

TOWN of CARVER

JOINT MEETING OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE and BOARD of SELECTMEN

Wednesday, February 13, 2019

7:00 p.m. OPEN MEETING

Town Hall, Lower Level, Room 4

Board of Selectmen Present:

Ronald Clarke, *Charman*

Sarah Hewins

Mark Townsend

Absent: David Robertson, *Vice Chairman*

Alan Dunham

Also Present:

Michael Milanoski, Town Administrator

School Committee Present:

Andrew Soliwoda, *Vice Chairman*

Stephanie Clougherty, *Secretary*

Andrew Cardarelli

Absent: James O'Brien, *Chairman*

Gina Marie Hanlon-Cavicchi

Also Present:

Scott Knief, Superintendent

Brad Brothers, Chief Operations and Finance Officer

Motion made by the school committee to open the session: Andrew Cardarelli

Second: Stephanie Clougherty

Meeting opened by Board of Selectmen Chairman, Ron Clarke at **7:00 pm** with Pledge of Allegiance.

I. Update and closure of school building projects

A. Middle High School MSBA

The Middle High School MSBA project for improvements and updates to the roof and windows at the Middle High school was approved at 7.4 million dollars and was reduced by 2 million dollars through the process. The work was completed and extended warranties were secured on several items.

B. Middle High School Sports Complex

Scott Knief, Superintendent of Schools noted that the project went well on all fronts. It was completed ahead of schedule and on budget. Each of the fall sports teams were able to play at least one game on the new turf field and it has been a positive addition to the

Middle High School.

C. Elementary School Project – steps for closure

Originally the elementary school project was a proposed renovation at 67 million dollars. At a town meeting, the residents of Carver voted to approved the construction of a new building at 52 million dollars to include recreation fields. Thanks to PMA and the designers at HMFH, the project came in less than 48 million dollars. The final stages of the interior construction was completed in February 2019. Most, if not all of the exterior work is due to be completed in May. This additional exterior work would be done in order to fix field issues, planting, fences, etc. They are going to replant in the spring and then again in the fall to ensure the fields take properly. Once completed, there will be a six month review from the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Association) at which time they will complete the audit and then release the funds back to the town. It was agreed that the Elementary School was a successful project. The Superintendent shared that there has been lots of positive feedback and the school is excited about the building itself. Mr. Knief also acknowledged PMA and HMFH for their great job.

The elementary school has also positively impacted other buildings in town. A computer room was added within the budget that houses the town wide technology department and with the combination of the upgrade of the fiber lines and phone lines for town buildings and additional cameras in different buildings in town it has allowed for whole security town wide. Steven Mahoney, Director of Technology for the town of Carver was applauded for his vision and plans for the school and for the town.

In addition to the school building the town has also purchased additional equipment to replace two town vehicles mandated for retirement by the MassDOT. Two new pickup trucks with plows are now located at the schools for their use. The town of carver also bought new lawn equipment to assist in the maintenance of the new fields. A number of those things go through the capital committee for funding but were born out of the elementary project.

1. Anticipate Transferring surplus funds to support new police station

Prior to the debt exclusion and bond, there were five different articles in cash totalling roughly \$845,000. This money is to be transferred to the new police station and being forwarded to build the building. Additional funds will be needed for things beyond the scope. The planning on the police project is currently coming in below budget.

II. Update on Capital Project and 10 year plan

The stabilization fund has a current balance of 3.1 million dollars of which 1.997 million dollars are fixed costs (i.e. existing leases, debt on MHS, fire department etc.) leaving 1.2 million dollars available to spend on various priorities. Some of the priorities mentioned were: basketball hoop replacements, special education transportation minivan and wheelchair van, new school bus, police cruiser, townwide technology department, police and fire gear, rehabilitation of fire heavy rescue truck #1 frame, fire tanker #2 purchase, replacement of the street sweeper, and upgrades to lighting at the transportation building. Any savings from these projects would get rolled back into the stabilization fund.

Ron Clarke, Board of Selectmen Chairman noted that this year, they stopped putting money into

the stabilization fund and added money back into the operating budget line to help move things forward. Michael Milanoski, Town Administrator added that they have also had meetings focused on how to build up the operating budgets. Income on new growth personal property has been moved into the operating budget which this year has offered a 2.44% increase for the school and town budget.

The Superintendent weighed in on the conversation about operating budgets, sharing that in regards to the school's budget, the Chapter 70 state aid is minimal, leaving a dire situation and it will continue to be every year without a change. Under the governor's proposed budget Carver would still get the minimum aid. It was agreed that the largest problem is the lack of funding from the state.

Michael Milanoski shared the town's perspective on budgeting with the state's funding. Since FY 16 the state funding for education has reduced dramatically. The town's forecasts are based on an increase of \$120,000 in state aid for education, the amount that they were hoping for. Although the governor's budget is up slightly, the net is still lower than it was 5 years ago.

The discussion continued with Charter School and School Choice funding. Scott Knief shared that the Charter School enrollment from Carver was projected at 52 students for FY 18 and instead our current enrollment is under 40. The funds are allocated based on projections and even though Carver will see that money back from the state, they cannot budget on it. The school choice impact is found online with Carver home school students tapping into virtual academies. The regular school choice impact is \$5,000 per student whereas online schools like TECCA virtual is \$10,800 per student. The funding impact is really seen by looking at the lack of dramatic difference in student enrollment and a drop in funding by \$250,000 in state aid. This does not account for inflation either.

The committees are hopeful with trends stabilizing and very slightly trending upwards, although as Andrew Soliwoda, School Committee Vice Chairperson noted, the school department and committee believe that in order for that to continue, there must be an increase in opportunities and programs which ultimately require more funds.

Acknowledging that there are fixed costs associated with the capital budget, Scott Knief shared his belief that the town has additional funds in capital and asked the town to consider moving some of those funds from capital to support operating budgets.

In return, Michael Milanoski responded by stating that the town has already made modifications in reference to this and referenced the previous year's model. The town capital budget was slated to grow by \$55,000 per year and they have shifted some monies already which was agreed upon by both parties.

Mr. Knief acknowledged that the town has tried to think creatively to help the school department, but there are still things to look at, like whether there are items or expenses that can be moved to and covered under capital. He shared that the town administrator has been willing to look at these things to help alleviate our school's operating budget, and that the town has used one time monies to help the schools (i.e. reserve funds for special ed, health insurance, and utilities in the event of any changes) In the past, the schools haven't needed to use the health or utilities reserves, however assistance with utilities will be used this year.

Ron Clarke, also acknowledged the cooperative work the school and town has done to find solutions, using the example of the School Resource Officer (SRO) and groundskeeper which now come out of the town's budget. Cooperatively, Mr. Milanoski noted, is the only way it can be done. Combining departments (ie. technology, facilities and maintenance) and creating reserve accounts are some of the ways this work has been done already, as well as offering the school 60-70% of the "free cash" funds.

Scott Knief agreed to the benefits and success of the collaboration with the two boards, but also shared that his focus is and must be students' needs and that making cuts is not what students' need. He felt as though this has been a reoccurring conversation and the schools cannot afford to keep cutting. He shared his understanding of why policies have been adopted and decisions were made by the town in the past. He also acknowledged that great things like the accelerated repair, elementary school, police, fire and center of town projects have all been funded without debt inclusions and ultimately increase our bond percentage but wondered as to whether or not they were being done at the expense of operating budgets. With a shortfall of \$320,000, Mr. Knief stated that the school didn't intend to ask the town to hand it over, but asked for the board of selectmen and town administrator to take a serious look at the impact to both the school and community if the shortfall remains and perhaps take a serious look at how to help close it in.

Discussion continued on how to properly balance what is necessary for building and stabilization funds, capital and operating budgets noting that if the state side is going down, then the tax payers side is going up. Michael Milanoski shared that the town made some major changes five years ago and had to make serious changes to make it work. It was acknowledged that the school is gaining problems and shortfalls year to year, but the town also must look to maintain and keep infrastructure up.

School Committee member Andrew Cardarelli closed the discussion by sharing his understanding and appreciation for the help given thus far by the town, but that the bottom line is that the school budget is still at a shortfall and they don't want to lose kids or teachers.

A. School Dude Implementation

School Dude is a software management system for use of facilities. When operations and maintenance combined, this program was brought along from use at the public schools for town wide implementation. This system is used beyond scheduling to create and maintain schedules for regular maintenance. An assessment was completed for School Dude for all facilities in town. The goal is for the schools to join the town in full use of the program. The program also allows for any town employee to log in and create maintenance requests if needs are being seen or need to be addressed. This should also help with the capital plan to assist with accurate building and facilities management costs.

III. Update on Town Wide Budget

A. Town Wide Technology

B. Operations and Maintenance

1. Discussion on Field Maintenance and additional staff person

Discussion was had on field maintenance and additional staff persons needed in

order to maintain the fields at this time. 1.5 positions will be added in the form of an additional full time groundskeeper who will have a focus on the fields in the spring and fall and fall under the town's budget, as well as a part time administrative assistant for Dave Siedentopf, Director of Operations and Maintenance.

2. Discussion on Town-Wide field and building fees to cover cost for expectation

Discussion was had on the town-wide field and building fees. A meeting was held with the recreation department, school administration and town-wide maintenance department to look at scheduling, order of priority use, fee structure, etc. The fee structure proposed currently is a lower fee than the original proposal. Any fees paid/collected will go into an account which would pay for the maintenance of fields. Any turf fees paid/collected will go into an account to pay for the maintenance of the turf field. The joint policy will allow for proper and unified maintenance for all fields. Organized sports will have to schedule time on all fields, school or recreation, with an understanding that school teams will fill first at schools and the same will be true on the recreation side. The school has already rolled out the fee structure to outside groups and will be proposing the same fee structure as the town for in town groups. This is planning to be put into effect in the spring. The school committee has also adopted an updated their advertising policy for the fields and gymnasiums. Advertisements can be purchased for display (must follow guidelines) and will be purchased by the schools for a uniform appearance. These ads will also only be displayed on field fences and in gymnasiums where appropriate.

3. Discussion of Career Pathways

Scott Knief shared a brief presentation about the school's plan for developing career pathways programs at the Middle High School. The school administration feels this is the best way to service students and prepare them to be college and career ready as industry is changing and the skills students need are changing. Some non-vocational schools in the area have begun to adopt this model as well. Through these programs students' coursework would be developed in a pathway to assist them in an area they might be interested in working towards in the future (i.e. health care/wellness, visual and performing arts, etc.) The plan is to begin this program with the current culinary curriculum. The culinary department is already on a great track, in fact the Culinary Team just won at the recent state competition and are going to compete at the national level in Washington D.C. Pathways like culinary would combine core curriculum, electives, internships, etc. The state is taking a similar route and offering grants to support these avenues. The school department is going to try to align with the state as they create and design these pathway opportunities. Grants will provide seed money to purchase supplies from a capital standpoint to build and begin the programs. In the college pathway grant, the state will pay the tuition for students taking the required dual enrollment courses (either specified for a particular certification or mass transfer credits) In the governor's budget, there is a fixed amount of money given under chapter 74 for students in a particular pathway. The school plans to apply for Chapter 74 funding for the culinary pathway. They would also like to apply for

Innovation pathway and are looking to support this with the addition of a full time technology teacher at the Middle High School. The full implementation of the pathways program would be 2-5 years down the road and school administration is hopeful that this may help to retain students or even bring students back to Carver schools. Scott Knief noted that the school already has a lot of the necessary pieces in house and would be looking to mostly restructure. Culinary, for instance, is already operating with very limited resources and excelling as previously mentioned, they just competed and won against 13 other vocational programs. Innovation pathways courses have already begun with a programming class within the current mathematics curriculum with the addition of "Bootstrap Algebra" a coding course introduced this year. A clear gap that has been identified is a technology and engineering teacher and the school's FY20 budget has included the technology teacher addition. The grants offered by the state are competitive and the school is not guaranteeing that they will qualify, but will continue to work with faculty and department chairs to find out interest levels and gather ideas to built these programs.

Ron Clarke asked about the intention of the program, whether or not all students would be in a pathways program and have access and resources to all of the "top skills" identified in the presentation. Scott Knief responded that on a daily basis, Carver teachers are already challenging our students in "top skills" like complex problem solving, critical thinking skills, creativity, etc., and believes that the pathways system will better support that. Ideally the school's goal is to focus on all of these skills K-12. Some of the goals and guidelines requirements of these pathways is gaining an internship and partnership of the school with community businesses which would further these skills as well.

School Budget: In January, the school administration presented a level service budget at a 4.25% increase. This level service was presented with a decrease of \$86,000 on the February 11 to school committee leaving a \$321,000 deficit, and a 3.9% increase from the town's proposed budget. Scott Knief shared that the school administration feels there are things they need to add to best serve Carver students. Vital additions for the FY 20 budget are: Technology Teacher (MHS), 5 additional part time Kindergarten Paras that would allow for full time support at the Kindergarten level and a town-wide .3 technology support person for the school side. With these additions, the shortfall would increase to \$422,929. The next steps for the school committee is to discuss what services would need to be reduced in order to meet the proposed town number at their next meeting on February 25. Administration had not spoken with staff about this yet. If in the end the town holds and votes the current proposed number, the school will have to make cuts. The school committee will vote on the budget on March 11.

4. Town Wide 10yr pro-forma and future growth expectations

The town has actively been working on the route 44 project. They are anticipating final MEPA this month and are hoping to have all permits on the state level in May. Developers have already negotiated the last residential property. Michael Milanoski believes moving forward, the town has never been in a better position for economic growth. The town meeting approved the change in bylaws to allow the battery storage facility and the solar projects that

are in the pipeline. With a combination of the solar project and route 44 development the selectmen and administrator believe it should yield additional growth in the budget. By FY21, they are hoping to meet numbers.

IV. Update on cost of Teachers Union Contract Settlement and impact to 10-year pro-forma

Discussion was had on changes reflected in the new teachers' union contract recently agreed upon by the EAPC (Education Association of Plymouth and Carver) and the Carver School Committee. In review, the following contract terms were highlighted.

Estimated increase in salaries:

- \$258,000 this year FY 19
- \$258,000 again FY 20
- \$316,000 FY 21
- \$422,000 FY 22 (year 4)

An additional percentage per year will only be granted to those on the top steps. Year 4 is when everyone gets a salary increase of 2.5% across the board.

Any savings from retirements would be a wash when looking at salary scale/column changes across the board. All agreed that the first three years of these contract terms will be difficult, but year 4 will be a real challenge. Everyone is hopeful the route 44 development and solar projects, etc. will kick in to help alleviate this financial change.

Motion made by the Board of Selectmen to end the joint session: Mark Townsend

Seconded: Sarah Hewins

Motion made by the School Committee to end the joint session: Andrew Cardarelli

Seconded: Stephanie Clougherty

Vote: Unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 9:03p

Minutes respectfully submitted by Gina Marie Rush