

# QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## BUDGET and FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, May 7, 2013

A meeting of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee was held on Tuesday, May 7, 2013 at 5:00 pm in the Gillooly Room at the NAGE Building. Present were Mayor Thomas Koch, Mr. Paul Bregoli, Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Mrs. Emily Lebo, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. Dave McCarthy, and Ms. Barbara Isola, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Assistant Superintendent Colleen Roberts, Mr. Michael Draicchio, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Mrs. Joanne Morrissey, Mr. James Mullaney, Mr. Kevin Mulvey, Mrs. Maura Papile, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Ms. Judy Todd; Ms. Jill Gichuhi, President of the Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education; Ms. Allison Cox, President of the Quincy Education Association; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Ms. Isola called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm and introduced Mayor Koch, noting that he had presented the proposed FY2014 Budget to the City Council on Monday, May 6. Mayor Koch shared copies of the submitted City Budget for FY2014; an additional narrative document is still to come. Mayor Koch reminded the School Committee that the Quincy Public Schools budget detail is not included in this document; the bottom line is presented to City Council and they may choose to amend the number but may not make changes to individual line items. Mayor Koch spoke of the many investments underway in the city from school buildings to sea walls to sewer lines. This year's budget shows growth based on the financial stability of the city. He cited the state legislative delegation's assistance, and working with the City Council and School Committee to create the budget that reflects the core values of the city: education, public safety, and infrastructure

The total city budget for FY2014 is \$257,817,260, a 4.4% increase from FY2013. Areas of increase include Veterans Services, the Library Department, Parks, and Information Technology. Some of these departments took deep cuts to preserve education and public safety during the years of budget cuts and many of these increases are of direct benefit to the schools.

The education budget will increase by \$3.6 million, based on preliminary information from Quincy Public Schools. This increase will allow for additional restoration of positions and services, absorbs positions previously funded by expiring grants, and provides resources for new teachers and programs. The Mayor is looking forward to deliberation with School Committee and Leadership Team on allocating these new resources.

For the police department, funding is included for seven additional positions. For the fire department, nine positions that were supported by a federal grant will be absorbed by the budget. A new ladder truck (almost \$1 million) will be funded through a bond. Additional training for the fire department related to the downtown construction will be funded.

The Public Buildings department will have a new energy manager position (buildings, street lighting, solar systems, fleets); this person will also serve as a liaison with the state and federal grant programs. Public Buildings will also add a system technician, managing the HVAC systems and electrical systems for all public buildings. An electrician will be added to the Maintenance staff, along with a carpenter and additional contractual funding. The Public Buildings department is growing to meet the needs of the integrated management of 50 buildings across the city.

For the Parks Department, three laborers plus additional summer help will be added. This will help with tree, beach, park, and open space management. Open space acreage has continued to grow, so the demands for management are increasing. Additional funding for the Department of Public Works will be earmarked for tide gate maintenance. Traffic and Parking has been merged into the DPW; plans are underway to repaint road markings twice a year. Crosswalks in school areas and along walking routes will be repainted just prior to the opening of school in September.

Quincy is in the process of purchasing streetlights from National Grid, which will save \$300,000 annually. An outside contractor will maintain the current system. Eventually, the system will be replaced by LED technology which has a longer life span and will reduce electrical costs over the 10 year life of the system. For snow and ice removal, gains have been made in fully funding this line item. Unspent money can be redistributed to the general fund. All plowing and snow removal around schools including custodial overtime are paid from this fund.

Contract negotiations have been completed across the city with only three non-school units left to settle (library, police superior officers, fire alarm). For most contracts, the 1%-2%-2% raise pattern over three years was implemented; in several contracts, new employees will have reduced sick leave and educational benefit levels. Provisions were made for a 3% increase for department heads and non-union employees on the city side; these employees have not received raises for several years. There will be a line item to appropriate \$250,000 into the stabilization fund, a good sign for the investment community. The stabilization fund is continuing to grow – the goal is for it to eventually be \$15 to \$20 million. Free cash, once certified, is appropriated to OPEB (unfunded liabilities for insurance trust fund), stabilization, and the inclement weather account. These are essentially savings accounts that are hedges in case of unplanned events.

In terms of revenue, sustainable growth is the goal and this has been accomplished over the last several years. Virtually all structural deficits and deficiencies have been corrected. An additional \$2.5 million will be generated through commercial and residential taxes. An excess tax levy exists; the average increase for a homeowner is \$100, well under that of comparable local communities. Mayor Koch appreciates the cooperation and collaboration between the Quincy Public Schools staff and city staff; everyone works together to make things happen.

Ms. Isola announced that subsequent budget meetings will be held on May 13, May 21, May 29; all will be at 5:00 pm in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room of the NAGE Building. A Public Hearing on the FY2014 Budget will be held on June 5 at 6:00 pm in the City Council Chambers at City Hall.

Dr. DeCristofaro and Mr. Mullaney then reviewed the Quincy Public Schools process for budget development. Dr. DeCristofaro thanked the Mayor for the level service plus budget which will allow for continued restoration and improvement of the educational offerings. Quincy Public Schools operated on the concept of shared, contributory decision making among the Leadership Team and Principals and School Committee; everyone's participation and input are key to successful budget building. The proposed budget will reflect Common Core obligations for new text purchases, additional positions for academic support programs, funding for extracurricular activities, step and level increases, and hiring elementary school support teachers to restore teacher planning time and assist with library and technology needs.

The first step in the process is to identify areas of consideration at the site and system level, meet with Principals and Program Directors, review and organize options, prioritize recommendations, and review the proposed allocations with School Committee. After the School Committee's initial review, options are reworked and discussed and prioritizations finalized. The budget is then presented at the Public Hearing and reviewed at the June School Committee meeting before a final approval. The final budget is shared with the City Council in June. Students are the center of the budget matrix, with Academic Classroom Teachers and Academic Programs first priority, followed by Academic and Non-Academic Support, Subsidized Programs (Revolving Accounts), Academic and Non-Academic Expenses.

Key questions are asked about maintaining or increasing staffing for academic classroom teachers and academic programs, considering staff retirements, leaves of absence, and Kindergarten registration. Population shifts in school buildings, School Committee class size guidelines, and strategies such as skills support are all kept in mind. For Academic Programs, the total array of services offered is reviewed and maintenance, growth, or reduction is considered for each. For Academic Support, Non-Academic Support, Academic Expenses, and Non-Academic Expenses, there is the same process of reviewing programs and changing needs for services. Subsidized services (Food Services, Transportation, Athletics, Building Rentals) are reviewed and fees and costs analyzed.

Dr. DeCristofaro concluded the presentation by inviting the School Committee to provide input for their budget priorities during the next few days as the preliminary budget preparations are underway.

Mrs. Lebo made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 pm. Mr. Bregoli seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.