

KING PHILIP REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
March 6, 2017  
King Philip Regional High School – Media Center

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mrs. Martin, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**ROLL CALL OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

Members Present:	Norfolk:	Mike Gee, Jeff Chalmers, Noelle Tonelli
	Plainville:	Ann-marie Martin
	Wrentham:	Lynn Desrochers, Erin DeStefano

Members Absent:	Norfolk:	Present
	Wrentham:	Jim Killion
	Plainville:	Charlene McEntee, Patrick Francomano (arrived at 7:05pm)

**VISITORS:**

Dr. Zielinski, Mr. Caliento

Mrs. Martin, Chair, opened the public hearing at 7pm and introduced Dr. Zielinski, Superintendent of Schools, to present the FY18 proposed budget. The meeting was televised by Wrentham Cable 8.

Dr. Zielinski thanked Mrs. Martin and greeted the members of the audience. She noted that following her presentation there would be time for comments and questions. She indicated that her presentation, along with the background financial information was posted online at the KP website.

**FY18 Budget Public Hearing:**

Dr. Zielinski presented the FY18 Proposed Budget which is attached as part of the Minutes. She explained the budget process in which department heads and curriculum team leaders present their anticipated budget to building administrators based on needs and enrollment. These numbers are then reviewed by the administrative team and are then used to build the budget with the superintendent. The superintendent is requesting a level service budget for FY18 or a percentage increase of 10.5% over FY17.

(Mr. Francomano arrived at 7:05pm)

Dr. Zielinski reviewed the budget drivers for FY18. The budget drivers include special education (out of district tuitions and transportation), health insurance (for active employees and retirees), contractual salary obligations, instructional programs and services including a technology refresh. Any shift in programs is based upon student interests and college requirements. The District also ensures that state mandates are met. King Philip will work with the 3 towns throughout the budget process.

Dr. Zielinski noted that there are 2 additional staff. One is a 1-1 teaching assistant for a student with special needs (required by the student's IEP); the second is a part time nurse at the high school due to the SBIRT requirements. Dr. Zielinski also noted that our nurse to student ratio is below the state recommendation of 1 full time nurse per 700 students.

Special Education out of district tuitions and transportation were reviewed. Dr. Zielinski explained (slide 14) that the District is obligated to service some special education students through the age of 22. In FY18 none of these students will be aging out of the program. In-district students in special education programs/specialized programs, are kept in the KP community. In district programs are developed when there is a need and they are financially viable. 143 special education students receive various accommodations through IEPs; 95 students receive specialized services in house; and 53 students are serviced out of district. BICO was reviewed including the services that are provided for some of our students.

Health insurance will increase in FY18 by 15% for active employees and 7.0% for retirees. The School Committee voted on February 23, 2017, to engage in a healthcare plan design change under municipal law. Based upon Slide 15 in Dr. Zielinski's presentation, in FY14 the line item for healthcare shows a decrease in healthcare due to a plan design change that occurred in 2013.

Dr. Zielinski explained the contractual salary obligations which include lane changes for teachers based upon their professional development coursework and licensure. The salary increases for individual employment contracts are budgeted at 3% as the maximum, but the total percentage is based upon an individual's evaluation for the year.

The substitute teacher pay line item was increased this year. The school committee voted on February 27, 2017, to increase the daily rate to \$85 per day.

Dr. Zielinski explained Excess & Deficiency (E&D). E&D has been applied to both the operating budget and to support capital improvements. \$850,000 of E&D funds were used to reduce assessments to the towns in FY17; and, therefore, FY17 town assessments were lower than the total percent increase to the operating budget. Over the years, E&D funds have been reduced due to the use of them to support the operating budget and capital expenses, such as:

FY12 – Waste water treatment plant (\$485,000);

FY14 – MS Lighting Upgrade (\$265,286) and MS sanitary project (\$150,000);

FY16 – Additional funds for MS Sanitary and water project (\$50,000); and

FY17 – Security cameras, glycol replacement, HVAC System and replace A/C (\$182,500).

FY18 – There are no certified E&D funds available for use.

Dr. Zielinski concluded that the FY18 level service budget provides students the same level of programming received in FY17 and does not include new programs. The Special Education requirements are funded. The contractual obligations are met including union contracts, transportation services, utilities and benefits. This budget also provides a portion (33%) of the needed technology refresh to maintain system and security throughout the District.

Dr. Zielinski opened the floor for questions from the audience.

Mr. Jim Lehan – Norfolk Board of Selectmen thanked Dr. Zielinski and stated that the use of E&D to support the operating budget is a short-term fix that creates problems the following years. He questioned how the towns can keep up with the increases as the funding King Philip has requested would eat up Norfolk's free cash. He also questioned the \$647,000 prepayment to Norfolk County Retirement that has caused E&D to be depleted and asked that the district push back.

Dr. Zielinski said that as part of the budget process we continue to review as numbers become firm. Regional transportation is \$2M and we continue to ask our state representatives to support increasing the reimbursement rate. The District is also looking at a healthcare plan design change.

Mr. Francomano discussed the use of \$850,000 from E&D in the FY17 budget.

Mr. George Sutherland, Plainville Board of Selectmen, stated that Plainville agreed with Norfolk about the need to find ways to reduce the budget. He expressed concern about the technology refresh during a time of fiscal crisis.

State Representative and Norfolk resident Shawn Dooley stated that he has worked to clarify the \$647,000 E&D issue with the Department of Revenue and the Department of Labor Services. After July 1, once KP recertifies, that \$647,000 would come back into E&D for FY18.

Mr. Francomano stated that the district is currently looking for budget items that can be deferred until after E&D is certified and fall town meetings are held.

State Rep. Shawn Dooley asked if the district anticipates any additions to E&D. Can we cut this year to help rebuild the fund?

Mr. Francomano stated that there is a budget freeze now and Mr. Caliento and the Administrative Team will be analyzing what savings there may be.

Discussion continued on the \$647,000 prepayment, what budget it was charged against, and how it will be handled in the future.

Mr. Lehan questioned whether more funds would be available from Special Ed (BICO), and circuit breaker that will help offset the budget increase.

Mr. Bruce Cates, Plainville Finance Committee questioned the refresh as well as custodial overtime costs.

Dr. Zielinski stated that The Finance Subcommittee and the administration have been meeting every Friday to look at various areas and do more analysis. The budget presented is a level service budget, we continue to work to streamline the budget and look for efficiencies with the goal of not cutting programs.

Mrs. Susan Klein – Norfolk asked for clarification on the budget process. What does it mean for our students? Do we lobby with our town reps or do we show up ourselves. What is the tax impact for individual taxpayers in the town?

Mr. Francomano explained that the Committee will vote a budget tonight, set up a time to meet with the 3 towns' selectmen and finance committees, and in between those meetings, continue to review and adjust the budget to bring it to a firm number once more information is known about the state budget. At some point, we hope to come to a consensus with the towns prior to the town meetings (we need at least 2 of the 3 towns to agree to a budget figure). At that point it is up to the town people to vote at town meeting.

Mr. Lehan explained the town government process as Norfolk has the first town meeting of the 3 towns. The town must take into consideration schools, DPW, public safety, etc. The town compiles its revenue and must present a balanced budget. Any request to amend the budget must have a funding source which could be free cash or stabilization fund. The town can also vote to attempt an override.

Mr. Francomano explained that we are not talking growth, we are talking status quo and we can't even maintain status quo. The state aid formula does not fund education appropriately and it understates the cost significantly in the areas of special education and health insurance.

Dr. Zielinski stated that the Governor's budget has given a \$20 increase per student.

Rep. Dooley stated that based upon the initial meetings with the Senate and House, there will be an effort to raise that number. Health insurance is an issue with the state budget. He stated that the foundation budget is designed to overfund the inner cities and the larger population areas, and that we are penalized because we are considered a wealthy district. Regional transportation and special education are huge financial costs; we have talked to DOR about a cap.

Dr. Zielinski: To Rep. Dooley - What one action should parents take to encourage more money for the school budget.

State Rep. Dooley: It is limited dollars, we are fortunate in this area that we are well represented by Senator Ross and myself who support funding education. We need to get the Foundation Review Commission recommendations enacted.

Mr. Francomano noted that he served on the Foundation Review Commission.

Mr. Gee: What assumptions do we make on circuit breaker?

Dr. Zielinski: We need to get a better handle on students who are in OOD programming. Ms. Lacher is working to see if there are any students that can be brought back to the district.

Mrs. Wolf: King Philip refinanced the buildings; wasn't there a cost savings to the town of almost \$1M

Mr. Lehan: They did refinance and that will save the towns \$2M over 10 years, but that was money passed by an override, it does not come from the operating budget.

Mr. Wolf: What will you do to look at special education from K-22 to manage the costs?

Mrs. Martin explained that a special education review (called the Walker Report) has been completed and a facilitator has been hired by the 4 districts to review and facilitate collaboration. Any budget savings would not be realized until FY19 at the earliest.

Hearing no further questions, Mrs. Martin closed the FY18 budget public hearing at 8:30pm.

 **A Motion was made by Mr. Francomano, seconded by Mrs. Tonelli, to approve the FY18 level service budget of \$33,615,314.00. All in favor.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Superintendent's Successor Contract: To be discussed in Executive Session.

Healthcare Plan Design: To be discussed in Executive Session.

### **ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- ✚ A Motion was made by Mr. Francomano, seconded by Mrs. Tonelli, to adjourn Executive Session at 8:30pm for the following purposes: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. (Zielinski contract negotiation); and to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. (Units A, B, C D and Cafeteria, Retiree - Health insurance) and not to return to open session. All in favor by roll call vote: Yes (7); No (0).

### **ADJOURNMENT**

- ✚ A Motion was made by Mr. Francomano, seconded by Mrs. Desrochers, to adjourn at 10:10pm. All in favor by roll call vote: Yes (7); No (0).

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Lisa B. Witkus  
Secretary to the School Committee*

**Attached Budget Presentation**