

NORTH READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS
North Reading, Massachusetts

Regular Meeting of the School Committee
FY17 Public Budget Hearing

Date: April 4, 2016

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: North Reading Middle/High School Distance Learning Lab

School Committee Members Present

Clifford Bowers

Julie Koepke

Janene Imbriano

Gerald Venezia

Mel Webster

Staff Members Present

Jon Bernard – Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Patrick Daly – Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Michael Connelly – Director of Finance and Operations

Visitors: North Reading Residents, Mr. A.J. Loprete (Principal NRHS), Ms. Catherine O’Connell (Principal, NRMS), Ms. Christine Molle (Principal, E. Ethel Little School), Mr. Glen McKay (Principal, J.T. Hood School), Mr. Sean Killeen (Principal, Batchelder School), Mr. Dan Tomasello (of the North Reading Transcript)

I. Call to Order Open Session:

Chair Janene Imbriano called the Open Session to order at 7:01 PM.

II. A. Fiscal Year 2017 Public Budget Hearing:

Mr. Michael Connelly, Director of Finance and Operations and Superintendent Jon Bernard gave a PowerPoint presentation at the beginning of the budget hearing to provide an overview of the current status of the FY17 budget, which totals \$28,665,689. This modified level services budget represents a \$1,170,615 or 4.3% increase over the FY16 budget of \$27,495,074.

During the budget workshop on March 7, 2016, the School Committee and the school administration identified reductions to address the budget gap for Fiscal Year 2017. At the meeting of the Finance Planning Team on April 1, 2016, available revenue was identified that brought the school department’s budget gap to \$350,440.

To address the budget gap, Mr. Connelly said school officials proposed raising busing, athletic and extracurricular fees, as well as instituting a \$200 parking fee for high school students. The fee increases would generate \$127,000 in revenue for the school system.

After the presentation the meeting was opened to the public for their questions and comments.

Eric Evans of 3 Sandra Lane said he opposes the student parking fee because it unduly burdens high school students. Shari Riley of Marblehead Street also opposed the parking fee because it is too high. Mr. Webster and Mr. Bowers indicated that they are in favor of eliminating the parking fee. Mr. Scott Buckley asked about the increase in special education costs, and Mr. Webster explained that the two teachers and one paraprofessional are needed to keep students in the district, instead of sending them to outside placements, which costs more.

A discussion followed regarding the lack of additional Chapter 70 funding from the state, which is “flat” for FY17. Mr. Connelly stated that North Reading has not had a sizable increase in state aid since 2010. Tracy Conlon, 7 Sandra Lane said she opposes the NRPS 2021 additions (middle school psychologist, special education teacher and high school academic teacher) because we can’t afford them. Mr. Bernard said the psychologist and special education teacher are needed to meet student needs, and the High School teacher will reduce class sizes. Marci Bailey, 21 Duane Drive agreed that another teacher is needed at the High School as this would impact over 100 students per day. Susan Regan, 5 Lindor Road said the extracurricular fee hike is a “huge increase.”

Mr. Bernard indicated that the administration does not like any of the fees, but the goal is to maintain high quality educational programs for every student.

III. Future Business:

April 11, 2016	7:00 PM	Regular Meeting, NRHS DLL
April 25, 2016	7:00 PM	Regular Meeting, NRHS DLL
May 9, 2016	7:00 PM	Regular Meeting, NRHS DLL FY 17 Budget Vote
May 23, 2016	7:00 PM	Regular Meeting, E. Ethel Little School Cafeteria

IV. Adjournment:

The Committee voted on a motion made by Ms. Koepke and seconded by Mr. Webster to adjourn at 9:27 pm. Motion passed 5-0.

Documents and Exhibits:

1. FY17 School Budget Update and PowerPoint presentation