to have all the IB options on cape – Sturgis has diploma program

CB: What is a diploma program?

BS: A very academically rigorous program, with long compositions, and tests that are graded overseas. When I was thinking about diploma program for other schools I worked at – and asked admissions people from colleges, what they thought about kids coming from diploma program, almost everybody said they gave them particular consideration – it's very well respected.

SS: Seems like such a shame that we're priming them for IB, and then they go to Nauset

BS: We have two Provincetown students going to Sturgis – we're a good feeding ground for Sturgis – because we have a lot of diversity here and Sturgis is looking for diversity.

SS: How many kids would be needed to add a 9th grade?

BS: That would be a school committee decision

CB: If you had 15 (the number of students in the current 5th grade) kids going to Nauset at \$17,000 a student that would be \$225,000 we could have a 9th grade for probably less than that.

AB: The challenge that we're facing now is getting our community to pay for a school.

BS: We were in decline for a long time for various reasons, and now the school culture has improved significantly, and you're seeing that turn around

6. PSC Comments

LL: Thanks for having me be a part of this committee, and answering all my questions.

CB: We invite a lot of people to this meeting, and not a lot come, we would like to see that change.

AB: Happy to see school caroling on Commercial Street. Congratulations to Eleanor on putting on one of the best school concerts, and hearing great violin playing.

Encourage people to come to our meetings and ask questions rather than complain on Facebook. Welcome to Liz, thanks for all your questions.

CB: Thanks to Jamie for her time, and welcome to Liz.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn

Motion: Anthony Brackett **Seconded:** Cass Benson **Vote:** 4-0-1

Respectively submitted,

Ben Williams

Approved by the School Committee on February 11, 2014