

**Preston Board of Finance  
Special Meeting  
Thursday March 22, 2018  
7:30 pm  
Preston Plains Middle School**

**1. Call to Order**

Melissa Lennon, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm

**Roll Call**

**Members**

Melissa Lennon – Chair  
Jerry Grabarek – Vice Chairman  
Stacey Becker – Clerk  
Dan Duprey - excused  
Keith Wucik - excused  
Ken Zachem

**Alternates**

Ian Stammel - seated  
Lennie Spencer - seated

*M. Lennon seated Ian Stammel and Lennie Spencer*

**2. Public Comment**

None

**3. FY19 BoE Budget Proposal Workshop**

Sean Nugent, Chairman Board of Education stated that the BoE budget being presented aligns with the high level strategic plan the BoE has been developing with Dr. Seitsinger. The BoE looked at where they could have shared services going forward to reduce cost to both the BoE and the Town. The BoE approved this budget unanimously.

Dr. Seitsinger, Superintendent explained that the budget process was approached differently this year. Dr. Seitsinger and the BoE engaged as a team. The budget was constructed simultaneously together rather than the Superintendent going before the BoE with an established budget to pick apart. The budget was approached with statements of intention. Statements of planning and the future. The budget is also a statement of communication, because once the budget is finalized it will be posted to the BoE's webpage for future reference for any member of the community to examine. The overall budget has a 3.04 percent, or \$355,915, spending increase over this year's nearly \$11.7 million budget.

Dr. Seitsinger presented a Power Point presentation to explain budget recommendations;

1. The Context of Our New Process
2. Our Budget Perspective
3. 3.04% Modest Increase Budget
4. Who Are Our Students?
5. Budget Process 380+ Statutory and Legal Obligations
6. Board of Education and Community Expectations
7. Other Budget Conditions
8. Request Drivers
9. Budget Drivers
10. School Social Worker
11. Executive Summary
12. FY 19 Board of Education Budget
13. Considered Multiple Scenarios
14. Wages
15. Health and Dental
16. Secondary Education
17. Special Education
18. Transportation
19. Utilities
20. Administrative
21. Plant Operations
22. Instructional Technology
23. Miscellaneous

Student population;

- 451 students pre-K through 8
- Free lunch to 96 families
- 3 homeless families
- Community expectations of small class size, bus rides, access to public buildings.

Basic “budget drivers” include;

- high school tuition
- 1 class room new teacher - \$65,320 - to address growing class sizes.
- social worker - \$72,218 in salary and benefits for a social worker
- 1.5 para-educator position - \$45,000 -added mid-year in this year’s budget using savings in special education costs, and now are included in the 2018-19 budget.
- increase I student population

Dr. Seitsinger explained that any social issue you can think of comes through Preston schools;

- violence,
- learning disabilities,
- family grief
- major mental
- substance abuse

The volume is less, but the issues are no different than anywhere else.

In order to support the student, the families need support and a social worker does that.

Dr. Seitsinger noted that a social worker can go to a student's home.

Dr. Seitsinger stated that the BoE were able to bring certain line items down for next year, however salaries, benefits and secondary tuition have increased.

- Salaries have already been negotiated and are in place.
- Health care is at State level, so BoE has very little control over the costs.
- No control over secondary tuition; they are set by other entities.

S. Becker asked how much was reduced in total from last year for the areas the BoE did have control over.

Dr. Seitsinger answered about 30.

Dr. Seitsinger noted that Special Education costs are down because special education students attending Preston schools no longer need the services.

Transportation costs are down because of the new buses which results in less maintenance costs

Dr. Seitsinger stated that after this budget process is finished, voted on and approved by the Town the BoE is going to submit the budget to a GFOA and ASBOI review who have national standards on budget design and implementation.

Dr. Seitsinger explained that two things happen when you have Capital Improvements;

1. You maintain the quality of the environment that you're in.
2. You add positive energy to that environment; people can see that things are taken care of.

I. Stammel asked what is currently happening that requires a social worker.

Dr. Seitsinger stated that right now several people will be needed to address issues of a student; principle, teacher, parents, trooper and sometimes an outside agency is brought in.

This takes time away from other duties while they concentrate on 1 student.

S. Becker asked if the 25% who are receiving reduced or free lunch is an increase from previous years

Dr. Seitsinger answered 10 years ago it was 12%.

K. Zachem asked if literacy software is really needed or can the purchase be staggered.

Dr. Seitsinger answered that it is staggered already.

K. Zachem thought changing the cameras from analog to digital is more of a wish list type of item.

Dr. Seitsinger answered that not having a consistent strategy of repair or replacement over time because they are now a fundamental and key high expectation of maintenance for our safety. A couple of years ago if the cameras went down I would not be thinking whether we should have school or not, we would have school. Now I have to think about that.

#### **4. Next Meeting for Regular Agenda**

Wednesday March 28, 2018 at 7:00 pm.

#### **5. Public Comment**

Andy Depta, Preston resident commented that if there is going to be shared services he would like to see what the savings is.

A. Depta complimented the BoE Finance Committee on the way they went over the budget line by line.

A. Depta asked where are the tax payers at this meeting? The audience tonight consisted of BoE and Town staff. Only 2 tax payers attended. How can we get the tax payers to come to these meetings?

#### **6. Adjournment**

**A motion was made by I Stammel and seconded by K. Zachem to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 pm.**

**All in favor. Motion carries.**

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Charpentier  
recorder