

TOWN OF ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS
ADAMS TOWN HALL BUILDING, 1st FLOOR, ADAMS, MA 01220

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES 03/28/2018

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CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Duval at 6:00 p.m. Members Blanchard, Hoyt and Nowak were present as well Interim Town Administrator Cesan, ACRSD Business Manager Erika Snyder, ACRSD Superintendent Putnam, School Committee Chairman Butler and McCann Business Manager Maloney, and McCann School Board Chair Mahar.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PUBLIC COMMENT – *Jeff Lefebvre* asked flood control chutes are being cleaned this year. He also announced that the Maple Grove Civic Club will be meeting with all Board of Selectmen candidates on April 15, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. The Department of Public Works has indicated there are some flood chute areas being addressed this year.

NEW BUSINESS - FY2019 BUDGET REVIEW

Adams-Cheshire Regional School District: *ACRSD School Committee Chairman Butler* gave an overview of the budget. Intervention positions on last year's budget have been filled. For the Fiscal Year 2019 budget further investments have been made for Project Lead the Way and personnel and funds were repurposed to add STEM, high school content, and two paraprofessionals. Insurance splits were reviewed. The Medex supplement plan split of 51/49 will phase in over three years and Berkshire Health Group (BHG) showed a 0% increase for next year. Updates were given on the increased assessments to each community due to the state formula which included the building project. It was noted that Chapter 70 is expected to increase minimally and *Excess and Deficiency (E&D)* funds were used to supplement. *Superintendent Putnam* reviewed the educational components and noted that budgets are a long range plan. The Collins Study was explained as informing the budget. Innovative programming is being added to attract students including *Project Lead the Way*, which will expand to Grades four through twelve. Reallocations allowed for a School Psychologist to be brought in. An explanation and breakdown of the change of computation of the state formula was given. Information was given about how the School Psychologist will work with School Adjustment Counselors to identify students with greater needs and to create a plan to address them with outreach to other agencies. *ACRSD Business Manager Snyder* reviewed the presentation given at the *Regional Agreement Amendment Committee* meeting and highlighted the changes. Foundation Transportation and Capital numbers were reviewed and were noted as increasing over last year. The Cherry Sheet was reviewed. State Aid for Chapter 70, Charter reimbursement, School Choice, and those opting out of School Choice were explained. She pointed out that due to the Charter School and students opting out of School Choice \$300,000 less funds will be received than anticipated, therefore increasing the budget. She explained that the District is assessed \$5,000 per student for students that choose to opt for School Choice. A marked increase of students from Cheshire chose to opt for School Choice due to the closure of the school. Charter School assessment versus reimbursement was weighed. The School District used its own operating funds to make the roof and building maintenance repairs. \$40,000 was set aside to address the Hoosac Valley Elementary School (HVES) roof, cosmetic and major repair work. Carpet was removed and replaced with tile. The lift was repaired and the back steps were evaluated for future repair. The School District entered into a contract with EDM, and the boiler was cleaned. Frozen pipework damage had to be addressed, and the District used building repairs and maintenance funds that had not needed to be used in the past. Savings were explained as being due to health insurance premiums being flat funded for next year and the District engaging in a net metering credit contract.

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Split changes for retiree insurance saved a significant amount of money, which will be used to add personnel. Strategy to slowly phase out personnel and move teachers out of School Choice funding and into the operating budget until it is stable was explained. Ms. Snyder noted that the School District is using an increased amount of E&D funds this year, and it was explained that the year should end with \$600,000 to \$700,000. The calculation of the Foundation Budget by DESE was reviewed and enrollment, demographics, and the disadvantaged status were taken into account. The process of how the budget is created was reviewed at length. Minimum local contributions are set by DESE and it was pointed out that this year it increased significantly. October 1st enrollment is used for the assessment of each town. The Transportation Assessment and reimbursement from the state was explained and funds left over from this year will be used to reduce the amount assessed to both Adams and Cheshire. Capital assessment was explained as being the same boiler bonds and bonds for building projects as in past years. The boiler bond for the Cheshire Elementary School is now the responsibility of the School District. The HVES boiler bond is based on the assessment of the school. The boiler bonds come due in 2023 and the School Project bond comes due in 2027. Board Members noted the closure of the Cheshire Elementary School caused a subsequent loss of students, and praised the strategy being implemented to retain students going forward. 2018 is the first year of a three-year contract with Dufour for school bus transportation, and a brief review of the changes made with transportation due to the school closing took place. Fifteen buses are used over three tiers to move students for high school, middle school and elementary school since there are not enough buses to move eight hundred kids at once. Darlene Rodowicz and Steve Vigna were thanked for their time served on the School Committee. The School Committee and Administration were thanked for making sure the budget increase was minimal to allow for the Town to put in the \$250,000 in order to maintain the HVES building. It was pointed out that \$250,000 will not solve all of the building problems in the building but it is a start. The Town is working with the School District to utilize the sources to help. It was explained that Law Enforcement agencies support and give recommendations on school building safety. A request was made for the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator to be informed and involved in the process. As the Superintendent is retiring this year an investigation is being done regarding sharing services, but no decision has been made.

McCann Vocational School: *McCann Business Manager Maloney* gave an overview of the positive achievements of McCann over the last year, including reaching a Level 1 status. Student performance on the MCAS and attendance rates both increased. For Automated Manufacturing, Machine Tech won a medal in Louisville for *SkillsUSA*, and the Robotics Team qualified for the State Championships. He noted that students are supporting *Louison House*, *Pop Cares*, and the local *Food Pantry* with projects and initiatives. Mr. Maloney explained the budget has barely enough money to keep things moving, and commended Superintendent Brosnan for locating \$670,000 in grant funds this year. He briefly reviewed the grants received and what the funds were used for. He explained that McCann worked with *National Grid* to retrofit with LED lighting to reduce energy costs. State funding for Chapter 70 was noted as being a problem. Insurance was a 0% increase. The increased minimum contribution for the towns was explained. Retirements were a consideration, and it was explained that staff is very lean so there is not much room to find savings. The total budget increase of \$3,800 was explained, and it was pointed out that student enrollment made the difference. The Transportation Assessment increased a little and the working relationship with Dufour is without problem. McCann was noted as making a conservative estimate and giving a refund to towns if funds are left over. Minimal assessments that were restructured on the formula were explained, and reductions were made to keep budget fairly level funded.

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Budget reductions and fewer students from Adams were some reasons for the change. Total enrollment in district was four hundred fifty six students, down from just over five hundred students in 2016 and 2017. Transportation is estimated and has not been calculated for 2018 because the year is not yet over. The Municipality per Student Assessment Formula was explained as State generated. Formula variables were explained and the budget was reviewed by line item. Business and Finance showed an increase for contracted services and software updates mandated by the state to keep track of the students. Clerical salaries were explained as normal step increases. Professional salaries decreased due to the retirement of vocational programs causing fewer salaries. Staff attendance was noted as very good. Professional development stipends were separated out as required by DESE, showing a shift from different accounts. The Instructional Technology account was noted as going up and down and every couple years due to upgrades and doing projects in pieces to reduce the financial impact. Transportation was explained as being in the second year of a five-year contract. Distance of buses carrying students was noted as being as far as Monroe. The Athletic Supplies account was increased for replacement of very old uniforms and football helmets needed for better protection for the students. The gymnasium project was paid off a couple years ago and the parking lot and other renovation projects were done with grants and not expensed out to the towns. Heating oil costs increased this year and electricity rates have changed, causing the budget to be underfunded. The use of oil or gas could flip back and forth if needed. Installation of solar panels was discussed. Tax credits can be used by municipalities for solar farms and may get solar field net-zero metering credits. Electricity usage was discussed. A recommendation was made to replace windows to help with heating costs. McCann is trying to plan ahead and work with MSBA on this. The HVAC system is aging and every year some of the units are replaced. It was noted that the higher maintenance costs of the building was because more heating units needed to be repaired. Berkshire Health Group showed some people changing from more expensive plans to the HMO plan for reduction in costs. Capital facility improvements last year were for the school bathrooms. The custodian staff, including sheet metal workers and a plumber, performs much of the work and plan to tackle another bathroom this year. Consulting for projects is done with the Building Department. Architects are used for plans, consultants are involved and some staff members are licensed contractors. Work is sometimes done with students if there is an educational benefit. Many of the grants received are vocational grants. Board Members expressed appreciation that the McCann budget was presented as lean as possible. McCann projects done for the Town of Adams were recalled and discussion has taken place about doing a prototype for a cabin for the *Greylock Glen Campground*. Teacher education requirements were discussed and Westfield State offers courses. Alumni frequently come back to teach at McCann.

At 7:27 p.m. there was a brief break. The meeting reconvened at 7:33 p.m.

Discussion and Approval of FY2019 Budget: Chairman Duval reviewed the budget approval process. Minor adjustments noted during the process were updated by Town Accountant Beverly and the Board was updated on new numbers. Discussion took place about a small utility vehicle gator or similar vehicle for the *Ashuwillticook Rail Trail*. A quick analysis indicated the cost of the vehicle would be \$15,000. John Deere is on the state contract and the best deal is being researched. Additional discussion took place about where the funds would come from in the budget. Overlay reserve, abatements and TIF agreements were explained. It was noted that the tax rate reduced from last year's rate of \$22.78 to this year's estimated rate of \$21.85. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve the Board of Health budget, second by Member Nowak. Abstention by Member Hoyt. Voted in favor were Chairman Duval, Vice Chairman Blanchard, and Member Nowak. Motion carried.***

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\$1,360,000 is the certified amount in Free Cash. Discussion took place about the use of free cash to reduce the tax rate. Wording in a recent news article was questioned. It was noted that this year the budget reflected past vigorous discussion received in public meetings regarding free cash. The State's past practices that were strict on the Town were explained as being an influence on the decision to present it this year to the Board for consideration. ***Motion made by Member Blanchard to approve all other Town of Adams Budget lines as submitted with the adjustments, second by Member Hoyt. Vote: unanimous.***

Motion made by Member Nowak to approve the budget for the Adams-Cheshire Regional School District for FY2019 as submitted, second by Member Hoyt. Vote: unanimous.

Motion made by Member Nowak to approve the McCann Budget for FY2019 as submitted, second by Member Hoyt. Vote: unanimous.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

SUB-COMMITTEE AND LIAISON REPORTS: *Member Nowak* attended the *Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP)* meeting in Charlemont. An extension was put on the bill regarding adjustments needed to the wording within the bill, and the amended bill is being brought forth. The MTWP is awaiting a hearing on it. It is going through the legislative process, but William "Smitty" Pignatelli is taking it over after the passing of Gailanne Cariddi. Steve Kulik, who authored it, is retiring.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GOOD OF THE ORDER: The Board of Selectmen received an invitation from Steepleview Realty celebrating twenty years of success. *Member Nowak* inquired about the progress and status of the *Mausert* and *Jones Blocks*. The *Mausert Block* was noted as being actively under construction. A meeting will be set up regarding the *Jones Block* to find out what impediments they are facing. *Interim Town Administrator Cesan* advised of progress on the *Train Station Platform Project*. The contractor mobilized on Monday and is starting to bring construction equipment there. *Member Nowak* advised *Hoosac Valley Elementary School Principal Colvin* is making plans to have the children participate with the train. Hopefully *Lieutenant Governor Polito* will attend the ribbon cutting event and the kids may attend as well.

ADJOURNMENT: ***Motion made by Member Nowak to adjourn the meeting, second by Member Blanchard, Vote: Unanimous.*** The meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

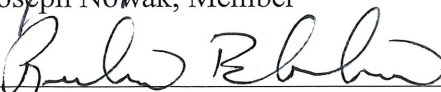
Respectfully Submitted by Deborah J. Dunlap,
Recording Secretary



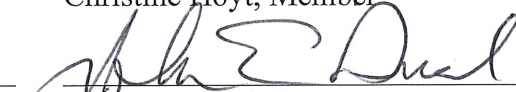
Joseph Nowak, Member



Christine Hoyt, Member



Richard Blanchard, Vice Chairman



John Duval, Chairman