

# **Watertown School Committee**

## **Report of the Subcommittee on Budget and Finance**

**Meeting Date:** December 12, 2016

**Location:** Phillips School Innovation Lab, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

**Subcommittee Members in Attendance:** John Portz (chair), Guido Guidotti, and Candace Miller

**School Officials in Attendance:** John Brackett, Theresa McGuiness, Mary DeLai

**Other Attendees:** School Committee members Eileen Hsu-Balzer, Liz Yuseum, Mark Sideris, and members of the public

The meeting was called to order at 6:30.

### **I. Review FY17 Budget Reporting Process**

The Committee reviewed the document distributed at the last School Committee meeting. This provides an update on expenditures and encumbrances to-date, using DESE categories and by school location. There will be a monthly report to the School Committee and a quarterly update that will include projections to the end of the fiscal year. Using DESE categories allows better comparisons with other communities, if that is desired, and using school location is consistent with the administration's focus on giving more budget responsibility to principals. It was noted that the quarterly update will include fees and grants. Other budget configurations can be developed to meet School Committee requests. There was discussion about several areas, including substitutes and the undistributed category.

### **II. FY18 Budget Calendar and Priorities**

There was a general discussion on the proposed budget calendar. One subcommittee meeting is scheduled for January, and the major subcommittee meetings to go through the budget will take place in late February or early March. A more definitive calendar will be developed in January. It was noted that the budget process has varied over the years, including a few years when there were joint Curriculum and Budget & Finance meetings.

A handout was distributed that outlined proposed FY18 budget priorities. The priorities emphasize the broad area of Enhance Teaching and Learning & Closing the Achievement Gap and also include Social Emotional Learning, Community Engagement, and Facilities and Infrastructure. There was a general discussion on these priorities. It was noted how class size is important in the district and the importance of closing the achievement gap while maintaining consistent and high quality instruction across all schools and grades. FLES is a key area to look at, and the district also should review the recommendations in the RSM report. A motion was made and unanimously approved to recommend to the School Committee approval of these priorities.

### **III. FY18 Level Service Budget**

This was postponed until the January meeting.

#### **IV. Enrollment Projections**

There were several handouts related to enrollment projections and extensive discussion ensued. Updated information from DecisionInsite was shared. This included a 2017-18 projection of 2461 students in K-12, which is a .3% increase over the current year. Enrollment information also was provided by school and another handout included an analysis of births in Watertown compared to kindergarten enrollments five years later. It was noted that it is difficult to predict birth rates, but the size of the kindergarten class is important in that it shapes enrollment in subsequent years. There was discussion about the impact of developments in town on enrollments as well as the general trend for enrollments within a cohort to slowly decline over the years. A number of factors can cause this. NESDEC also will provide enrollment projections in the next month or so.

#### **V. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:10.

#### **VI. Documents Presented**

- FY2017 School Committee Budget – Monthly Report thru November 2016
- FY18 Budget Development Process – Updated November 30, 2016
- FY18 Budget Priorities – December 2016
- 5 Handouts on Enrollment Projections

Submitted by John Portz, Chair