



Framingham

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Committee

**Finance and Operations Subcommittee
Joint Meeting with City Council's Finance Subcommittee
Remote
February 22, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.
Open Meeting Minutes**

PRESENT: Adam Freudberg (Chair), Richard A. Finlay, Jennifer Moshe, Priscila Sousa

ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: City Council Finance Subcommittee Members George King (Chair), Noval Alexander, Michael Cannon, Adam Steinter, and John Stefanini, Executive Director of Finance and Operations Lincoln Lynch, Superintendent Dr. Robert Tremblay, Framingham Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Louise Miller, Executive Assistant to the School Committee Joanna Hastry

Call to Order

The City Council Finance Chair Mr. King called their portion of the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The School Committee Finance & Operations Chair Mr. Freudberg called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. He said this meeting was being broadcast live on Facebook and being recorded. He read those in attendance, and how to participate in public comment.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

City Council Specific Agenda Items

The City Council first discussed two agenda items without a School Committee role. Upon request of the Mayor and Assistant Chief Financial Officer, a referral to the Finance Subcommittee to consider a transfer of Salary funds to Operating funds for the Assessing Department for consulting work; and upon request of the Mayor, Changes and Additions to the Job Classification Schedule. The Council approved both 5-0.

FY23 Revenue Projections, Finance Operations Overview, and Budget Development Process with the Chief Financial Officer/Director of Administration & Finance

Mr. Freudberg said that the Finance and Operations Subcommittee and full School Committee would be meeting in the next several weeks to refine the budget for the School Department that would include reviews of expenses, new position requests, and seeking consensus with the Mayor, Chief Financial Officer, the FPS Superintendent, and the FPS Executive Director of Finance and Operations for what would be in the best interest for all stakeholders. He noted that the final number would include the Special Education carry over, and the Chapter 70 funding for this fiscal year was record breaking with an increase of \$11.8M for a total of \$68.8M, which will help with funding, and the discussions have already begun on how to best use these funds. He said that the study on mergers and efficiencies, which was unanimously approved 20-0 between the City Council and School Committee last year, was not carried out yet due to the previous

administration not choosing a vendor so there was no information or suggestions to influence this budget season's planning, and recommended the new administration launch the study to close out this long standing goal.

Executive Director of Finance and Operations Lincoln Lynch described the current School Department budget status at this moment as an “all-in” budget that reflected the requests of principals and directors, is not the amount that is being asking for at this time, and instead is just a starting point. He said that a vote to send a final request to the Mayor would be made on March 30th. He shared the FY22-23 School Department Preliminary Budget Development Status slides that included a breakdown of the current 8.20% increase, School Department funding including State Aid and Local Contribution, the FY23 Budget drivers, the FY23 Budget offsets, potential additional budget offsets, and the FPS Operating Budget history.

City Councilors asked what the foundational enrollment for FY23 is estimated to be and what programming is being planned for preschool education as many children are being left behind without having this education. Mr. Lynch said that the enrollment is estimated to be 9,344. Dr. Tremblay said that there is currently limited capacity to expand the preschool programs within the buildings that the school department already has, but they have created partnerships with the YMCA and Framingham State University and he would like to expand these types of community-based relationships as a short-term plan. He said a long-term plan is to use of the Farley Building or part of the building of a new educational compound on the south side for a preschool. He said that the budget will include funds for additional expansion toward meeting this need. He spoke to some challenges that come with utilization of partnerships including accreditation, appropriate space and considerations to existing private programs. City Councilors spoke to the concerning broad issues of safety and asked if there was an increase focused on mental health and safety. Dr. Tremblay said that they have increased the number of campus aides at the high school, and funding is included to implement training for students, such as for students to be active bystanders. City Councilors asked what the status and estimated amount of the surplus funds rolled over will be and how it will be reflected in the budget. Mr. Lynch said the exact number was not available yet, but noted that the salary surplus may be a bit on the higher side as they have had a hard time hiring as had other district, and estimated it would be around \$3-\$3.5 million with \$2-2.5 million of that planned for special education carryover. There was discussion from City Councilors on how no other city department has the opportunity to decide how much surplus to keep for the following year, and from School Committee members on how the carryover was identified to help with the structural deficit and the carryover is to be reduced every year as part of a new long term effort to reduce the reliance on it. Mr. Freudberg noted that the City Council has invited the School Committee Finance and Operations Subcommittee to a joint meeting with the Mayor on March 29th, the School Committee annual public hearing on the budget would be on March 16th, and the Committee would meet to vote upon the budget the following day.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes of September 28, 2021.

Moved: Ms. Sousa **Seconded:** Mr. Finlay **Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous (4-0-0)
(Yes: Freudberg, Finlay, Moshe, Sousa)

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Mr. Finlay

Seconded: Ms. Sousa

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (4-0-0)

(Yes: Freudberg, Finlay, Moshe, Sousa)

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Meeting Packet Materials

Agenda

FY23 Budget Presentation

FY23 Budget Schedule

Policy DIBA: Special Education Circuit Breaker Account Management

Draft 09.28.21 Joint Meeting Minutes

These minutes were approved by the Finance and Operations Subcommittee in Open Session on June 30, 2022.

These minutes were sent to the City of Framingham for posting on July 5, 2022.