

Ashley Martell
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Girls Basketball Coach
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4. Superintendent's Budget Report

Mr. Sills handed out some additional reports requested by the School Committee members in order to help them analyze the FY'16 budget request. One item handed out was information on the numbers of initial special education evaluations performed over the last several years. Mr. McAllister asked for Mr. Sills's general thoughts on the numbers and trends.

Mr. Sills said he is still digging into the information. However he believes that the trend in special education is for fewer students to move into special education due to the numbers of other interventions put in to place at each school. He said teachers have created and use effectively the district accommodations plans at each school.

Mr. McAllister said he thinks that Bedford's district curriculum accommodation plan is a good tool. He thinks teachers should continue to use it and parents need to become more aware of the available accommodations to help struggling students.

School Committee members then spent time going through the budget document and asking questions on a variety of budget line items.

Mr. Hafer asked if the schools do not move forward with the proposed, new in-house special education programs, would the operating budget increase. Mr. Sills and Mr. Coelho said yes, based on today's special education profile.

Mr. Sills reported that the financial guideline from the Finance Committee, less money for utilities and computer replacements, is \$34,723,771. He then reported that his FY'16 budget request is \$36,865,177.

(Mr. Pierce arrived at 8:15 pm)

The School Committee then focused on reviewing the offset balances. Mr. Coelho handed each a report and then explained what each account is. Mr. Coelho also explained the rules associated with federal grants (for accounts such as the METCO Grant and the Preschool Grant) and how these rules restrict the use of the money. He noted that grant funds cannot be integrated into the operating budget because they are supposed to be supplemental.

The School Committee asked to see an accounting for the preschool. Mr. Sills agreed especially now that this will be the first year that some of the Preschool Staff are Bedford Public School employees. (Previously most had been contractors.)

Members of the School Committee also discussed the Mudge Fund, Circuit Breaker, Title 1, E-Rate, and State Impact Aid. (All revenue accounts)

Mr. Coelho noted that State Impact Aid funds may now go directly to the town now that the new law is in place.

Mr. Hafer asked if the Committee should establish a balance guideline for the school's offset accounts. He wondered if we should use some of the funds more aggressively.

Mr. Coelho agreed to put additional information about each account on the report. (For example note which funds are restricted to interest only use? Which are restricted to certain types of use.)

Ms. Seibert suggested turning over any School Committee controlled scholarship funds to the CSF or to the trip scholarship fund since School Committee members have not awarded these scholarships to students in many years. School Committee members thought this was a good idea.

Mr. Hafer suggested that the Schools use as much of the revenue from the offset accounts as possible and reasonable.

Mr. Hafer said that the next step in the budget process is to explore and understand more about the large cost centers. He suggested that the Committee look at the largest categories and see if there is anything we can adjust in the base and in the desired additions for FY'16. He would like to re-examine the base budget to see if there is anything we can do better and more efficiently.

Mr. Coelho agreed that he would break down the number in the "Steps and Lanes" line item (the biggest category). Mr. Sills said he would go back to the Principals and ask them to review staffing and make sure there is no way to make things more efficient.

Mr. Pierce commented that each year, the School Committee does review the base budget because it is driven by enrollment and class size as well as time and learning. He said we also have to consider the town-wide expectations to keep art, music, physical education, and extra curricular activities.

5. Superintendent Report

Mr. Sills said that the School calendar will be proposed soon and he is going to propose starting before Labor Day since the holiday is very late this year.

Mr. Sills also congratulated Erin Dietz from the high school for a very successful Cross Country season and being recognized locally as Athlete of the Year!

Mr. Sills also complimented the high school for hosting a panel discussion on the recent events in Ferguson, MO. He said there was a lot of student participation and a lot of discussion about difficult topics like race.

Mr. Sills also noted that each school is very busy with holiday projects to help the needy in our communities.

6. Minutes

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes from the November 18, 2014 meeting as amended.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

MOTION APPROVED: 4-0- 1

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes
Mr. McAllister	Abstained
Ms. Guay	Yes
Mr. Hafer	Yes

7. Liaison Reports

Ms. Guay reported that the Youth Task Force was going to look into the possibility of having an application for smart phones that helped parents know the status of school bus arrivals and departures.

She also reported that Ms. Hamilton, Director of Recreation, discussed the likelihood that Springs Brook Park would close on weekends this summer to help manage water clarity issues and budget shortfalls.

Mr. McAllister said that the Energy Task Force met recently and will pursue the possibility of using solar panels on one of the school buildings. They also hope to incorporate this project into student curriculum. They want to do a solar panel project on a very public place.

Ms. Seibert said that the Capital Expense Committee had questions about some of the school projects. They also questioned the sustainability of the technology plan. She said some projects in front of the CEC have been deferred or removed from this year’s considerations.

Mr. Hafer noted that the Finance Committee presented a new financial model that adjusted for utilities and technology. He said the increase for FY’16 is currently limited to about 2.5%.

8. Future Agenda

- Discuss School Calendar
- Discuss election day plans
- Board of Health discussions about nursing staff coming into school budgets

9. Adjournment

Ms. Seibert made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:00 p.m.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Guay

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Pierce	Yes
Ms. Seibert	Yes
Mr. McAllister	Yes
Ms. Guay	Yes
Mr. Hafer	Yes

School Committee Secretary

Date

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
December 16, 2014
Exhibits/Document

- Analysis of Initial Special Education evaluations by school.
- Superintendent's FY'16 Budget Proposal Executive Summary

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Executive Session
December 16, 2014