

**LEBANON BOARD OF EDUCATION
FINANCE/BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE
LYMAN MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
January 18, 2018
7:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT: William Meese, Alexis Margerelli-Hussey, Dawn Whitcher, Jason Nowosad

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent Robert Angeli, Robert Sirpenski, Business Manager, Al Vertefeuille, approximately 15 people from the town.

1. Call to Order
Budget/Finance Subcommittee meeting was called to order at 7:02pm by William Meese.
2. Discuss 2018-19 Budget

Discussion began with an open forum for the public to offer their comments and concerns. There were approximately 15 citizens from the town in attendance. To begin the open session, the Superintendent gave a slideshow to the audience showing the status of the school finances for current fiscal year and next fiscal year. The preliminary Board of Education budget prepared this year showed an approximate 5% percent increase in the budget over last year. The Superintendent stated the final budget proposal would be much lower. After the slideshow, the finance/budget subcommittee and Superintendent entertained comments and questions from the audience.

There was a concern about using transportation costs for savings. Jason Nowosad explained the idea could be to save costs by combining the early and late bus runs into one bus run. He explained it was too early to tell if it could save money because we had not had any solid figures back from the bus company. The concern from the audience was that older children with younger children might risk having increased bullying on the buses. There was also a concern that the age difference could lead to inappropriate interactions between the kids.

There was a concern from the audience that reducing the certified staff by 3 could lead to increased classroom sizes. The Superintendent indicated this would most likely not be the case as reduced enrollment keeps the size of the classes down.

There was a question from the audience regarding recruiting students from other towns to raise tuition revenue. The Superintendent reported that Franklin has designated Lyman for VOAG and general ed. The town of Sprague has also designated Lyman for general ed. The Superintendent indicated Bozrah is currently looking at Lyman as an alternative choice for high school.

There was a question from the audience concerning Columbia. The Superintendent indicated he knew the Superintendent of Columbia schools well and that he had broached the subject with the Superintendent of Columbia in the past. Columbia is not interested at this time.

There was a comment from the audience that suggested that improving recruiting students from out-of-district requires improving programming. The suggestion would be it would be better to cut administration than cut programming or services. The Superintendent responded that the schools need principals and that the central office administrators were needed to maintain PK-12 programming. Cuts would be considered if necessary.

There was a suggestion from the audience that to improve transparency of the Board of Education meetings that the Board of Education should consider live-streaming the meetings so the public can see it. The reason for the suggestion would be that more citizens of Lebanon could participate by understanding what was happening at the Board of Education meetings. Dawn responded by observing it is important that the citizens communicate with the Board of Education sending letters, sending emails, or making phone calls to Board of Education members, the chairman of the Board of Education and their school administrators.

There was a question from the audience wanted to know what was being done about the increased health insurance cost. The Superintendent responded by outlining the various alternatives that were available.

There was a question from the audience concerning the status of a proposal to consolidate from three schools to two schools. The Superintendent replied that it has not been given any serious consideration and no forecast of savings has been made.

One citizen explained that she could live with the consolidation of the bus routes if necessary.

The public portion of the meeting concluded after about 90 minutes.

After the conclusion of the public portion of the meeting, the finance/budget subcommittee agreed to give the school Superintendent some planning goals. All agreed that the first budget prepared with a 5% increase was too much. The first goal would be to minimize the increase in health benefits cost by researching other alternatives. Bob Sirpenski indicated he may be able to keep health insurance costs as low as flat by finding another carrier or another program. The second goal would be to keep all increases to the school board budget to no more than 1% for the next budget preparation round. A copy of the Board of Finance letter to the Board of Education was circulated to the subcommittee. Jason agreed to distribute it to the subcommittee via email. The budget finance subcommittee agreed to hold the next special meeting on February 7th at 6pm at the middle school library.

3. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Submitted by,
William Meese, Chair