

**Town of West Boylston
Finance and CIB Committees
Meeting of April 7, 2015**

A meeting of Fincom and CIB (Capital Investment Board) was convened at 6:58 pm at Town Hall by Ray Bricault, Chair of Fincom and CIB. Chris Berglund, Pat Bryant, Pat Crowley, Dave Eckhardt, Pavel Loven, Jim Marinelli, and Pete Murphy were in attendance. Bill Fay and Aaron Goodale were absent.

The Fincom minutes of meeting for 20 October 2014 were approved as amended 8-0.

The school budget was discussed. Superintendent Elizabeth Schaper presented the budget. Rick Shaw and Roger Pontbriand also attended to help answer questions.

The school budget is \$11,086,883, an increase of 2.9%. The Town Manager has approved a lower budget and there is a \$71,000 difference. The Superintendent and the School Committee are working to resolve the difference.

- Salaries and Wages increased 3.4%, which includes one additional staff member (STEAM) and a contract increase of 2%. The stipends for athletic coaches have been moved to School Choice. Adding these back means the increase would be 4.2%.
- In addition to athletic stipends, Technology and Sped Transportation have also be shifted to School Choice. These changes have been made to fully utilize school choice funds, which must be used in the year received. Last year included one-time expenses for purchase of vans and the math curriculum, leaving funds available for this year.
- Special Education had the largest increase in the budget of 28.5%. Out of district tuition increased the most, 41.8%, to service 11 students with very special needs. Transportation was also impacted, increasing 17.5%. 7 of these students are approaching the end of their secondary education, reducing this cost in coming years. Total special education is \$2,975,266, 27% of the budget.
- Vocational tuition and transportation decreased 6.8%. This cost has been a problem in the past, but fewer students are choosing or being accepted into the vocational program.
- The estimated energy savings from the ESCO project in the budget are \$143,000. There was considerable discussion about this estimate being lower than the guaranteed savings. It was the opinion of the Fincom that the full guaranteed savings should be included, 94% of \$216,000, or \$203,000. If this is done, \$60,000 of the budget gap of \$71,000 would be closed.

Other school issues were discussed:

- The school population from West Boylston continues to trend down, opening school choice places. The current headcount is 956, with 896 from West Boylston. The goal is to keep the school population between 900 and 1000 with normal limits on class size. The school choice waiting list is over 100.
- The ESCO project is running very well with training complete. Savings are being achieved, but the detail will not be available for some time. The project did not include upgrade of the classroom pneumatic heating controllers in the MS/HS school building. They could not be included because the cost could not be covered by the expected savings. The contractor ABCO has estimated \$600,000 to replace these controllers. A plan is needed to create a scope and schedule for this work. Dave Eckhardt will work with the school committee and the superintendent to put together a study group to create the plan.
- Fincom and CIB requested an update to the school capital plan, including items completed and priorities for the coming year. The Superintendent agreed to provide this update.
- The schools completed their 10 year state evaluation review in 2014. The results were very good based on oral feedback. The written report is expected soon with strong positive evaluation. There was discussion about the school committee distributing this report outside of the town to strengthen the image of the school system. The committee members present agreed to consider this request.

The meeting will reconvene Monday, April 13, to hear from the Library, Fire, and DPW departments.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 pm.

Pete Murphy
Secretary