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Board of Finance Regular Meeting

Monday, January 24, 2022
Meeting Room -Town Hall 7:00 p.m.

Approved

Attendance

Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Kevin Houlihan, Vice Chairman James Leahy, Kevin Moffett, Joseph Nuzzo, Kevin McNabola, and Ajeet Jain

Board of Finance Members Absent: P. J. Shanley

Staff: John Cifarelli, Finance Director; Deborah Satonick, Recording Secretary

Guests: Dr. Jennifer Byars, Superintendent of Amity; Terry Lumas, Amity Finance Director

1. Call to Order

- Chairman Houlihan called the meeting to order at 7:05 and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Public Dialogue

- There was no public dialogue at this time.

New Business

3. Amity Budget Presentation for 2022-2023 – Dr. Byars

- Dr. Byars discussed academics, athletics, and the arts at Amity, highlighting the many accolades and accomplishments of the student population. She also briefly mentioned some of the negative impacts of hybrid and remote learning on the student body.
- Dr. Byars reported that their preliminary 2022-2023 budget is \$54,243,108, which represents a 4.92% increase over last year's budget. The budget drivers are salary and benefits, health insurance, Special Education services, technology, and personnel. Dr. Byars advised that the new initiative of Spartan Prep requires an additional Special Education Teacher, Mental Health Clinician, and a part-time Administrative Assistant. Additional new positions include

a School Security Guard, Information Security Technician, MS Media teacher, and a DEI Instructional Coach.

- Dr. Byars discussed Capital improvements and would like 2% of the current 2021-2022 operating budget, or \$1,033,963, to be appropriated to the Capital and Nonrecurring Fund for future capital items. Lastly, she acknowledged Mr. Browe and Mr. Hartshorn, members of the Amity Board of Education, in the audience.
- Mr. Leahy discussed the history of the formation of the Amity Finance Committee. He also illustrated the impact of a 6.27% budget increase on Orange taxpayers, which is the town's budget portion to pay.
- Mr. Leahy displayed the Teachers' contract, illustrating the step salaries for teachers. He also displayed the negotiated contract for administrators.
- Mr. Leahy noted that there has been a significant decrease in the number of students, and based on the historical data since year 2009, the student population at Amity has been on a steady decline. He also noted that staffing, to the contrary, has increased over the last four years. Mr. Houlihan pointed out that there could be a reduction of one guidance counselor next year based on these current numbers.
- Mr. Leahy spoke on Amity's history of budget surpluses over the last fifteen years. He pointed out that while Amity has always had large surpluses, they have had a three million dollar end- of-year surplus for the last four years. He noted that over the years the actual surplus has been far higher than the budget dollar increases that were originally requested. This historical data indicates that Amity could have operated successfully for many years without any budget increases. He noted that residents are being overtaxed by these hefty surpluses. The Board of Finance members thanked Dr. Byars and Ms. Lumas for their presentation.

Mr. Moffett made a motion for a ten-minute break, seconded by Mr. McNabola. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

4. Amity Update

- Mr. Nuzzo had nothing additional to report at this time.

5. Vice Chairman's Report & Possible Vote on Percentage Increase to Support Amity Budget for July 1, 2023

- Mr. Leahy pointed out that 63% of the entire budget is allocated to education. In light of the hefty Amity surpluses over the last several years, there was a lengthy discussion about what percentage the Orange Board of Finance would support for the 2022-2023 Amity budget.

Mr. Leahy made a motion to support a 0.41% increase, or \$211,963, for the Amity 2022-2023

fiscal year budget, totally \$51,901,170. Mr. Jain seconded the motion and all were in favor. The motion PASSED.

6. Discussion & Approval of Minutes – December 20, 2021 Regular Meeting

•The Board members reviewed the minutes and made edits as necessary.

Mr. Leahy made a motion to approve the revised December 20, 2021 BOF minutes, seconded by Mr. Moffett. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

7. Discuss Meeting Schedule for Budget Workshop on 02/04/22 and Budget Hearing Date

•Mr. Cifarelli presented the Agenda for the all-day Budget Workshop scheduled for February fourth. The Budget Hearing is tentatively scheduled for April 21st.

8. Revenue and Cost Reports – December 20, 2021

•Due to the lateness of the evening, this discussion was tabled until next month.

Old Business – Next Steps

1. Annual Audit Review – Michele Loso – February 2022

2. OVNA Financial Report-February 2022

3. COVID Mitigation Plan

9. Adjournment

Mr. McNabola made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:07, seconded by Mr. Moffett. All were in favor and the motion PASSED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deborah Satonick
Recording Secretary