

AUBURN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES from Tuesday, November 19, 2019
6:30 p.m. Budget Presentations

In attendance:

George Scobie
Jessie Harrington
Gail Holloway
Dorothy Kauffman
Meghan McCrillis

Maryellen Brunelle
Beth Chamberland
Cecelia Wirzbicki
Rosemary Reidy
Eric Bouvier

Marie Mahan
Jenn Stanick
Susan Lopez
Jessica Pitsillides
Casey Handfield

Eileen Donahue
Gregg Desto
Brian Davis
Matt Carlson
Maria Garrow
Ginny Bailey

Visitors: Lia McDonald and Family
Maura Anish and Family
Bill Coyle, Town Engineer/DPW Director
Cathy Stone, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 4
Dan Largesse, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 4
Joe Shenette, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1

Call to Order and Pledge:

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and asked if anyone else was taping the meeting. There being none, he asked that everyone join him in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS:

Worcester County Superintendents' Scholar

Maura Anish was in attendance to be recognized as this year's Worcester County Superintendent's Scholar. Maura is currently the Class of 2019 Valedictorian with the highest GPA of 4.8452; she has been on the High Honor roll each trimester all four years of high school, has scored 4 or above on 5 Advanced Placement exams, receiving the AP Scholar with Distinction award. Maura is part of the Varsity Math Team and has one an Achievement in Varsity Mathematics Competition Award from the Math Team League President for being one of the top scorers. Her non-academic interests include having written and self-published a novel in the 8th grade; she traveled to France on a school trip in April 2019; and she has volunteered at least 15 hours per week since her sophomore year.

Maura is unsure of her major but is considering the idea of being a statistician or data scientist. She is applying to Connecticut College; Hamilton College; Wesleyan University; Wheaton College and Williams University. Wheaton is her favorite right now!

Project 351 – 8th Grade Representative to Visit the State House

Dr. Brunelle asked Mr. Desto to introduce the 8th grade representative to Governor Patrick's Project 351, a youth congress to celebrate service and civic leadership. He recognized Lia McDonald as such. Mr. Desto stated that Lia was the unanimous choice for this award. She earns grades in the high 90s, she is civil and respectful to everyone but also respected by her peers. Lia serves as the President of AMS Student Council, is a part of Chorus, will be an actress in the spring performance of "Aladdin" she performs community service on a weekly basis as well as volunteers at a local food pantry. Mr. Desto stated that Lia will be an incredible representative for Auburn. She was congratulated by the Committee and invited back to a meeting after the Project 351 event on Saturday, January 18th to tell the Committee all about her experience.

Citizens' Comments: Tabled until later in the meeting

SUPERINTENDENT'S MEMO:

Budget Presentations

Central Office Budget Presentation

- Dr. Chamberland led off the evening's budget presentations with the Central Office Budget for Teaching, Learning and Curriculum. She spoke of accomplishments thus far and goals for FY 2021. Mrs. Wirzbicki then presented for the Business Office, noting that funding sources were being considered to offset budget increases; Mrs. Reidy for Pupil Services; Mr. Bouvier for Technology and Mrs. Wirzbicki, on behalf of Mr. Fahey who was unable to be in attendance for Facilities and Maintenance. Each highlighted their accomplishments in FY 2020 and expected accomplishments in FY 2021. All had, for the most part, level funded budgets, with some decreases noted.

Athletics Budget: Mr. Brian Davis

- Mr. Brian Davis was in attendance to present the Athletic budget. The main budget increase is the cost of transportation due to an increase in the number of teams, extended seasons due to tournament play (MIAA Statewide tournaments), as well as increases from the bus company. He thanked everyone for their continued support of the Athletic programs noting that Auburn was fortunate to have a college-like athletic facility.

Fine Arts: Ms. Ginny Bailey and Mrs. Maria Garrow

- Ms. Ginny Bailey and Mrs. Maria Garrow, Co-Directors of K-12 Fine Arts, were in attendance to present their budget. They provided the Committee with an update of what the Fine Arts Department provides to students at each of the age groups, as well as extra-curricular offerings. Their budget concerns are the age of the school-owned equipment and the price of repairs and regular maintenance of it. Their budget is nearly level-funded but for an increase in transportation costs and the personnel request reflected in the AMS budget of a 0.6 FTE position for a strings teacher to work to transition the strings program into the 7th grade. They also thanked the Committee for their ongoing support of the Fine Arts programs at Auburn Public Schools.

Budget Summation, Dr. Maryellen Brunelle

- Dr. Brunelle closed the evening's budget presentations with a Budget Summation PowerPoint, noting once again that our Core Values drove the decision-making as the FY 2021 budget was developed. She noted that offsets totaling \$2,510,508 were used to minimize the impact of the FY 2021 budget, including available grants, school choice funds, Medicaid receipts, building rental, athletic revolving and all other revolving accounts.

She noted that the District's draft budget is \$27,840,658, which represents an increase of \$906,501 or a 3.37% increase over the approved FY 2020 amount of \$26,934,157. She noted that with the request from the Town Manager to try to keep the overall budget at closer to a 2% increase, the Leadership Team would be doing further work to prioritize potential cuts to bring it to closer to that number.

Dr. Brunelle noted that the next steps in the budget process are:

- The Town's Budget Kick-Off is being held on November 20, 2019
- The Governor's budget and preliminary Chapter 70 figures are not anticipated until mid-winter
- We do not yet know the impact of the STUDENT OPPORTUNITY ACT
- The budget will be added to the agendas of the School Committee meetings in December, as well as that of January 8th, 2020.
- The draft budget needs to be submitted to the Town Manager by the second Monday in January, this year that being January 13th, therefore the School Committee will need to take a vote at the January 8th meeting to send a draft budget forward.

The Committee thanked everyone for their comprehensive budget presentations which were evidence of the great things going on in our schools. The Chair asked that the Leadership Team sharpen their pencils and come back with some other scenarios to bring it more in line with the Town's request.

At 7:53 p.m., Mrs. Holloway made a motion to take a short recess; Mrs. Kauffman seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

The Chair called the meeting back to order at 7:58 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:Presentation by Mr. William Coyle re Auburn Street Redesign

Mr. William Coyle, Public Works Director/Town Engineer, was in attendance to provide an update regarding the proposed Auburn Street redesign, particularly with regard to the areas immediately adjacent to Auburn High School.

He noted that the project was 80% federally-funded and 20% state-funded and the sooner the project is completed the Town will gain additional funding should it be ready to start by June 30, 2020. He also noted that there was going to be a Special Town Meeting held on January 21st exclusively for this project to be approved to move forward. If it is approved, construction would begin in the fall of next year but could also be delayed to after the winter months and start in the spring of 2021 and would take the better part of a year.

Mr. Coyle walked the Committee through the upgrade from Walsh Avenue to Brotherton Way and took their questions.

Citizens' Comments:

Three citizens were in attendance to make comments/ask questions:

Cathy Stone, Town Meeting Member from Precinct 4, who asked how long the flashing lights will last for; Dan Largesse, Town Meeting Member from Precinct 4, who stated that it is his belief that there should still be two crosswalks; and Joe Shenette, Town Meeting Member from Precinct 1, who stated that the best engineering solution doesn't always support human nature; that there has not been a left-hand turn at that location in the 45 years he has lived in Auburn and he is afraid it will be creating a hazard.

NEW BUSINESS:Town of Auburn Tree Lighting Ceremony

Dr. Brunelle shared an invitation from Town Manager, Julie Jacobson, to attend the annual tree lighting at the Drury Square Fire Station on Friday, December 6th beginning at 6:00 p.m. She noted that this is the 8th Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony which has become a wonderful Auburn tradition. Dr. Brunelle also shared an invitation from Town Hall to their annual Holiday Open House on Thursday, December 19th from noon to 2:00 p.m.

School Committee Tour of Schools

Dr. Brunelle asked the Committee if they would like to tour the schools in December around the holidays, as has become an annual tradition. She provided several dates for this to take place with most members noting that December 13th would be the best day for them. A final decision is still to be made.

There being no further business to discuss, Mrs. Kauffman made a motion to adjourn for the evening at 9:07 p.m. Mrs. McCrillis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Ailaine Zautner
Recording Secretary

Referenced Documents:

Budget Presentation PPTs