

Finance Committee and School Committee Meeting – 6 PM
Finance Committee Meeting – 7 PM
March 17, 2021
By Zoom

School Committee and Finance Committee meeting for local school budget hearing

6:00 PM

Finance Committee members present: Richard Kisloski, Gil Loud, Julia Peters, Paul Wetzel, Charles Dudek, Linda Rowley, Lisa Sheehy

Committee Members absent: Charlie Heath, Eric Cerreta

Principal Stacey Jenkins reviewed the Williamsburg Public Schools preliminary budget for FY 2022 in the amount of \$2,550,434. The proposed Town Allocation is \$2,330,298, an increase of \$55,910 from FY 2021.

Ms. Jenkins answered questions about the financial impacts due to COVID, CARES Act funds, projected American Rescue Plan Act funds, projections for future enrollment, tuition-paying pre-K students, and reorganization of some Central Office functions to individual schools. It is proposed to add 1.0 FTE to the Administrative Clerical Staff. It is proposed to bring fiber into the Anne T. Dunphy School for telephone service, at an estimated cost of \$12,000.

The Finance Committee members left the joint meeting at 7:00 PM.

Finance Committee Meeting

7:10 PM: Paul Wetzel called the meeting to order.

Finance Committee Members Present: Paul Wetzel, Julia Peters, Richard Kisloski, Charles Dudek, Linda Rowley, Gil Loud, Lisa Sheehy.

Committee Members absent: Charlie Heath, Eric Cerreta

Other people present: Charlene Nardi, Town Administrator, Rob Stinson

Discussion of the school budget review

The total estimated direct municipal aid to Williamsburg under the American Rescue Plan Act is \$721,550. Charlene Nardi will look into how it may be expended.

Could the Town share communications fiber service with the school for any additional functions and possible cost savings? Town Offices currently have fiber. It was installed up to, but not into the school building.

Discussion of the Public Safety Complex

Committee members agreed that all are convinced that a new Public Safety Complex is needed.

Questions and concerns that were discussed:

- Energy efficiency: The PSC plan does not include installation of solar panels and battery, although the roof would accommodate later installation. The plan does not include a complex HVAC system. How will the planned HVAC system affect energy efficiency? What are the benefits of increasing insulation as opposed to a more complex HVAC system?
- Cost and design of the proposed PSC: Is the proposed building more expensive per square foot than appropriate or than comparable buildings in other nearby towns? The proposed PSC is not a pre-engineered metal building. Pros and cons of a pre-engineered metal building were discussed: lower cost; would it be less or more durable and long-lasting? There is some public sentiment about the building's looks at the proposed central Town location. It must meet flood plain and seismic design requirements since it will house Emergency Services. Is a detailed floor plan available for review?
- Impact of tax increase on residents with fixed incomes: Concern for homeowners on fixed incomes. Has the public comment process adequately included them? Are Town tax abatements fully used?
- Costs of delay: costs of borrowing are currently low. Annual cost to insure and minimally maintain the Helen E. James building are approximately \$45,000 per year just to keep the building safe. It will need a new roof soon.
- Deferred maintenance: are there costs resulting from deferred maintenance by Fire and Police Department due to being housed for many years in sites that were meant to be temporary?
- Stabilization Fund: how would the proposed use of the Stabilization Fund affect the Town's future stability? It was noted that the Stabilization Fund's current balance is higher than the target benchmark, because construction of the Anne T. Dunphy School did not use as much as anticipated due to state funding.

At its 3/31/21 meeting, the Finance Committee will vote on a recommendation on the PSC proposal.

The Finance Committee will prepare an explanation for the public of how the proposed PSC building will affect property taxes. This is addressed in PSC FAQ #14 "How much will the Public Safety building increase my taxes?" Paul Wetzel will draft a more detailed narrative.

Next meeting:

The Finance Committee will meet on 3/31/21 at 6 PM. Agreed to start meeting in the parking lot at the Town Offices in April, unless it is raining in which case the meeting will be held virtually.

Richard Kisloski moved to adjourn. Julia Peters seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 PM.