

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUDGET and FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, May 6, 2014

A meeting of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee was held on Tuesday, May 6, 2014 at 5:00 pm in the 2nd Floor Conference Room at the NAGE Building. Present were Mayor Thomas Koch, Mr. Paul Bregoli, Mr. Noel DiBona, Ms. Barbara Isola, Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. David McCarthy, and Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Ms. Beth Hallett, Mr. James Mullaney, Mrs. Maura Papile, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Ms. Madeline Roy, Mr. Keith Segalla, Ms. Judy Todd; Ms. Allison Cox, Quincy Education Association President; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Mrs. Hubley called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm

Mayor Koch gave an overview of the City of Quincy FY2015 Budget, a proposed appropriation of \$268,540,406, a 4.1% increase over last year. The Quincy Public Schools budget is an increase of \$2.9 million. Mayor Koch is proud of the school system both as mayor and a parent. The Superintendent, Leadership and Principal Team have created a good feeling about the school system, which is good for the city. Other areas of budget increases include Public Safety (Police and Firefighters) and Library (replacing state funding). Incremental increases are planned for the Assessing Department, capital outlay for computers, software, and vehicles. Salary commission recommendations for department heads are also incorporated into budget proposal. The Mayor's salary and City Council stipends are recommended for increase, these would not take effect until the next calendar year; Mayor Koch is also recommending an increase in stipend for the School Committee members of \$2,500.

In terms of debt service, the city will face a peak of debt in FY2016; Quincy's debt is low compared to other cities and towns, and the bond rating was just increased. Community Preservation funds, the Hotel Tax, and the municipal Meals tax contribute to paying down debt. As projects are completed, new projects are added, there is a constant need for infrastructure upgrades and improvements.

Revenues are generated through property taxes (74%); state aid (17%), and local receipts (9%). State aid has not recovered to the level of earlier years, but is up slightly. Stabilization has increased over time and property tax growth has continued to be substantially under state limits. The goal will be to keep the property tax rate increase modest, but it is too early to predict a rate. The tax rate will be set in the fall. Quincy has excess levy capacity of \$18.5 million, one of the highest in the state. Almost every city and town taxes homeowners to the legal limit each year.

All City Departments, including Quincy Public Schools will appear before City Council's Finance Subcommittee. City Council can change the Quincy Public Schools bottom line, but not individual line items. Mayor Koch said additional QPS funding will give School Committee the opportunity to work with the Superintendent and Leadership Team to make improvements and add value to existing programs.

Dr. DeCristofaro thanked Mayor Koch for the Quincy Public Schools budget appropriation and the opportunity to analyze and grow QPS through investment in class size and academic programs. He then reviewed that the budget process begins with the Superintendent meeting with Principals and Superintendent's Leadership about areas of consideration: enrollment and class size, program and student supports. In a series of scheduled meetings, a draft budget will be presented to School Committee, options are reviewed and prioritized, there is a public hearing, and then a final vote on the budget. As always, students are at the center of the budget priorities, with Academic Classroom Teachers and Academic Programs first, followed by Academic Support, Non-Academic Support, Subsidized Programs, Academic and Non-Academic Expenses. School Committee Policy on Class Size Guidelines are observed, and presented to School Committee in October and as part of the School Improvement Plan process.

In the rebuilding that has taken place in the last five years, there has been restoration and growth in many academic, academic program, and academic support areas. Subsidized Services are analyzed and fees and requirements reviewed and adjustments proposed as needed. Dr. DeCristofaro said that for most School Committee members, this is a familiar process. School Committee has had the opportunity to share their individual ideas with the Superintendent and the draft budget will reflect their thoughts.

Mr. McCarthy thanked Mayor Koch for the Quincy Public Schools budget appropriation, noting that it is much easier to add than subtract in budget deliberations.

Mayor Koch made a motion to adjourn the Budget and Finance Subcommittee meeting at 5:30 pm.

Mr. Bregoli seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.