

## Finance Committee Meeting

April 7, 2015

Present: Tom Burnell, Joe Phelan, Diane Lyons, Deirdre Burns, Mark Fleischhauer  
(Regrettably, ten minutes into the meeting, Mark was called back to work and departed)

### State Aid

- Joe reported that all of our state legislators (Cahill, Barrett and Serino) provided us with state aid runs.
- Total aid increased by \$120,000 from last year. Most of this is Gap Elimination Adjustment restoration. In some areas, we received less money than last year and in others a slight increase, including Foundation Aid. Tom noted that it is important to analyze in what areas aid is changing in an attempt to understand how and why the State is distributing monies. In response to a question from Deirdre, Tom and Joe reported that as of the meeting they had not received any information on policy rationales or the process behind aid distribution. GEA restoration monies were not distributed evenly across all Dutchess County districts suggesting that a formula that uses combined wealth ratio may have been used.
- Tom has calculated Excess Cost Aid (i.e., special ed monies) more precisely than that which is included in the state aid runs. Due to the increases this year in special ed costs, Tom anticipates that that number will be greater.

### 2015-16 Budget

- Given state aid, our budget is \$180,489 above the tax levy limit.
- Joe and Tom's proposal, at this time, is to make the Tier 1 cuts (\$224,600). The bulk of the Tier 1 cuts are from removing a CLS K position and a .4 ELA AIS position at BMS, along with a few other items. Removing these items from the budget will bring the budget under the tax levy limit. The remaining dollars (\$44,111) will be repurposed to increase the CLS STEM lab position while keeping an AIS position at CLS that is currently the purview of the part time STEM teacher. As well, there will be just over \$8,000 for RHS after school clubs.
- Diane noted that the reduction in the AUSSIE program in the Tier 1 cuts, while it makes sense programmatically, removes those monies from the PD budget more generally.
- Joe alerted the committee that should K registration increase such that another classroom teacher is advisable, we would look to our Tier 2 cuts, none of which implicate personnel.
- Joe noted that, since spring break was last week, he has not had an opportunity to review his current thinking with his administrative team.
- Joe pointed out that the current spending plan (i.e., the budget) does not include using more fund balance. Prudent use of the fund balance is essential. We want to be sure to reduce our reliance on fund balance while being sure not to develop a spending plan that is so close to revenues that responding to unexpected expenses, such as with special ed cost increases this year, becomes problematic.
- Marvin and Steve have been in discussions with RSF regarding applying for a grant to improve the BMS computer lab and to support curriculum and professional development work for BMS technology teachers.

- Deirdre suggested we monitor carefully increasing technology costs through multiple labs and new equipment while the enrollment is decreasing. Joe noted the critical importance of a robust technology curriculum for all students.
- Our “Plan C” Technology Plan moves us forward even as we have scaled back the original plan.
- The committee supports Joe and Tom’s approach to bringing the budget in line with tax levy cap limitations.

Submitted by Deirdre Burns