

PROVINCETOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Joint meeting with Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen
PROVINCETOWN TOWN HALL
JUDGE WELSH ROOM
260 COMMERCIAL ST.
PROVINCETOWN, MA 02657
TUESDAY, January 28th, 2014

Members Present: Kerry Adams, Shannon Patrick, Liz Lovati, Cass Benson, Anthony Brackett

Members Absent:

Others: Dr. Beth Singer, Superintendent
Provincetown Finance Committee
Provincetown Board of Selectmen

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:15

2. Roll Called: (See above)

3. Budget presentation

Slide Show:

Erik Yingling: Why is there a waiting list, why not let everybody in?

Beth Singer: There's a give and take with how much it costs to have students come, at some point it costs more to have them – you need to add services etc.

Mike Canizales: Looks good, deciding to add more students would depend on how much it costs to add them.

BS: There was a period of decline that centered around closing the high school, (if you're not going to go to the high school, then you decide if you're going to go to the middle school, and what is the middle school going to be.) Now the community is beginning to know what the MYP offers and understand the IB primary and MYP program, so the decline has turned around. It's too early for us yet to say exactly what the trends are. We know we're getting calls weekly from towns across the Cape from interested families.

EY: What is the current PPE for Provincetown?

BS: \$33,000

EY: So the difference in tuition cost is in large part because of health care

AB: Waiting list – we had a lengthy discussion at school committee about ideal class size – which the SC decided was around 15 – 17 students. So to keep that ideal we have to cap the number of students at 15 for choice – since if a student moves in to town we're required to educate them here.

We're not looking to turn away any students unless it interferes with the quality of education.

Austin Knight: also economic component, educating students who live here - don't want to school choice numbers to override – need to protect local town needs.

Doug Cligott: With current staffing the MYP could have something like 65-70 students?

BS: Yes

Tom Donegan: School choice – when we get a School Choice kid, do we send a bus for them?

BS: We have two buses, one who does a high school run, and one that picks up kids for PK-8, so yes.

TD: If we had more kids in myp program I remember us saying it would be more robust – are we being pennywise and pound foolish – we have a small population against large budget...

BS: When you have a small population and have one person do extraordinary well it skews the results and vice versa. In some cases we don't have enough to make a cohort.

TD: Is there an advantage to there having more kids, do you have a more robust environment if you have a bigger school?

BS: Tough question, big schools are not healthy places, 15 to 17 per class is ideal.

FC: To jump to 30 and have two classes would be quantum leap

Sean – Finance Committee: Also you could increase class size via choice and it won't effect PPE. If you add an IB program you make a more robust program and would drive people to choice in or move into town.

TD: Is the MCAS test changing? Do we have a sense of how well the IB curriculum has increased student learning – is IB having a positive effect?

BS: IB isn't a curriculum, our curriculum is based on common core as the state is and most of the states are.

EY: Do we know what our retention rate is?

BS: It varies a lot. We're the only option for many preschoolers, so there are a lot of them who come here for that, and then go home to their local school when they can. We're working on that, but that's the only trend as far as people leaving at a certain point.

Elaine Anderson: Why do we have the highest tuition rates in the state?

BS: Charter school rates are set by the state via PPE.

Clarence Walker: What's the Worst case/best case scenario? I want to see the benefit of having child come from outside of community compared to having a student here. So every time we bring in an out of town person coming in via choice – there's a potential financial burden. Best case would be to have a fully-loaded in-town student population.

BS: The best case would be to have the whole student population come in from Provincetown. When a student chooses in the school minimally receives \$5,000 from the other town, plus any extra costs associated with the special education needs of that student.

MG: Sounds like we have a balance of trade with other districts, it's not realistic to think we would have more students coming in than going out, it's about balances. What's driving it is that there is a much smaller population here than in the past, a large number of retirees – unless we do something radical in terms of medical benefits changes, there's not a lot that can change, and I don't think we should rate you negatively or positively on a budget which you mostly can't change. We should learn to live with this -

Catherine Russo: There is nothing more important to spend your money on than education, IB is great and often only accessible to those in more affluent communities.

Budget PK-8

AK: Used to pay the town to have MIS from town, so now that's somewhere else in budget?

BS: Yes

TD: Choice goes out of town – where is that?

Dan Hoort: Comes out of cherry sheet – out of state aid.

BS: We've always done our own purchasing of technology – but it sounds like the town does this as capital improvement.

MG: PCs and laptops should be done on a yearly basis – and if you're doing 15 per year that's okay since they're more or less disposable. The servers and large systems – if you expect to have them last 3-5 years – should go as capital improvement.

DH: Desktops go through regular MIS budget yearly, not capital improvement.

CW: Is there a possibility of putting photovoltaics on the roof?

BS: Our proposal to Massachusetts State Building Authority (MSBA) is two-fold – one is a new heating system, one would be a new roof on the gym with solar panels

TD: What is SPED circuit breaker?

BS: It's a funding source for special education – it's reimbursement for special education costs. It's a year behind – for instance if you have a student in an out of district placement, and that placement is 50k a year, the district where the student resides has to pay that, and the following year the district is reimbursed from the state by the circuit breaker rate.

TD: And that number shows up in the cherry sheet?

DH: It won't show up until a year later.

TD: But if the rate is increased (as has been proposed by the state) that will help us out.

CR: PTC receives funds from Comcast for education – do you receive any of that?

BS: There's no specific exchange of funds, I believe it's for more general education, not the school.

Motion to move forward the comprehensive budget for PK-8 of \$2,811,290.50

Motion: Tom Donegan **Second:** Erik Yingling **Vote:** 5-0-0

High School Budget

AK: There has been some conversation in the commonwealth about extending school year, so it's good to keep that in mind.

MG: Went to one meeting before – there was discussion about how many extra students to put in budget, we will recommend a couple of students worth of money is in the fin com budget as well

BS: It's important to state that unused funds from the school go back into free cash for the town. So if we budget for one or two more, and we don't spend it, it goes back to the town. Last year we returned about \$60,000

David McChesney – Will be under budget by how much on the High Schools restoration.

BS: Possibly around \$300,000

DH: It will be the town's money and will be left in one article and moved to another.

EL: Is it prudent budget for two more over this budget?

MG: I think there's a lot of wisdom to not having the extra in separate budgets – would rather have that in FC extra funds so it's accessible if they come in or not.

AK: Can still be done at the end of the year if we don't have them in the budgets if they come in

Motion to move forward comprehensive budget for High School of \$779,007.25

Motion: Tom Donegan **Seconded:** Austin Knight **Vote** 5-0-0

4. Adjournment

Respectively submitted,

Ben Williams

Approved by the School Committee on February 11, 2014