

December 17, 2020

Report to the Advisory Finance Committee on the Facilities Portion of the Budget (2600)

The following people met on November 12, 2020 via Zoom to discuss the Facilities Portion of the Budget: Jeanne Ludt (AFC Rep.), Amy Facey (Bd. Rep.), Roger Preston (Director of Facilities), Porter Dodge (Director of Security), and Michele Croteau (Business Administrator), John Glover (Board member)

Rather than go into great detail and report out line by line, I have chosen to attach copies of the spreadsheets that contain both the requested amounts, budget questions posed to Roger, and his answers. I hope this will be useful to those who have detailed questions regarding this portion of the budget. Here are the overall financials:

FY 21 Budget - \$1,565,481  
FY22 Budget - \$1,418,504 (represents 7.2% of the total budget)  
Change from FY21 – Decrease of \$146,977 or -9.39%  
3 Year Avg. - \$1,498, 006  
Change from 3 year Avg. – Decrease of \$79,502

Overview

My general impression after meeting with Roger was that he inherited a facility that had been neglected in terms of general maintenance and that his goal was to put in place a comprehensive preventative maintenance program that would address many of the deficiencies identified by him upon coming on board this year. He is a seasoned professional who carefully crafted his portion of the proposed budget to address various upgrades, improvements, and repairs but without breaking the bank. His method of creating a budget was to look back at the averages and determine if his requests were within those margins. He also was very mindful that many of the things he identified fell into the category of being essential and that maintenance was key in order to keeping the facility running efficiently and safely. He is thinking long term; building a 10 year maintenance program that will keep things running until such time as a bond can be passed to do major renovations to Souhegan.

Roger has attempted to upgrade and repair the current system so that it provides increased efficiency, better temperature control, improved air filtration, and ventilation --- much of this work will hopefully be funded from the unanticipated fund balance designated specifically for COVID improvements to the building – mainly in the areas of air quality and sanitization. He has been innovative in solving problems by, for instance, rewriting software programs to work controllers rather than installing new controllers. Four additional custodial employees were contracted from a firm that specializes in training employees on the use of chemicals and cleaning techniques. Since the proposed budget is based on returning to normal rather than making COVID accommodations, there is some question as to whether there will be a need for these additional contracted employees next year. The proposed budget does include additional preventative maintenance items directed at the HVAC system but only designed to keep it functioning efficiently.

Additional repairs that are driving the FY22 facilities budget are as follows:

Roger was concerned that there appeared to be no plan in place for unanticipated repair problems or failures. He has calculated the amount of \$44,000 to cover unanticipated repair problems based on a calculation of \$.20 times the square footage of the 2 buildings. In addition, there are 4 items amounting to \$68,000 in total that are requested to be addressed: 1) Replacement of the Fire Rated Auditorium curtain, 2) Replacement of Glycol in MB, 3) Replacing carpeting with VCT in 3 classrooms, and 4) exterior repairs to building façade. Some of the items that he has identified as critical are: 1) Fire Systems and Sprinkler Maintenance, 2) an HVAC contract with an outside vendor, 3) Fire Extinguisher inspections, 4) Inspection of and Cleaning of Kitchen Hood Systems, 5) Boiler and Water Heater Service, 6) Septic Pump Maintenance, 7) required gym equipment and bleacher preventative maintenance, 8) Water quality testing, 9) elevator recall inspection in the Annex, 10) upgraded HVAC software for temperature control and detection of valve problems, 11) replacement of 3 Security Cameras, 12) repair heating valve in Cafeteria, and 13) need 7 rooftop units to control program.

There is an additional list of repairs/replacements that was developed from the Onsite/Insight Study that was mapped out in phases to be funded over the next 10 years. The bulk of those items appear in the column designated to be done in FY22 – the total being \$251,900. From what I can gather this will be funded by a maintenance capital reserve fund.

Regarding custodial personnel, Roger was asked if the number was adequate. Currently each custodian is responsible for cleaning 32,478 feet per person. He feels that with improved efficiency, the number he currently has is adequate.

#### Report on JFAC Souhegan 2.0 Committee Work

Although outside the current facilities budget, it is important to share what I know about the projects being considered as part of the JFAC review of the 30+ million proposed renovation known as Souhegan 2.0. Regarding the major renovations that were proposed in Souhegan 2.0 (which was a study done several years ago to renovate and redesign the Main Bldg. of Souhegan), members of the JFAC (Joint Facilities Committee) committee met as a subcommittee to identify what if any of the items identified in the Souhegan 2.0 study should be brought forward for immediate consideration by the Souhegan School Board.

The 4 items that were identified were: 1) New and improved HVAC, 2) new lockers in the sports area (the boys' lockers in particular are in terrible disrepair), 3) a more secure entry system into the Main Bldg. (there is none), and 4) renovated science labs in the Annex (currently not designed to deliver science curriculum adequately due to inadequate square footage per student).

It will be up to the Souhegan School Board to determine if any of these items will be addressed in FY22 and how they will be funded. It is my impression that if these items are approved by the board, they will be funded by a combination of funding but primarily through a capital reserve fund specifically targeted at building maintenance and security. It was also my impression that the board will probably be requesting the approval of the voters to add funds to a capital reserve fund to cover these projects. There is also a possibility that some of these items could qualify to be included in the budget under the justification of needing maintenance or curriculum delivery.

The one thing that will remain on hold will be a wholesale replacement of the HVAC system because of the enormous expense and amount of disruption that will occur in taking down ceilings to get to ducts, wiring, etc. Approval of a bond down the road will cover the cost of a complete renovation of the HVAC system.

One additional future repair/replacement that falls under the category of facilities/athletics involves the turf field that was installed in 2016. After consultation with experts, Roger Preston feels that the turf field will not need to be replaced for another 4 to 5 years. It has been recommended that the board seek funding from the taxpayers in the amount of \$85,000 per year for the next four years in order to have adequate funding to replace the field when it becomes necessary.

#### Conclusions/Observations

Overall, I believe Roger's expertise has been invaluable in being a creative problem solver as well as knowledgeable about careful budget management. He wisely recognizes that preventative maintenance is the key to keeping our schools running smoothly, efficiently, and safely. The facilities budget had an overall decrease of \$146,977 in spite of the fact that the proposed budget had much needed increases in maintenance requests. Any increase was offset by what appears to be the end of bond payments amounting to close to \$260,000. My concern is that the needs for repairs and maintenance are becoming critical and now is not the time to see a decrease in the facilities budget. At the very least I am recommending that it be flat so that the \$146,977 decrease can be put to work doing all the things that need to be done --- they will only be more expensive if we delay.

Respectfully submitted –

Jeanne Ludt