

**Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Local School Committee,  
and the Finance Committee  
Monday, January 22, 2007  
Assawompset School  
6:30 PM**

The Board of Selectmen continued their meeting to Assawompset School. Present: Selectman Nancy Yeatts, Selectman Charles Evirs, and Town Administrator Rita Garbitt. Also present from the Finance Committee were Rick Velez, Martha Weeks-Green, Stephen Olivier, Gary Mansfield and Robert Hill. Present from the School Committee were Carolyn Gomes, Charlene Shea, Lorraine Carboni, and David Goodfellow. Also present: Superintendent Dr. Stephen Furtado, Louis Roderigues, Director of Business & Finance, Laurie Hunter, Assawompset Principal, Megan Beaubien, George R. Austin Intermediate School Principal, and Anne St. Pierre, Special Education Director.

**Discussion regarding Assawompset Elementary and GRAIS (George R. Austin Intermediate School) Schools FY08 Budget Request.**

Various informational budget handouts were distributed to all present. Dr. Furtado explained that Mr. Donald P. Noack's position, Director of Instructional Services, is being paid per diem for this school year. There will be a savings in this account this year, however, next year there will be a full-time person in the position. The salaries at present are accurate for what they are. The contracts between the teachers, nurses and custodians have been settled with a 2% increase. This allows smoother calculation for these budgeted areas over the next couple of years. If a state function code is seen in red, then it will be brought before the School Committee with a request that a transfer be made with their approval.

Dr. Furtado explained, that what was important this evening, is that as much information as possible is presented to everyone so that it is more easily understood how the School Budget is developed, to help all understand the needs of the School Budget and to look for support in the quest of the School Budget. The bottom line is understood that it is never really the bottom line. It is important to walk everyone through certain areas of the budget, line by line. Explanations have been given along the side. Additional budget information was distributed for explanation purposes and also the rationalization of why the Principals have asked for particular increases to their budgets. What is included is: salaries, longevity, capital plan, rationales for necessary staff, Special Education Costs, etc. With respect to Special Education Costs, there have been several requests from Hospitals and Schools that some of the students attend, to increase tuitions substantially. This is an area where no permission is requested to increase the tuition, it is just done and then passed on to the School Department. The Circuit Breaker number is based on this year's students, not next year's, thus there is always a one year lag. It may seem that there should be a substantial increase, however, it will not take place until the following year. The Circuit Breaker does not include transportation. That is dollar for dollar with the Town. It is hoped that the Legislature will take the cost of transportation into consideration since it is a strong topic in many school districts.

Dr. Furtado explained that what has taken place so far, is that the questions that have been brought forward have been reviewed. There is an accurate salary line to date. The Kindergarten figures for Special Education are on target at this point. Ms. St. Pierre has done a good job in identifying this cost. The Central Office salary and budget has been built from the ground up. The transfers are steady. This meeting will be the first of many budget meetings and it is appreciated that everyone is present this evening from the beginning of the School budget discussions. The budget is transparent. If there are any questions once the meeting is over, anyone can contact one of the

School Committee members or a member of the Administration for answers and clarification. The budget is meant to meet the services of the students and the process is ongoing. The budget being presented is fair, and it is hoped that at its conclusion it will be supported. Discussion can take place line by line or wherever there may be questions.

The School Committee section is 110. This section includes, the policy manual, newsletters, auditing, MCAS dues and any expenses with respect to regional disbursements. This account was also increased since the FY06 actual was not really the actual amount, it was higher, thus an adjustment was made. The audit is \$3,500 in and of itself. The cost of advertising has increased because it needed to be. There will be a significant amount of teachers retiring this year, approximately 20 at the Region, thus a great deal of advertising will need to be done in order to attain teachers for the district. Advertising will be done through the Boston Globe, the D.O.E. (Department of Education) website, nine (9) college/university placement centers, etc. The District will be competing with other schools across the state. It is anticipated that there are 5,000 teachers retiring this school year. The bill for the Globe will be high. There is a company, Career Building, of which a contract has taken place for \$900 for the year. They will post openings three (3) times on their website. Each posting can be as long as 500 lines long. This will help lower the advertising costs and will also be seen by a larger audience. The District simply cannot afford to advertise in the local papers anymore. The District website and the D.O.E. website have no costs associated with their advertising. The Administration will also be attending two (2) Job Career Workshops to attract candidates.

Account 1210 is the Superintendent's Account. This is my salary, the secretary's salary, expenses, etc. It has been developed frugally. In the Business and Finance section, state travel and the salary for two (2) positions is included. In the Legal Expenses section, the good news is that since no contracts need to be negotiated, the costs will be a flat line. There also have not been any legal settlements to increase the costs either. With Administrative Technology, this is the Information Specialist salary and an increase of \$100,000 for hardware and additional computers. Otherwise, this account has basically flat lined as well. For the Curriculum Director, this account has stayed the same, since it is anticipated that it will be a full time position, the amount will soon follow. The Professional Development account is up slightly. The Custodial Account is basically Bob Souza's salary and that of his secretary and is otherwise constant.

In the 4450 account for Technology, there has been an increase since it is anticipated to contract for a system-wide support person and the need for new servers. \$8,800 of new support software will be purchased for the District. The District certainly got its monies worth out of the former system since it is 25 years old and has crashed numerous times. The data has actually left the screen. The District is one of only three (3) or four (4) in the State that continues to use an older version of software. The new software will help cut down paper costs since Purchase Orders will be done on the screen and take place immediately. Once they have gone through the security process, they will go to the School Principal, then to the Business Manager, then to the Superintendent. This will all happen simultaneously, there will be no lag time, an immediate balance of what is left in the account, line by line will be on the screen, and no one will be able to go below that amount. At this time, it is difficult to know what is left in an account due to the lag time of a couple weeks. This Unifund software should interrelate with the Munis software at the Town Hall. It is an incredible software package. It will also allow for tracking salaries and other information. Without this software, all the information that the D.O.E. is requesting to be provided could not otherwise be done in a timely fashion. The software will also hold information on the teachers, such as the status of their certification, etc. It will also hold information on the students, Special Education costs, and the residences of the students. It is hoped to get the new software system up and started in March and then fully in effect by June or July. Other school systems have indicated that they are completely amazed at all this software package can provide.

Ms. Carboni mentioned that this is 20% of the cost being allocated to the District. How long will this be in effect? Mr. Roderigues stated that that amount was for the technical help. The servers would be purchased, and the company will come to the District on retainer to fix any problems that may be taking place. Right now the two (2) technology people are overwhelmed with fixing all the problems with the computers throughout the district. Having the company on retainer will take the place of having to hire another technician and pay health benefits, etc. Mr. Mansfield asked if the District would have to go out to bid on the retainer contract. Mr. Rodriguez responded that several of these type of companies are under the State contract, so the District does not have to go out to bid. Ms. Garbitt asked if technical support could be shared with the Town. Dr. Furtado responded that anything that can be done to work together with the Town will be done. There are presently 1,600 computers in the District, and the two (2) technicians are overwhelmed, even with their extensive capabilities. The bottom line for the Central Office has increased about 11%. The increase is partly salary, but primarily the service contract.

Ms. Carboni asked about the amount for the Policy Manual. Dr. Furtado responded that the cost would be to print the policy manual and to put it onto a disk. It should be finished by June, otherwise the cost is a holding place. The goal is to have the Policy Manual completed by June. Mr. Olivier asked if there were any other line items that ended in 0? Mr. Rodriguez responded that he will be trying to implant the actual figures during the week and then provide it to the Finance Committee. At this time that account is misnamed. Dr. Furtado added that another aspect is if the School Committee will allow the Administration to also advertise for the anticipated new positions. There will also be the Director of Instructional Services, District-wide and an ELA (English Language remedial teacher), also District wide. Thus some costs will effect just Assawompsett School, other costs will be District-wide. Ms. Garbitt asked about the increased health costs for two additional teachers to replace the two (2) teachers that are retiring from Asswompset. Ms. Hunter responded that only one teacher is retiring.

Dr. Furtado explained that with the Intermediate School (GRAIS), 36% will be Lakeville's portion for next year. This is a decrease from 42%. The GRAIS (George R. Austin Intermediate School) budget was extensively developed factoring in the shared costs of the Region and the Intermediate School. The salary for the Principal is lower than what it was due to the fact that the former Principal retired, and the previous salary for this position had been budgeted for FY 07.

At this time Ms. Beaubien went over the GRAIS budget. An additional secretary is needed in the front office since the present secretary has to open the door frequently and work the office as well. This is an essential position, also taking into consideration that the student body has increased by over 100 students over the past three (3) years, and there are more needs to be met for the students. At this time there is a part time Art and Music teacher in GRAIS and Assawompset and it is being requested to have a full time set of teachers for each school so that the teachers do not have to travel from building to building. This would solidify staff ownership and cohesiveness of the programs. Mr. Goodfellow added that art is required and this year some students are not getting a full year of art and music due to the fact that the teachers have to travel from school to school. Ms. Beaubien further added that it may appear that other positions are new positions, however, the line items are being tracked more closely and some items were found not to be in their correct category. Now they are separated. This will allow for easier tracking and understanding of the budget. There are other general education supports that are being added. The Remedial Reading teacher is part time, and the Math support teacher is part time. Math is in danger at the Middle School since the MCAS scores need some help.

Dr. Furtado explained that the Region learned on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006 that it lost all of its Title I money. It was being used for remedial support for fifth grade students and some support for fourth grade students. The Intermediate School did not make AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) with the Federal

NCLB (No Child Left Behind) Act so it is under corrective action at this time. It is an effort of the District to make sure that the students receive Remedial services since the District does not want to be sited again. The School Committee is to be applauded for looking into the budget during the middle of the school year in order to determine where funds could be brought over to help the students. With respect to Title I at Assawompset, students are being seen in the first three (3) grades, however, it is difficult for the teacher to then go over and give remedial support to the fourth grade students. This year there is an MCAS Remedial person working with fourth and fifth graders in the area of ELA, however, there are needs with the students in the area of math as well.

Ms. Beaubien explained that the textbook account has decreased since the necessary books for the Everyday Math Program were purchased last year. The supply account has increased since there are Art and Physical Education supplies that are not at hand which need to be purchased for the students. In the supplemental supply account there are needs for Globes for the Fourth Grade Teacher's classrooms and other everyday classroom supplies. The Adjustment Counselor is a split new position for preventative support for the classrooms. The IEP (Individual Education Plans) are being contracted out at this time. The after-school clubs that the teachers provide was without pay initially, now a stipend is being paid to the teachers. Additional funding is needed in the Custodial account for preventative maintenance for the building in order to keep it up and in good condition. At this time not all the bathrooms are open since the custodians are not able to get them all cleaned and do all the other work that is needed to be done. It is hoped to open the entire facility by increasing this line item.

Dr. Furtado mentioned that there was a Custodian in the budget that the Region was paying for in full. This position will now be shared between the Region and Lakeville. With respect to fuel costs, based on Mr. Velez's extensive analysis of the fuel, a clearer picture of the costs for the pool is known. It appears that the pool requires 50 gallons of additional water a day. Then this water, which is about two inches worth, needs to be heated according to NCAA standards for swim meets. The water enters the building at a temperature of 50 degrees. The analysis has been a learning experience for everyone. Lakeville will not pay for the pool for the rest of this year. The pool fuel oil charge backs to the Town have been frozen. When the figures are officially calculated for the pool, the Town will only be charged for the cost to heat the building not the pool. Ms. Garbitt asked if this included the electricity as well since not all the electricity used for the pool is on the pool electric meter. Dr. Furtado responded that it is very very close in terms of the electricity. Mr. Velez added that the pump, which is a large part of the electricity, is on the pool electric meter. It is not known about the ventilation or the lights, unless a circuit trace is done. Also, when the weather changed from mild to cold, the readings changed dramatically, and the readings were taken more frequently to ensure that the temperature readings were most accurate. The School Department is thanked for all the support that has been given with respect to the analysis being done.

Dr. Furtado added that the analysis will be an ongoing effort until it stabilizes in the Spring. What is being put in for fuel now, 50 gallons a day, are backed out of the fuel costs. Com Rec (Community Recreation) had only been charged eight (8) gallons a day. Com Rec met with the Region last week, since truly it is the Region's pool, and the Region needs to pay for the pool. Comrec is the Region, and the Region needs to pay for the pool. So adjustments need to be made and a correction for the actual amount for the pool. Selectman Evers asked if, through the ongoing effort of stabilizing the costs for the pool, will the money be given back to the Town of what was charged and paid over the past few years? The Town has been unfairly charged. Dr. Furtado responded that he would defer to the School Committee and the Town on that. Selectman Evers explained that this was money out of the taxpayers pockets that should be returned. Dr. Furtado explained that the Assawompset Budget is a little more extensive than GRAIS budget since it is Lakeville's responsibility.

Ms. Hunter stated that it was important that everyone hear the needs for Assawompset. The marked increases and decreases will be highlighted. Communication is being done with folders and paper at this time, and an attempt is being made to do more online and have information generated electronically. There is a need also for an Assistant Principal at the school since 50-60 evaluations are required to be done each year. Then there are the discipline and parent issues, etc. At the 272 line, a request has been put in for a technology integration specialist so that someone certified in the area of technology and curriculum is available. Line 49 has to do with curriculum writing in order to get documents up to date to reflect what is currently taking place in the area of report cards and the subject areas. The \$35,000 includes a \$17,000 retirement deduction assuming that someone else can be hired at a lesser rate. It is also hoped that support can continue for the students that have been identified at risk for Remedial help. Title I continues to decrease and it has been cut more than was even anticipated. This funds 80% of the Reading Specialists. \$68,000 is needed for a Special Needs Teacher since the staff has been stretched quite a bit and an additional inclusion class has been added which needs a teacher present in the classroom throughout the day. It has really become challenging to meet the needs of the students. An additional trained person is needed in the area of Reading support since the person that is in place is stretched across Grades one through three. Some students can be helped with quick intervention, however, there needs to be someone in place in order to do this.

Mr. Velez asked if any of the students who needed tutors are in the After-School program, where some of the volunteers could capitalize on helping them at that time? Ms. Hunter responded that she did not know that answer, however, that is a creative idea. Ms. Carboni asked if statistics are available based on the needs of services for the students, and if there was an increase of the students needing a particular service? Is there a trend? Ms. Hunter responded that sometimes it is population generated. Ms. St. Pierre added that this data is available and tracked for the type of supports that are needed. There is also a trend at times. Ms. Hunter stated that if the students are helped get over the curve before they get too far behind, it may prevent them from needing to enter a Special Education situation. Ms. St. Pierre added that the response to intervention is to catch any difficulties with students early on so that their learning gap does not widen. The more that is done with the regular education students, the less students there will be needing Special Education services. There is already a cluster of students who need intervention, and if a more intensive piece was in place, they would not need referrals in their later grades.

Ms. Hunter added that additional Special Needs Aides are needed for particular students. There are two (2) hearing impaired students who attend the District half time and go out of district half time. In the Fall, they will be in the District full time, however an aide will be needed full time. With respect to Professional Development, more substitutes are needed in-house so that the teachers can attend Professional Development in-house. This would help augment the curriculum. Supplies have been increased since the students need two (2) journals and the Science textbooks need to be replaced since they are dated 1998. This may seem like a huge increase for supplies, however, it has been accumulating cumulatively over the past few years since only basic needs have been funded. Maps and Globes are needed for each classroom so that the students are seeing accurate data, and this is about \$1,000 per classroom. There are also other parts of the Mifflin Program to purchase since we were unable to purchase all the parts initially. The SRA kits are also very old. When there are large school events the parents are shuttled back and forth from Ted Williams, and this is an additional cost.

The School Psychologist line went up slightly due to the longevity buyout. Transportation is based on what is in the contract. There are four (4) van drivers and their salaries, substitute van drivers as well at a cost of \$20,000, then maintenance and gas of about \$12,000, then any necessary repairs and supplies for the vans. A new van has been included in the Capital Plan. A swing shift should be done with the Custodian since he is usually at the School from early in the AM to late in the PM.

The Matron is essentially for the bathrooms. It is difficult for the Custodian to do preventative maintenance when something else comes up at the School. About \$2,000 is needed for custodial supplies, tools, trimmers, etc. The fuel cost was increased to \$2.30 per gallon and electricity was increased by 10%. It is hoped to spruce up the grounds, the courtyard, the beds, reseed the fields, etc. The field is the greatest concern at this time. The overtime for the Custodian would remain the same since there are routine building checks that need to be done on the weekend to check on the pipes, etc. The outside grounds work would be a separate priority summer project for the Custodian. The water bill is still in the positive, due to the prepayment, in time it will need to be budgeted for once again. Then there is the three (3) year asbestos inspection which needs to be done. There are a lot of capital needs that should be addressed with the school. The custodial equipment is getting very dated and should be replaced. A leaf vacuum, scrubber, mower deck are needed. Copiers are also needed since there is a large volume of copying that needs to be done.

Mr. Velez noted that the security system line is empty? Ms. Hunter responded that there is no alarm system for the school. Ms. Beaubien stated that GRAIS has an alarm system with codes. The Police Station, the Custodian and the Facility Manager are notified if it goes off. There are also motion sensors at the school. Ms. Garbitt added that the Police Chief looked into an alarm system for the School, however, it is very difficult to retrofit an old school and very expensive. Dr. Furtado mentioned that he and Mr. Roderigues are attending an Emergency Management Conference the next day and will be provided with strategies and ideas for the school. A more user-friendly crisis manual is being put into effect, only two (2) pages in length. Anyone else with ideas are welcome to offer them for the building.

Another thing that has been discussed is the need for a Feasibility Study for the school, and this is included in the Capital Plan. It is Assawompsett's turn, and it is for more than just a roof. It is for security, wiring, and energy management since a significant amount of energy is lost with the single pane windows. The building is beautiful, it is clean, a new playground will be coming in March, however, the infrastructure needs to be seriously considered, and this is a proactive approach. Regarding the increase in the Special Education, the District is at the mercy of the schools and hospitals that increase their tuition.

Mr. Roderigues stated that he has spoken with the Town Administrator regarding the roof and getting it done. A Statement of Interest will be needed from the School Committee to submit to the SBA (School Building Assistance). The windows and other aspects of the building need to be justified with a Feasibility Study. It is important to have the Feasibility Study done in order to move forward with other projects in the future. The State has designated the School as a three (3) which is low on the scale, the worst is a four (4). Dr. Furtado added that the State has identified some significant points with the school. The Statement of Interest is just to put the School on the map. That if at any time there is money available, the School would be in line for some. The SBA is only allowing \$5 million a year for helping schools. Though this may sound like a lot, other school districts will be requesting and needing that money as well and it will go fast. With documentation on file, it will get the School on the list. The Selectmen also need to approve the Feasibility Study. No major project can move forward without a Feasibility Study being done. This is a very comprehensive study. It includes everything on the footprint. The most critical need at this time is a roof. Ms. Garbitt asked how much money was left in the warrant article from the design of the roof. Was there money from the \$35,000 left over? Mr. Roderigues responded that about \$1,200 was used for the design.

Ms. Weeks-Green stated that on paper she saw over \$900,000 that was needed for the Elementary Students and none of the needs seemed frivolous. This is a lot of money, and the other needs of the community and the Region have to be addressed. What is next for the School Committee. Will the entire amount be looked for? Dr. Furtado responded that they have not gotten that far as of yet.

This evening was just to outline all the needs. The schools will then begin to prioritize their needs, and there are also some gaps in the budget that still need to be closed. The School Committee has not yet had the opportunity to spend time on the budget with the Administration. This evening was to validate the needs and give a rationale of the budget. The comments are appreciated. It is time to restore what is needed in the schools for the students. There will be other meetings, and everyone is encouraged to attend. The frustrating part is not having the numbers from the State regarding the budget picture for the schools. The next budget meeting will look at the sixth through twelfth grades. There are also significant health care costs to consider. The Regional budget is up considerably. Fixed costs cannot be moved. The Special Education Director is one of the best finds that the School Department has had. She is looking at bringing students back into the District to save money. Everyone is part of the same team, and everyone is thanked for attending the meeting this evening.

The meeting was adjourned by the School Committee, Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen at 8:45 PM.