



Town of Adams Massachusetts 01220-2087

FINANCE COMMITTEE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL BUILDING
8 PARK STREET

Monday, March 28, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

**Adams Free Library,
1st Floor Annex Meeting Room
92 Park Street, Adams Ma**

RECEIVED-POSTED
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TOWN CLERK
ADAMS MASS.

CALL TO ORDER: On the above date, the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen held a Joint Meeting at 6:30 PM at the Adams Free Library. Chairperson of the Finance Committee Carrie Burnett opened the Meeting for the Finance Committee. Present from the finance committee were Chairperson Carrie Burnett; Vice-Chair Jay Meczywor, Members Carol Cushenette; Timothy Burdick; Justin Duval, Jay Nocher, David Lennon, Stephanie Melito, David Lennon, Rachel Tomkowicz Erin Mucci, Carrie Burnett, and Sarah Kline. *Members Michele Butler, and Erin Mucci were absent.* Member Jeff King arrived at 6:53 pm.

Chairman John Duval of the Adams Selectboard called the meeting to order simultaneously. Present from the Adams Board of Selectmen were Chairman John Duval, Vice-Chair Christine Hoyt and Members Joe Nowak and Howard Rosenberg. *Member Rick Blanchard was absent.*

Also present were Jay Green, Town Administrator; Crystal Wojcik, Town Finance Director; Holli Jayko, Adams Free Library Director; Sarah Fontaine, Adams Council on Aging Director; Stephen Roy, Veteran Services Agent; Bruce Shepley, Chairman of the Council on Aging Advisory Board; Jim Brosnan of the Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District and Bri Hantman, Recording Secretary. Aaron Dean and Erika Snyder of the Hoosac Valley Regional School District arrived at 7:48pm.

BUDGET WORKSHOP:

Northern Berkshire Vocational Regional School District

Jim Brosnan introduced his budget.

The Adams Municipal minimum in the transportation assessment went up by about \$1800. The assessments and swings in the budget are all driven by enrollment. There is a significant increase in money put in Chapter 70 by the state of MA. Mr. Brosnan clarified that the funds committed by each community includes a calculation of wealth of the community, so communities cannot necessarily be compared side-by-side. Whenever the transportation assessment is higher than the actual cost, the funds are returned to the towns. Expenditures are assessed from year to year and pretty standard, but there are always anomalies.

The budget includes a proposal to have an additional IT instructor which would allow for further enrollment in the IT specialization as well as maintain technology at the school.

Member Cushenette asked if there were currently contract negotiations happening and *Chairperson Burnett* asked if there were any open positions currently. Mr. Brosnan clarified that the contract negotiations are ongoing and that the school is fully staffed with the exception of the two new proposed positions.

There is an increase in the budget for textbooks as some of the technical books need to be replaced. Additionally, the cost of materials such as metal and wood have gone up significantly.

The price of gas and the price of electricity has gone up which has also caused for a budget increase in that section. Additionally, there have been some extra needs for grounds keeping and landscaping.

Vice-Chair Meczywor asked about the additional costs associated with the new HVAC Program. There is an outline for where the shop will be physically located and Mr. Brosnan is excited to get it out to bid. He is hopeful that they will be able to take enrollment for the HVAC program in January.

Member Nowak asked roughly how much grant funding the school has received. Mr. Brosnan stated that this last year the school received roughly 1 million in grant funding.

Member Rosenberg asked if the school has grants that come through the private sector from companies or corporations that are looking for workforce.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Council on Aging:

Sarah Fontaine, Director of the Adams Council on Aging, presented her budget, beginning with the operating budget which is level funded. The formula grant provided by the state was increased by a rate of \$2.00 per senior which offsets other costs and allows for level funding on the operational side. Ms. Fontaine also explained the Savoy will be providing the Adams Selectboard with their State Formula Grant due to the shared services agreement that the Towns have. There are three full time employees at the COA and then a per diem van drivers and meal site coordinator. The COA is back to their pre-COVID numbers of events and services.

Veteran Services

Steve Roy, Veteran Services Agent, provided some background regarding the nature of the shared services agreement that Steve works under with 10 different communities in Berkshire County. The Veteran Services offices expenses are level funded as well.

The Recreation- Entertainment line item is there for the Memorial Day services and the Holiday Decorations line item is for remembrances at grave sites.

Library

Staffing patterns are the same and the Library is currently fully staffed. The custodial services line item was increased after the custodial services that are contracted by the Library was

increased by the vendor. There is an issue with water leaking into the wall in the corner of the Annex meeting room. The library will be seeking capital funds to solve that issue.

Hoosac Valley Regional School District

Superintendent, Aaron Dean introduced the budget. There are positions being added to the budget that were previously in grants. These positions will allow the school to position itself in a way to better serve the student population. These positions include Assistant Principals of Teaching and Learning.

Chapter 70 State Aid is being increased significantly, about 7.7%

The Athletic Director is now a shared services position with North Adams Public Schools. In the past, the position was stamped and added on top of a teacher's salary. The school is working to put more money towards instruction while cutting back operational costs.

Enrollment at the high school has gone up slightly. The elementary school enrollment is slightly up, but the numbers waver frequently.

Vice-Chair Meczywor asked how many positions will be funded through the ESSR Grant versus how many were going to be put on the budget. Mr. Dean stated that it would be 5 or 6 positions being put on the budget. A Special Education Chair has been brought on board to manage the Special Education Teachers and IEP/ 504 Writing. Many employees coming in have not taken insurance. Other budgetary changes are the result of staff turn over and new individuals either being hired at a lower or higher rate of pay based on the new individual's experience and qualifications.

Member Lennon asked if the Athletic Stipend line includes ticket takers and crowd control. Ms. Snyder stated that yes, that is. Refs and EMTs are taken out of a separate line item reflecting contracted vendors.

Ms. Snyder went over the calculations sheet. This sheet details the enrollment trends over the last 10 years, showing the split between Adams and Cheshire. The split is assessed at 77.867% Adams and 22.133% Cheshire.

Vice-Chair Hoyt asked if there was a plan for the district agreement to be reviewed this year as it was written 5 years ago? Superintendent Dean stated that there is a plan to review it, but the process has not begun yet.

Member Nowak stated that he is a substitute teacher at the school and he feels like there are people who are up at the school that are great and that the School District is top heavy.

Member Nowak feels a paraprofessional should be present in every classroom at all times. Mr. Dean spoke to how that is not a feasible solution to add untrained individuals. The school is attempting to grow the staff, provide mentorship, provide continued education, provide consulting services.

Vice-chair Hoyt made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Member Rosenberg. The motion passed unanimously. The Board of Selectmen meeting was adjourned at 9:01

Member Tomkowicz made a motion to adjourn. Vice-chair Meczywor seconded the motion. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Finance Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:01pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Bri Hantman, Recording Secretary.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carrie Burnett". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Carrie Burnett, Chairperson