

GARDNER SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Public Hearing – FY 2021 Budget– May 19, 2020
Zoom Meeting (due to covid-19 pandemic)

Members present on Zoom: Acting Mayor Elizabeth Kazinskas, Chairperson; Jennifer Pelavin, Vice Chairperson; Anne Hurst, Secretary; James Abare, Rachel Cormier, John LaFreniere, and Robert Swartz

School Personnel present on Zoom: Dr. Mark J. Pellegrino, Superintendent
Brenda Smith, Administrative Assistant
Ms. April Yu, Business Administrator
Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer
Ms. Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel
Ms. Courtney Dunn, Grants, Communications & Compliance Manager

Call to Order

Acting Mayor Elizabeth Kazinskas, called the Public Hearing on the FY 2021 Budget to order at 6 pm. The meeting opened with a roll call. The meeting was broadcast live on Channel 8 television and recorded by Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary.

Presentation of FY 2021 School Department Budget

Superintendent Pellegrino presented the FY 2021 School Department Budget. At the end of the presentation, School Committee members will be allowed to ask questions and members of the public will be allowed to zoom in to ask questions.

The changing demographics of students in the community have increased costs. Charts were presented showing the changes since the 2014-2015 school year. Gardner has continually grown as a diversified community and additional resources are required to support our students.

The 2020-2021 Goal is equity and excellence for every child, in every classroom, every day. To achieve this the following strategies will be implemented:

- Continue to implement targeted standards-based instruction driven by common assessments that measure student academic growth.
- Foster a culture of achievement that is positive, supportive, and engaging for all of our students.
- Provide all stakeholders with transparent communication that is respectful, timely, consistent, and inclusive.

Strategies to achieve these goals were presented.

Superintendent Pellegrino explained how the budget was developed and cognizant that available funding for school operations will likely not be sufficient to support level services, certain adjustments had to be made to the FY2021 budget. The Budget reductions, additions, and restorations were presented. A list of the critical additions that are needed to give more support to the students was presented.

The Net School Spending Budget was presented. The Commonwealth's school finance statute, Chapter 70 of the M.G.L., establishes an annual Net School Spending (NSS) requirement for each school district. The revenue, expenses, payroll and expense accounts for FY2021 were presented. The Transportation Subcommittee worked very hard on a new transportation contract resulting in a savings of \$98,181.

A meeting of School Administration and community stakeholders was held on March, 2, 2020 to identify strategies for use of possible funding from the Student Opportunity Act. Results included increasing school staffers, supporting educators with Professional Development opportunities, and increasing personnel especially in the younger grades.

Three options for adoption of a FY2021 Level Services Budget were presented. The recommended option is \$25,588,840 with the addition of the Critical Needs of \$645,000 for a total budget amount of \$26,233,840.

There were no questions from School Committee members.

Open Time for the Public

Mr. Jonathan Dudley, 71 Summer Street, Gardner, was present on zoom. He had attended the March 2, 2020 meeting where stakeholders gave input for applying for additional State funding and to determine priorities for the District. Mr. Dudley spoke about hiring a more diverse work force.

Mr. Dudley was the only person who called in to the Public Hearing.

ADJOURNMENT

Acting Mayor Kazinskas, Chairperson, declared the Public Hearing closed at 6:40 pm.

Anne Hurst, Chairperson