

## Amherst School District Ways & Means Committee Wrap-Up Meeting June 4, 2020 Meeting held via Zoom

Attendees: Frank Brown (Ways & Means Committee Chair), Victoria Parisi (Ways & Means Committee Member), Jeff Candito (Ways & Means Committee Member), Kelly Schmidt (Ways & Means Committee Member), Christine Grayson (Ways & Means Committee Member), Nate Jensen (Amherst School District Moderator), and Michele Croteau (SAU 39 Business Administrator)

The meeting began at  
3:12pm.

Amherst District Moderator Nate Jensen provided guidance regarding the format for meeting minutes. He indicated that in full Ways & Means Committee meetings, summary minutes with a list of topics discussed is satisfactory. Minutes will be submitted to SAU staff for proper posting. For Sub-Committee meetings (in which school board members, SAU administration, and Ways & Means Committee members are in attendance), a Ways & Means Committee member will only be responsible for taking notes/minutes to report back to the full Ways & Means Committee.

The following topics were discussed. The notes in red were provided by Ms. Croteau.

1. Clear Process - Start Date & calendar. Michele to draft a budget calendar and schedule a mtg w/ Frank (assuming Chair of W&M), Brd Chair, & Moderator to review.
2. Regularly scheduled Sub-committee meetings set out at beginning Michele to draft time frame for meetings as part of #1 above.
3. Clear understanding of the services available from the Business Administration office. Michele coordinates responses to questions on the budget and coordinates meetings with appropriate staff for sub-committee budget review meetings. Michele provides an overview of the budget file at the start of the budget process, an overview of the account structure and a narrative of proposed budget changes and budget assumptions. Other requests from Ways & Means committee members in addition to this process are to be vetted through the Ways & Means Committee and communicated to Michele through Frank.
4. Increase staffing of the BA office during the first 2-3 months to address questions. Thank you for the recommendation.
5. Narrative to accompany each section - describing any relevant changes during the past year and what any increase in the coming year is for. Michele to provide narrative of budget changes based on function and object summaries.
6. Clear benchmark dates for the Board for the development of the budget. Build into the calendar in #1 above.
7. Liked Michele's "frozen" date process as a way to track changes

after a certain date. Thank you

for the feedback. 8. Would like to see a clean budget at the beginning. 9. Would like notification to all members of W&M of budget changes. Decided to add a column to the W&M Lookup tabs to reflect the Superintendent's budget (would be a stagnant number) and the column showing as the Proposed budget would reflect the Board's budget and would change as the Board approves / adopts changes to the budget. 10. Individual questions versus W&M questions. Upon opening the budget process for submission of budget questions, W&M members will review questions that have been entered into the budget form to see if a similar question has already been asked in an attempt to reduce the number of duplicate questions. Questions will flow through this process so they will be documented, and therefore the responses documented as well for all to access. 11. Leave question-submission form open during entire budget process. After presentation of the budget and review of the budget narrative, there will be a period of time that is open for submission of budget questions. The budget question form is to be modified to indicate the category (via drop down list) to better facilitate responses. At the end of the question phase, the form will be closed to submissions. At each sub-committee meeting the list of questions and answers will be reviewed. Additionally, at each sub-committee meeting the question submission form will be re-opened for submission of new questions raised during the meeting. A member in attendance at each meeting will be designated for capturing and entering questions raised at the meeting. 12. Discussion of Budget Categories for Ways and Means (possible changes). W&M committee members are open to Michele reviewing and tweaking the categories. 13. Ways and Means to receive an **entire** updated budget as revisions are made during the process (not a list of revised budget lines). One after board revisions are made, and one that matches the final budget amount that will appear on the warrant article. See item # 9 above addressing this issue.

Jeff's recent  
Additions

First, I would like to have the option to meet one on one with Michele or Katie to discuss specific items in the budget, for instances when my questions or concerns do not get fully addressed during the official W&M meeting. This could happen right after our official meeting for convenience, and others could be invited to listen if they want. I feel that some of my questions or concerns do not get fully addressed during our group meetings. This is nobody's fault, but is what often occurs in group meetings. This could relate to Frank's #9. It was decided that questions would flow through the question form process to document the question and the response for the benefit of all committee members.

Second, the subcommittee meetings seemed very rushed last year. Ways and Means made a significant effort to cram all of these meetings in within a couple of weeks in October and submit our reports to each other, the board, and the administration. Then for the next month or so, nothing seemed to happen on the school board/admin end. I don't mind doing the subcommittee

meetings early (I think it's actually a good idea), but I think the board and admin need to act a little more quickly to prevent the process from being rushed in November and December. Frank may have addressed this in #5, but I wanted to mention it. **Michele to build Board budget workshop time into the budget calendar. Also, review process for Board budget sub-committee reports back to the Board,**

The meeting ended at  
4:15pm.

Respectfully  
Submitted,

Christine  
Grayson