

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
December 2, 2014
Bedford High School - Large Group Instruction Room

1. Call to Order

At 7:30 p.m., Mr. Hafer called to order the meeting of the Bedford School Committee. Other members present included Ms. Seibert, Mr. Pierce, Ms. Guay and Mr. McAllister.

2. Comments from Public

None

3. Assistant Superintendent Appointment

Mr. Sills asked the School Committee to vote on appointing MaryLou Sallee to Assistant Superintendent.

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee accept Mr. Sills' appointment of MaryLou Sallee as Assistant Superintendent beginning July 1, 2015 and subject to contract negotiations.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

4. Capital Expenditure Proposal Update

Mr. Sills explained that the School Department needs to consider adding an \$8,000 construction project at Davis School to the FY'16 Capital Expenditure proposal. Space at Davis needs to be reconfigured in order to accommodate occupational and physical therapy needs due to space reconfigurations.

Mr. Sills also presented to the School Committee, the Facilities Director's, Mr. Alani's, response to the Capital Expenditure Committee questions. The School Committee reviewed this response and found it helpful.

Mr. Pierce asked for more information on the science wing fans. Mr. Sills explained that the project has been divided over two years so that all of the labs could be updated. The desire is to now spread the project over two years because of the expense and because the work cannot be easily done in only one summer.

Mr. Hafer noted that the cost to replace the gym doors at the middle school (\$48,900) seems very expensive. Mr. Coelho said he was not too surprised because the doors are expensive as is the hardware.

Ms. Seibert suggested looking into the feasibility of purchasing the same security equipment as the DPW. She also wondered if security cameras could be part of the town wide communications project that is being considered. Mr. Sills agreed to keep this as a placeholder but thinks coordinating a town-wide purchase is a good idea.

The School Committee agreed to request getting a generator at Davis School but making it clear that if this does not happen, then the ballast replacements will be necessary.

Mr. Pierce asked Mr. Sills if he got any feedback on not having visitor bleachers on the Thanksgiving Day game. Mr. Sills said he did not.

Ms. Seibert made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the capital expense request of \$1,630,797 for FY'16 given the outstanding questions discussed this evening.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. McAllister

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

5. Superintendent's FY'16 Budget Request

Mr. Sills presented the Superintendent's budget request, as the first step in the FY'16 budget process. He began the presentation by reviewing the community expectations for schools and explained that his budget request reflects these expectations.

Some of these points include:

- Desire for high performing schools
- Supportive and safe school culture
- Intellectually engaging and challenging learning experiences
- Comprehensive and well articulated curriculum
- Robust music, arts and wellness courses
- Ample athletic and extra curricular opportunities
- Strong 21st century skills
- College and career readiness
- A commitment to educational equity

Mr. Sills noted that since utilities are expected to rise up to fifty percent more than last year town wide, his budget request does not include this expense. The Finance Committee agrees with this approach.

Mr. Sills also noted that State impact aid may be cut for FY'16. Therefore, there could be approximately \$500,000 less in budget offsets for FY'16.

In summary, the Superintendent's FY'16 budget request is \$36,890,178 that is a \$2,064,807 increase (5.93%) over FY'15.

Budget drivers include:

- Salary contractual obligations
- Out-of-district placements and transportation
- Technology, material and supplies inflation
- Mandates and accountability
- Enrollment increases
- Student and program needs
- Technology demands

Mr. Sills pointed out that to maintain our programs, it would require a 4.88% increased over the FY'15 budget. His request includes meeting enrollment needs, students and program needs, and expanding in-house Special Education programs.

Mr. Sills reported that Davis School is expected to increase by another 17 students. The school needs to add another PE teacher or reduce the PE time for students. He thinks it is important to

have the children meet for PE two times a week, for forty minutes. The cost to do this is approximately \$61,670.

Mr. Sills explained that the social and emotional demands of the students is a big driver at all schools. Currently, school psychologists cannot keep up with the demand for special education evaluations. Adjustment Counselor demands are growing at the high school and elementary level, as well as the need for a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Mr. Sills shared data supporting this assertion.

Mr. Sills has asked for a 1.0 FTE Adjustment Counselor for Davis (\$61,000) as well as some additional staffing in counseling at the high school (\$51,000).

Mr. Sills would also like to strengthen the robotics and engineering curriculum at the middle school by hiring a new full time technology teacher (\$61,000). He would also like to add an after school homework program stipend at Lane School for approximately \$15,750.

Mr. Sills spoke about the importance of having the “least restrictive environment” for special education students. He believes if we create some more needed in-house programs, the district will save money in the long run while meeting this mandate.

Mr. Sills explained that the types of disabilities Bedford is seeing is changing. For example, diagnoses of specific learning disabilities are going down while diagnoses of emotional issues and health, including autism is growing. Davis School has a need for a substantially separate class next year. He is requesting to hire a full time special education teacher, 4 teaching assistants, an additional .6 speech and language pathologist and a .5 BCBA specialist. The estimated cost for this new staff is \$146,000.

Mr. Sills also explained that the high school could use a self-contained classroom that would require a \$171,000 investment of a Special Education teacher, two teaching assistants, an Adjustment Counselor and another Guidance Counselor.

Mr. Sills shared an analysis of costs of having both of these programs in-house versus sending students out of district for similar services. He showed a net savings to the school budget of \$148,313 that equates to a net savings to the town (including benefits) of \$33,395.

Mr. Sills also reviewed a list of other items needed in the budget to meet mandates and replenish supplies at all four schools, totaling approximately \$147,000. For example:

- PARCC testing will require \$36,000 in equipment such as headphones and extra ipads
- Lane requires \$54,000 for an additional Teaching Assistant and materials
- ELL needs \$9,000 for Lexia Reading and Bridges Math materials
- Davis needs \$21,500 for software and instructional materials
- JGMS needs \$6,000 for engineering materials
- BHS needs \$20,000 for a variety of materials including AP Science texts, digital cameras, engineering texts, etc.

Mr. Sills also identified approximately \$24,000 in safety and system maintenance equipment needs.

Mr. Sills summarized the FTE increases in the budget request:

Regular Ed FTE 3.4

Special Ed professional	3.9
Paraprofessional Staff	4.9
Total	12.2

To put this request in perspective, Mr. Sills showed the hiring trends:

Students growth over 10 years	9.4%
Regular Ed Hiring for same period	10.2%
Special Education Hiring for same period	70.40%

Mr. Pierce asked Mr. Coelho and Mr. Sills to provide some additional information and analysis such as revolving account summaries. He also asked for more information on understanding what is involved in special education evaluations and the number of evaluations one person can do

Ms. Guay requested the number of students on IEPs by grade in order to better understand what is driving the increase in the number of evaluations being requested.

Ms. Guay asked if the proposed Autistic classroom included an extended summer program and emphasized the need to build capacity. While the proposed classroom is designed for 3-4 students, it may need to grow given the rise in the numbers of students diagnosed with ASD and the number of students enrolled in Early Intervention. Ms. Guay said we may see families move into Bedford to enroll. All of these factors could lead to higher numbers.

Mr. McAllister said he liked how Mr. Sills started the presentation with community expectations of education. He encourages Mr. Sills to reiterate the theme “available to all” through out his presentation.

Mr. Hafer noted that energy costs are rising yet gas prices are dropping. He asked if the transportation contract has a discount tied to the price of gas. Mr. Coelho said yes, that we may soon see a discount as a result.

Mr. Hafer asked Mr. Coelho to unbury the offsets so he can look at the expenses without the effect of offsets. Mr. Coelho agreed.

Mr. Hafer asked what will go away at the middle school if Robotics course is added. Mr. Sills said Mr. Tracey has a plan and will explain at a later date.

Mr. Hafer asked if the Lane After school program considered transportation costs for a late bus. Mr. Sills would look into this.

Mr. Hafer asked to look at enrollment in all areas – Special Education, METCO, Homeless, and Hanscom.

The School Committee decided not to meet on December 9, 2014 in order to afford Mr. Sills and Mr. Coelho more time to gather information. The next meeting will be December 16 and budget discussions will continue.

6. Superintendent’s Report

Mr. Sills said next week the schools will participate in the “Hour of Code” in hopes of getting students interested in coding. He is sure all of the programming offered will be engaging for the students.

Mr. Sills noted that the homeless population at the Bedford Plaza Hotel is growing again. Apparently a nearby hotel stopped supporting these families and many are relocating to Bedford.

7. Minutes

Mr. Pierce made the following motion:

MOVED: That the School Committee approve the minutes of the November 4, 2014 School Committee meeting.

MOTION SECONDED by Ms. Seibert

MOTION APPROVED: 5-0

8. Liaison Reports

Ms. Guay reminded everyone that the BEF will hold its annual fundraiser on Saturday night at Waxy’s.

9. Future Agenda

Budget discussion will continue.

10. Adjournment

Ms. Seibert made the following motion.

MOVED: Motion to adjourn at 10:00 p.m. to Executive Session to discuss non-contract employee concerns, not to reopen.

MOTION SECONDED by Mr. Pierce

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 2, 2014
Exhibits/Document

- Presentation - Superintendent's Budget Request dated December 2, 2014
- Draft of minutes from November 18, 2014 School Committee meeting
- Memo summarizing Capital Expenditure questions

BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Executive Session
December 2, 2014