

Finance Committee Minutes
FINAL

Date: 25 February 2020

Start Time: 6:30 PM / 7:15PM

Location 1:

Ashland Police Department 137 Main Street – 6:30PM
Ashland, Massachusetts

Location 2:

Ashland Police Department Sub-Station, 29A Pond Street – 7:15 PM
Ashland, Massachusetts

Members Present

X	Scott Warnetski, Chair	X	Jonathan Moore
X	Jonathan Moore, Vice Chair	X	Ryan Turncliff (acting Secretary for this meeting)
	Jenn Cooney, Secretary	X	Ed Hart
X	Jack Walsh	X	Ashwini Chitnavis

Guests Present

X	Michael Herbert, Town Manager (7:45 PM)	X	Brittany Iacaponi, Town Finance Director
X	Vincent Alfano, Police Chief (6:30 – 7:00 PM)	X	Jim Adams, Ashland Public Schools Superintendent (7:15 PM)
X	Paul Kendall, School Committee/Mindess Building Committee Chair (7:15 PM)	X	Laurie Tosti, School Committee (7:15 PM)

Minutes:**1. Call to Order**

- The Chair called the meeting of the Finance Committee (the “Committee”) to order at 6:30 PM at the Ashland Police Station
- The Ashland Police Chief Vincent Alfano provided a tour of the Police Station
 - The police station was constructed in the 1960’s
 - Significant deficiencies exist in the department include inadequate space for operations as well as basic necessities such as bathroom facilities.
 - Locker room and office space for female officers is accommodated via an external trailer attached at the back of the police station. This arrangement is both demoralizing for officers as well as costing the town significantly in terms of both modular rental as well as heating.

- Multiple safety issues were pointed out by Chief Alfano that endanger both arrest suspects and officers.
- Planning of the new Public Safety Building was discussed:
 1. The new facility will accommodate a single dispatch location for police and fire and will be self-contained such that on-duty dispatch personnel do not need to leave the area while on-duty.
 2. A large meeting room is planned to accommodate training and other possible uses including community use. A significant advantage to the APL and AFD is that external training conducted in the facility will likely offer free seats/training for Ashland service members.
 3. A shooting range is being planned for the facility, significantly reducing costs associated with using other departments facilities (Hopkinton/Devens) as well as offering improved flexibility for training.
 4. Due to location, some of the facility requests may not be able to be met (eg: drive-through sally port for both police and fire vehicles; all vehicles will need to either back in or out)
- The Finance Committee Departed the Ashland Police station at ~7:05PM to travel to the Ashland Police Substation on Pond St for continuation of the meeting.
- The meeting resumed at 7:15PM at the Ashland Police Sub-station, at which time guests as noted above joined the meeting.

2. Public Comment

- None. No community members were present.

3. Mindess School Update

- Mr. Kendall provided an overview of the Mindess Building Committee's activity and projected timeline
 - Materials presented during the meeting are located here:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ppLYd0B0yP0XM5oe2-hyDq4DjAeJ6Hje>
 - Additional materials are located here:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1xClzv52By1AwVOZyH5qlboDiw81wZy3->
- It is suggested by the Mindess Building Committee (MBC) Chair that a Tri-Board meeting(s) be held in March and April. The Finance Committee is not required for a vote on the plan, however support is sought for the recommended preferred option.
- The MBC has considered the cost of a larger building in consideration of future need, however such costs may not be reimbursable by MSBA therefore it needs to be carefully considered.

- At this time the plan includes a building that could be added to later for up to 15% additional occupancy (as required by MSBA)
- Project costs estimated in the presentation materials (~\$41.5M - \$75M) are the presented as prior to reimbursement by the State. The base rate for reimbursement was locked in at the end of 2018 at 52.26%. An additional 2% reimbursement may be achieved based on inclusion of sustainability planning/goals for a possible reimbursement rate of ~54-55%. Importantly, as not ALL costs are reimbursable (eg: MSBA will reimburse only up to a certain amount of cost/sq ft. and Ashland is responsible for 100% of the additional cost), the *effective* reimbursement may be closer to 45%

4. Discussion on excluded debt

- Ms. Iacaponi presented an overview of current excluded debt and associated projects (attached); future projects were not included at this time.
- A significant drop in excluded debt for current projects is projected in year 2025 and beyond
- Bond duration for the new School and Public safety building are anticipated to be 30 years
- The FC requested that columns be added to the spreadsheet to include the start year of the projects listed and the initial borrowing amount.
- The FC will revisit this topic at future meetings in order to be well prepared to present a position on excluded debt and impact to tax payers at the Fall Town Meeting

5. 2021 Budget – School Department

- Mr. Adams presented the highlights of the proposed APS budget
- The FC discussed at length the “FY21 Costs of In House SPED Programs vs. OOD Tuition and Transportation” spreadsheet.
 - APS goal is to continue to provide support for students that are either entering new or shifting/transitioning between schools (eg: Warren to Mindess); requirements and staffing needs change with such transitions.
 - 36 students are current outplaced, reflecting 7% of the total student body. For comparison, this is amongst the lowest in the state and compared to nearby communities of Holliston (9%) and Medway (10%)
 - OOD costs anticipated increase is \$336,000 next year
 1. 1 student has to leave the district (at significant cost) and 1 student’s costs are shared with Holliston
 - 18% of students are on Individual Education Plans (IEP)

- The staffing requests presented, totaling \$537,500, are to support the highest needed requests of APS; page 14 of the superintendent's report reflects ~\$1.5M that was not requested.
- The total APS proposed budget is \$35,493,528. The allocated budget for the Town of Ashland for Schools is \$34,775,363, a difference of \$718,165.
 - A level service school budget proposal would have a deficiency of ~\$166,000
 - The FC discussed the use of SPED reserve account as a potential source of funding based on the premise of the increase in OOD cost of \$360,000; no decision or recommendation was reached
 - The FC will discuss the issue of the discrepancy in the proposed vs. allocated APS budgets at a future meeting following meetings between APS and the Town Manager.

6. Other Business

- None

7. Schedule Future Meetings

- March 17th, 2020 at 6:30pm. Location is TBD, but attempting to meet at Keefe Tech for a tour and discussion of Keefe Tech budget (Ms. Iacaponi to inquire)
 - Additional topic: Select Board Budget presented to FC

8. Approve Minutes.

- **February 4, 2020**
 - Motion: Scott Warnetski
 - Seconded: Jonathan Moore
 - Vote 7-0

9. Adjourn

- There being no further business:
 - Motion: Ed Hart
 - Seconded: Jack Walsh
 - Vote 7-0
- Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

Mindess School Building Project: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ppLYd0B0yP0XM5oe2-hyDq4DjAeJ6Hje>

Proposed Superintendent's FY 21 Operating Budget – Executive Summary:

<https://docs.google.com/a/ashland.k12.ma.us/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=YXNobGFuZC5rMTlubWEudXN8YXBzMXxneDo2ZmFjMGFkNTcxNTgyM2Uz>

FY21 Costs of In House SPED Programs Vs OOD Tuition and Transportation (attached)

Excluded Debt Analysis (attached)

Summary of In-House Costs vs Out-of-District Costs

Total Cost of SPED In-House Staff and Transportation Costs FY21: \$3,621,907
 Total Cost of NEW SPED OOD Tuitions and Transportation Costs FY21 if no In-House programs exist: \$6,171,084
 Savings of In-House Programs vs all OOD: **\$2,549,177**

In House Programs	Program	# of Students	Teacher Cost	ESY Cost	Other Support Cost
Pittaway	Room 10 (Developmental/Autism)	5	\$71,957	\$140,614	\$86,466
	Room 9 (Developmental/Autism)	5	\$61,114	\$152,816	
Warren	RISE (Developmental/Autism)	8	\$71,496	\$121,331	\$23,571
	RISE (Developmental/Autism)	10	\$83,175	\$123,340	\$23,571
	REACT (Language Based, SID)	5	\$79,428	\$93,589	\$23,571
	TL3 (Emotional/Behavioral)	4	\$71,258	\$41,080	\$23,571
Mindess	Developmental	6	\$69,190	\$143,368	\$30,514
	S.I.D., Language Based	15	\$97,710	\$80,605	\$30,514
	TL5 (Emotional, Behavior all)	6	\$54,807	\$64,740	\$30,513
AMS	Developmental	6	\$61,908	\$50,855	
	S.I.D., Language Based	20	\$83,175	\$68,947	\$110,405
	TL5 (Emotional, Behavioral)	6	\$61,114	\$46,891	
AIS	Laminin Center (Emotional Needs)	7	\$82,927	\$44,604	\$74,750
	AXIS (Emotional/Behavioral)	7	\$86,860	\$25,769	\$28,747
	Pathways (Intellectual and Developmental)	9	\$31,464	\$22,302	\$28,747
			\$1,138,078	\$1,186,781	\$514,940

ACCEPT TRANSPORTATION OF IN-TOWN STUDENTS:
 Current In-House Cost \$2,839,799
 New Positions Needed \$244,608
Total In-House Cost \$3,084,407

PROPOSED FY21 NEW SPED POSITIONS TO SUPPORT IN-HOUSE PROGRAMS

SPED Mindess	Total Cost Required	
SPED Mindess	\$ 18,000	
SPED Warren	\$ 22,000	
SPED HI/BI	\$ 22,000	
SPED HI/BI	\$ 28,000	
SPED Mindess	\$ 28,000	
SPED Warren/Mindess	\$ 73,000	
SPED Middle	\$ 36,500	
SPED Warren	\$ 56,000	
SPED Mindess	\$ 56,000	
SPED Middle	\$ 56,000	
SPED Warren	\$ 105,000	

Out-of-District Costs

School	Program	# of Students	# of Students OOD	avg cost Tuition OOD net of CB
Pittaway	Room 10 (Developmental/Autism)	5	5	\$51,166
	Room 9 (Developmental/Autism)	5	5	\$15,911
Warren	RISE (Developmental/Autism)	8	8	\$4,707,272
	RISE (Developmental/Autism)	10	8	\$1,483,812
	REACT (Language Based, SID)	5	4	
	TL3 (Emotional/Behavioral)	4	4	
Mindess	Developmental	6	6	
	S.I.D., Language Based	15	5	
	TL5 (Emotional, Behavior all)	6	6	
AMS	Developmental	6	6	
	S.I.D., Language Based	20	6	
	TL5 (Emotional, Behavioral)	6	6	
AIS	Laminin Center (Emotional Needs)	7	7	
	AXIS (Emotional/Behavioral)	7	7	
	Pathways (Intellectual and Developmental)	9	9	

123 92
 x \$51,166 avg cost tuition OOD net of CB
 x \$15,911 avg cost Transp OOD
 \$4,707,272
 \$1,483,812
\$6,171,084
Cost if Students are Out-of-District

