



**AVON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**AVON HIGH SCHOOL
Avon Community Room
Monday, December 4, 2017—6:30 p.m.**

Attendance

Members Present: Ken Birk (arrived at 6:39 pm); Jackie Blea; Deb Chute; Jason Indomenio; Houston Putnam Lowry; Peggy Roell; Jay Spivak; Laura Young; Kathy Zirolli

Member(s) Absent: none

Administration Present: Tim Filon, Director of Athletics; Jess Giannini, PGS Principal; David Kimball, AMS Principal; Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs; Dr. Kimberly Mearman, Director of Pupil Services; Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Interim Superintendent; Mike Renkawitz, TBS Principal; Noam Sturm, RBS Principal; Robert Vojtek, Director of Technology

I. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Houston Putnam Lowry at 6:34 pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Executive Session

Chair Lowry motioned and accepted by unanimous consent to enter into Executive Session to review confidential information regarding information technology systems, standards, processes and procedures and to invite into the session the Interim Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Dave Modzelewski; Mr. Justin Byrne; Dr. Robert Vojtek; and Mr. Ryan Kocsondy.

The Board entered Executive Session at 6:35 p.m.

- a. Review of confidential information regarding information technology systems, standards, processes and procedures.

The Board returned to Public Session at 7:18 p.m.

IV. Communications from the public

There was no communication from the public.

V. New Business

- a. 17-18/78 Proposed 2018-2019 Pine Grove School Budget

PGS Principal, Jess Giannini, presented PGS' proposed budget, which includes:

- Staffing to keep class sizes appropriate, offer support services, and help grow well rounded individuals in all areas.
- Continuation of new science curriculum and service learning projects
- Switch from math coach to enrichment coach
- STEM teacher will blend the library media specialist position and create learning center/maker spaces in the library
- Enrichment to modify our instruction to meet the needs of all students

Questions & Comments

- Ms. Zirolli asked if the addition of a STEM teacher will mean students will have more specials and thus allowing them to move and visit other classrooms. Mr. Giannini explained that the library media specialist and the STEM teacher would share the space and rotate between PGS and RBS and will not add to the time the students are out of the classroom. The maker spaces would model the more modern library formats.
 - Ms. Zirolli also asked about the decrease in certified salaries, whether it was taking into account retirements. Ms. Michaud explained lines had been adjusted, however, due to the late Board approval of the necessary staff reductions, the original budget for FY 17/18 did not reflect these distributions.
 - Ms. Zirolli asked for clarification as to the increase in supplies. Mr. Giannini explained that next year's supplies are additional resources and materials needed for programs such as Words Their Way.
 - Ms. Chute asked how the Enrichment Coach will be utilized being shared between three schools. Mr. Giannini responded that the Enrichment Coach will have a schedule to go where needed including faculty meetings. The Enrichment Coach will help with PD, co-teaching, modeling lessons and as a resource for any subject.
 - Ms. Chute also asked if there is any additional item that is missing in the budget that the school would benefit critically and that the Board should consider putting back in. Mr. Giannini expressed the Teaching Assistant positions were invaluable to the school, especially in the lower grades. This also offered newer teachers opportunity for experience.
 - Mr. Birk commented on his enthusiasm on the service curriculum and Maker Space for the library. Mr. Birk also asked, given continued uncertain intergovernmental revenues, what would having one less third grade section look like as it would still result in a lower average class size than the previous year's third grade. Mr. Giannini responded that decreasing a section increases class size and given how enrollment fluctuates throughout the year that it is a decision best made as the new school year gets closer.
- b. 17-18/79 Proposed 2018-2019 Roaring Brook School Budget
- RBS Principal, Noam Sturm, presented RBS' proposed budget, which includes:
- No cost to the district changes such as promoting student leadership and bus ambassadors to help with dismissal
 - Shared STEM teacher to complement the library media specialist and perhaps create opportunities with community area STEM businesses/organizations
 - Hope of bringing back teaching assistants if the budget allows after the state budget is disclosed
 - Material costs for current programs such as Words Their Way
 - Additional literary material to build up school and classroom libraries

Questions & Comments

- Ms. Zirolli asked for clarification regarding kindergarten enrollment numbers. Mr. Sturm replied that RBS' kindergarten enrollment has historically been around 100, the current enrollment of 71 is the smallest in some time.
- Ms. Zirolli also asked about the World Language teacher to which Ms. Michaud replied it was the same issue she responded to regarding PGS.
- Ms. Chute acknowledged Mr. Sturm's request for teaching assistants and asked if there were any additional items he would request. Mr. Sturm responded that he is extremely happy with the budget presented as it meets the school's needs and feels it is one fiscally responsible to the Town.

- Ms. Young asked what the Open Choice money would cover this year. Dr. Rusack replied that Open Choice money for the current year was not yet received and Title I money that covers many of the teaching assistant positions was reduced \$100,000. If funds do come it they will be used to cover the positions.
 - Mr. Spivak asked for clarity on enrollment numbers as PGS estimates 106 students with 6 sections while RBS estimates 107 students with 5 sections. Mr. Sturm replied that predicting enrollment is a guess and administrators need to decide when it is needed to have smaller class sizes.
 - Ms. Young mentioned the potential increase in enrollment due to two new housing developments in Avon, one off RT 44 and the other off Arch Road.
- c. 17-18/80 Proposed 2018-2019 Thompson Brook School Budget
- TBS Principal, Mike Renkawitz, presented TBS' proposed budget, which includes:
- Continuation of Family Connections Night where Avon and Hartford families go out to eat and do a fun activity together and Enrichment Clusters - enrichment for all such as students learning inspirational sayings in American Sign Language
 - Gaining back the two 6th grade teachers lost last year due to enrollment though still down two 5th grade teachers lost two years ago
 - A .5 social worker will be shared with the middle school that will help with the school counselor and school psychologist
 - A full time assistant principal will be another resource to teachers and will help with the teacher evaluation and supervision of teachers
 - Language Arts supplies are for the Words Their Way program
 - Current Library Media Specialist will work on Maker Space and doing some of the STEM work such as coding for all students
- Questions & Comments
- Ms. Chute asked Mr. Renkawitz about the increase of funding for the school library. Mr. Renkawitz replied that it is for the library itself, to prepare for the Maker Space area and supplies the librarian may need.
 - Ms. Chute asked if there were anything Mr. Renkawitz would like added to the budget. Mr. Renkawitz replied that the budget supports the school mission as well as the safe school initiative and has everything he needs.
 - Mr. Birk commented on the increase in the AP position. Mr. Renkawitz commented that the full time AP position was necessary to be responsive to staff and to help with supervision and evaluations.
- d. 17-18/81 Proposed 2018-2019 Avon Middle School Budget
- AMS Principal, David Kimball, presented AMS' proposed budget, which includes:
- Continuation of AMS's culture – why are we here? Four pillars include responsibility, compassion, curiosity and resilience.
 - Continuation of academic excellence
 - A decrease of FTE to shift staff to TBS where more staff is needed while maintaining consistent class sizes
 - Funding for Maker Spaces for STEM and Gifted & Talented
 - Funding for instructional materials
 - Addition of a social worker is critical to help with the current two counselors and one school psychologist
- Questions & Comments
- Mr. Spivak asked about the reduction of a Social Studies and Language Arts teacher in the 7th grade and how the teams will be structured. Mr. Kimball explained that there will

be various options in constructing the 7th grade team, possibly making the third team a mini team as the teachers are dual certified or two teams with the extra Science and Math teachers helping with the overload. This will all depend on enrollment numbers.

- Ms. Chute asked about the increase in the library and if there were any additional items requested. Mr. Kimball replied the funds will be used for Maker Spaces and has no other items to ask for as the budget is responsible and on point to put AMS in position to push forward.
- Ms. Zirolli asked for clarification regarding the decrease in interscholastic costs yet an increase in transportation. Mr. Kimball explained that was to remedy the issue last year of not having enough transportation funding that left the middle school in a bind.
- Ms. Zirolli expressed concern that there seems to be a concentration on the child with needs and the advanced child but there is no mention of the “middle of the road” child; is the average student being missed? Mr. Kimball added that with his staff the conversation is to move all students to the next level. Mr. Renkawitz reminded everyone that the enrichment coach is not just for gifted and talented students but for all students.
- Ms. Blea thanked everyone for bringing forth a responsible and forward thinking budget that balances the needs of the town, taxpayers and students.

e. 17-18/83 Proposed 2018-2019 Athletics Budget

Athletic Director, Tim Filon, presented the Athletic Department’s proposed budget, which includes:

- Items coaches really need which were determined after much discussion and review
- Necessary fees
- Transportation expenses including offering additional transportation expenses for out of town students
- Rental fees
- Updating and repair of equipment
- Technical services to maintain equipment and score board
- Maintaining what is currently in place with no additional hires

Questions & Comments

- Mr. Spivak expressed his concern of the inconsistencies across the board of what is paid by the district, by the Booster Club and by the parents; example – helmets provided for football while no helmets provided for lacrosse. Mr. Filon agreed that there needs to be a review of the equity across the sports teams and hopes to close that gap.
- Ms. Blea mentioned that the pay to play fee is waived for students who cannot pay but asked what is done for a student who cannot afford to pay for equipment. Sometimes extra equipment is available and if not we can look into other options to help the student explained Mr. Filon.
- Ms. Zirolli inquired about the increase in rental costs and if PowerTen were included. Mr. Filon confirmed it was and amount also included other items such as lights for night games, Batterson Pond, hockey, lifts for filming games, etc.
- Ms. Zirolli also asked about the various levels of teams and if there were any cuts, to which Mr. Filon replied it was contingent upon the number of participants. He confirmed there were no cuts for JV teams in this budget.
- Ms. Young asked if there was money for repairs to the middle school gym score board and tennis courts which were donated by the community. Mr. Filon replied that the money is available.

- Ms. Young was also concerned on the equipment left behind at meets to which Mr. Filon replied that coaches must do inventory of equipment and are held responsible to inform the students and their parents of lost or broken equipment.
- Mr. Indomendico asked for an explanation of the contracted services line. Mr. Filon replied it was for the Avon Police, ambulances, etc. Ms. Michaud replied it was also for the under armor reconditioning which needs to be spent every year to certify all equipment is up to code and stored.
- Ms. Chute asked if there was anything he wished be in the budget. Mr. Filon stated that he would like the freshman football program reinstated to make football a safe education experience.

f. 17-18/84 Proposed 2018-2019 Technology Budget

Technology Director, Dr. Robert Vojtek, presented the Technology Department's proposed budget, which includes:

- A 7.0 FTE staff which includes himself, Technology Teacher on Special Assignment, Data Specialist, Network Specialist and three Field Technicians
- Continuation of a pilot program at the high school with new laptops for staff
- Additional dongles to projectors that will allow teachers to project wirelessly
- HP warranty that covers batteries for the life of the equipment warranty
- Additional Chromebooks to allow each student, grades 1 – 8, a device
- Apps to connect with curriculum
- Maintenance and repair of equipment
- District-wide software
- District-wide licensing

Questions and Comments

- Ms. Chute asked if the learning curve for the staff is an issue to which Dr. Vojtek replied it depends on whether the individual is ready to take on the challenge; most time people are enthusiastic especially with Elizabeth Ferry's help in supporting the teachers.
- Ms. Chute also asked if there was a wish that should be included in the budget. Dr. Vojtek would like to include providing Chromebooks to the students in the high school.

VI. Communication from Avon Board of Education members

There were no additional comments from Board members.

VII. Communications from the public

A resident addressed the Board regarding the issue of equity in proposed second grade class sizes between PGS and RBS. One enrollment report reflects equity at 21.2 for both schools (page 181 of the budget binder). The school reports however reflect different numbers: PGS at 18.0 and RBS at 21.4 (pages 39 and 51, respectively).

VIII. Adjournment

The Board adjourned Public Session by unanimous consent at 9:21 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary
Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathy Zirolli, Board Secretary

Katharine F. Zirolli

December 8, 2017