

Marblehead School Committee

June 10, 2020

7:00 PM

Zoom Conference - Meeting ID 945864115 & Password: 664575

<https://zoom.us/j/94586411595?pwd=VDg3M0ZSZ1ISSjdmSGZnaUtwY281Zz09>

Dial In (415) 762-9988 with ID and follow prompts

Meeting ID 94586411595

I. Sarah Gold called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm

Ms. Gold noted the meeting was a follow up to the meeting the budget subcommittee had the previous week.

II. FY21 Capital Plans Status

Ms. Fox walked through the final priority list as presented by the Facilities subcommittee which are as follows:

• Coffin School- replace front entry doors	\$20,000
• MHS - Replace front entry doors	\$30,000
• Capital facilities needs assessment	\$42,750
• Vets MS - Sand, repaint and refinish Gym floor	\$25,000
• Vets MS - replace library carpet	\$9,995.00
• Glover School - Interior painting	\$30,000
Total:	\$177,750

Ms Fox noted the facilities committee determined a capital facilities needs assessment is a major priority as maintaining of facilities has been a recurring problem. It was also noted that the information yielded from this study would be important when developing any possible future budgets and or override.

Ms Fox noted safety is also a huge concern. Door replacement at Coffin and the MHS are safety needs. Ms Fox explained Vets gym floor was due to be refinished and the current library carpet at Vets was buckled and had several outlets that were placed in the floor which due to wear and buckling now presented a safety issue. The Glover school required repainting as the walls were in disrepair due to the use of less resilient surfaces.

Ms Fox explained her suggestion to use some of the FY20 surplus to prepay allowed items for the capital ask in order to save the town funds in FY21. Ms Fox noted the town administrator had said he could not meet the current capital ask but instead could offer \$81,000 for the school departments portion of the capital ask. Meagan Taylor agreed it made sense to use a one time surplus to cover a one time expense like the Capital improvement requests.

Ms Fox noted her only concern with using the surplus is she wanted to leave enough in the FY20 budget to cover any unanticipated bills that may come in for FY20 prior to the close of the fiscal year. Ms Fox stated she wanted to defer to Ms Cresta on what she felt needed to be reserved for unanticipated costs.

Ms Taylor stated it was not her understanding that the town wanted the schools to cover all of the Capital Expenditures with the surplus. Ms Fox stated she understood that the town wanted the School Committee to discuss and decide what to spend. Ms Taylor stated she understood the town had not wanted the schools to spend the entire \$200,000 surplus. Mr McCaulduff noted he missed the end of the conversation but that Mr Silva had penciled in \$81,000 for the capital expenditures for the school which would need to include the 2 vehicle leases as well. Mr McCaulduff noted he also had the impression that the town was hoping to have some of the FY20 surplus turned back over to the town. Mr McCaulduff asked to retain a safety valve of \$35,000-\$50,000 in the FY20 budget for any unanticipated invoices.

Ms Fox said she understood that any leases would need to go through town meeting due to the mechanism used to obtain leases. Mr McCaulduff noted that town meeting would need to approve leases but alternative funding sources could be identified.

Ms Fox asked for clarification if the town was stating we could use the \$81,000 placeholder for capital from the town and go into the surplus for the remainder or if the town wanted to eliminate the \$81,000 capital line for the schools and then have us fund any of the schools capital asks from the surplus while still giving back a portion of the surplus to the town. Ms Taylor stated the latter was her understanding and Mr McCaulduff agreed and reiterated the \$81,000 was a total including the two leases.

Mr Harris noted historically the buildings and vehicles budget asks were separated. Ms Fox asked Mr Harris if he recommended a lease or full purchase given his professional experience. Mr Harris said given the current cost of money it may be advantageous to do a full purchase however given the predictability of leasing it may be better for stability of future budgets to utilize a lease. Mr McCaulduff pointed out in the public sector leases are always lease to own and that in three years we would own the bus.

Ms Gold asked Mr McCaulduff how much the costs of vehicle leases were. Mr McCaulduff answered \$40,000.

Ms Fox stated that only leaves \$41,000 and she is concerned because in her opinion the capital needs assessment is a must and the doors are a safety must. Mr McCaulduff stated he spoke with Todd Bloodgood, the facilities director and Mr Bloodgood prioritised the bus over the pickup and that the district could go one more year without the pick if needed. Mr McCaulduff noted that with the custodians back full time that a lot of interior painting was being done by our staff.

Ms Taylor asked for further explanation of the Coffin Door request. Mr McCaulduff stated due to the shape and size of the existing doors, any replacement would need to be entirely custom and that Mr Bloodgood was awaiting an estimate. Ms Taylor asked if the \$20,000 estimate was still a valid number.

Ms Schaeffner indicated she had been waiting to speak for some time and noted she thought the number for repainting at Glover included painting at other schools as well. Mr McCaulduff responded the \$30,000 estimate was for painting only Glover. Ms Schaeffner also noted she understood the replacement of MHS re-entry to not just be a door replacement but rather a reconfiguration of the front entry to allow for safer entry throughout the day as requested by Mr Bauer. Ms Schaeffner voiced concern that

\$30,000 may not be enough to achieve what Mr Bauer had described during the facilities committee walk through. Ms Fox agreed that it was not simply a door replacement but also an additional build out with some type of check in desk that had been requested.

Ms Schaeffner noted a district messenger had gone out the past week stating the school lunch program would be ending June 18 and stated she wanted to use some of the aforementioned surplus to fund free lunches for anyone in need through the end of June or the end of the Summer and asked the committee to consider it. Mr McCaulduff noted a resource list was sent to families. Ms Scheafner reiterated asking the committee to consider continuing the free lunch program. Ms Gold asked Ms Cresta if she had a figure for continuing the program through the end of June. Ms Cresta noted it would only be a few thousand additional dollars to extend through the end of June. Ms Taylor asked to clarify if that would be a few thousand per week or a few thousand for the time between June 18 and June 30. Ms Cresta replied it would be through June 30. Mr McCaulduff estimated the cost would be \$3200 and felt that was a cost the current budget could absorb if it was the will of the committee. Ms Fox said she felt it was a great idea and Ms Gold agreed.

Ms Schaeffner asked if we were having public comment tonight and Ms Gold stated it was not on the agenda.

Mr Harris stated he wanted to approve the school bus and replace the front entry doors only. Mr Harris noted he felt the capital needs assessment was also important and if possible could be added back in if we have enough flexibility in the budget as the year progresses. Ms Schaeffner asked for clarification if we were starting with a target number and backing items into it or if we were looking at needed items and coming up with a number. Mr Harris stated he was looking to meet the goal set forth of \$80,000 by the town. Ms Schaeffner asked if we were going to use the FY20 surplus to meet any additional needs. Mr Harris said he was concerned with only three weeks left of the fiscal year we did not have enough time to put items out to bid in order to utilize the surplus as the funding source. Ms Schaeffner asked Ms Cresta if the capital needs assessment was a capital outlay and Ms Cresta stated yes. Ms Schaeffner noted we are able to use surplus dollars for very limited things from one year to the next, one being out of district tuition and asked if we could prepay additional OOD tuition to the replace the cost of the Capital needs assessment and then add the Capital Needs assessment into the proposed FY21 operating budget. Ms Cresta stated that by Massachusetts General law this would be allowed. Mr Harris said he was in agreement with the thought process but would want to put an asterisk noting the capital needs assessment is not a recurring cost and would need to be deducted when developing FY 22 budget. Ms Cresta noted that the tuition being prepaid from FY21 budget with FY20 funds would need to come back into the FY22 budget. Ms Cresta noted the FY22 budget would need to stand alone rather than be a rollover budget due to the way we were balancing it this year.

Mr Harris requested we approach the Finance Committee with the bus lease, coffin and HS front doors and ask them to approve prepaying OOD tuition with the surplus and replacing it with the Capital Needs Assessment. Ms Gold suggested we give a dollar amount rather than specific items and state we would prepay tuition to what amount and then earmark the same amount in the FY21 budget for any capital needs the schools identify since we do not have firm estimates on the individual items.

Ms Fox stated her concern is that the current way the town develops its offered number for the budget is by taking the previous years budget and adding in COLA and Step and Lane adjustments and by prepaying to reduce the FY21 budget we would be putting ourselves in a situation that we already know the funding for FY22 would not meet our needs. Ms Gold stated Ms Cresta had stated the prepaid amounts would need to come back into any rollover number when developing the FY22 budget. Ms Fox stated she asked the town finance committee if that would be guaranteed to come back into any rollover budget and the response given by Ben Berman was that although the town always wanted to help the schools when able there could be no agreement could be made at this time. Ms Fox stated she was very cautious given that reply. Ms Gold said she could understand that. Ms Fox stated she wanted to make sure we are setting the schools up for success and as much as she wanted to use the surplus funds she wanted to be clear that any prepaid funds would have to come back into our FY22 budget to make sure we can fund our special education out of district placements. Ms Gold stated that she believes the hesitation to make an agreement stemmed from concerns that if the town does not have funding for these items in FY22 then they simply do not have it. Mr Harris agreed but said given our current situation we need to focus on our short term needs. Mr Harris also said this was an opportunity to hand back money to free cash which he had never seen and he was happy to do so.

Ms Schaeffner stated in her opinion we were appropriated a sum of money at town meeting last year and we have underspent that given the unfortunate circumstances we find ourselves in with Covid-19. Ms Schaeffner stated she wanted the school committee to think about what the best use of the funds we were appropriated for the use of our schools and that we maximize our opportunity to secure what we believe we need for our students.

Ms Taylor asked to clarify that we would use the surplus to fund \$20,000 for Coffin school doors, \$30,000 for MHS doors and \$23,000 for the bus lease. Ms Schaeffner pointed out that we had the opportunity to fund additional items as well. Ms Fox stated she felt strongly we should also include the Capital needs assessment. Ms Fox explained that during the finance meeting Mr Silva had said he was comfortable giving \$80,000 to capital needs, the schools shared there was an unanticipated surplus of \$225,000 and even after adding in the doors at both schools, the bus and the capital needs assessment there would still be a positive delta of \$157,250 from what was being offered and what we were asking which would benefit the town. In this scenario Ms Fox stated this was a very good compromise. Ms Schaeffner stated she did not understand the explanation and all other committee members stated they also did not understand. Mr McCaulduff explained how the math of Ms Fox's suggestion worked and pointed out this would allow some of the money to be used immediately rather than waiting for free cash to be certified.

Ms Taylor stated she is concerned about adding these costs to the FY21 budget. Mr McCaulduff stated he felt it is best practice to use surplus to fund one time costs and suggested purchasing items from FY21 budget that are identified as one time fees which would be the Go Math online resource and the FOSS Science kits which he believes to be approximately \$65,000 which would protect the budget from any issues with rollover funding. Mr McCaulduff suggested finding another \$40,000 in one time expenditures to prepay with the surplus. Ms Fox noted the Coffin doors were under the threshold to go

to bid so we could enter a contract for those prior to the end of FY20 and Mr McCaulduff agreed. Mr McCaulduff noted that brings the exposure down to \$20,000 which was much more manageable. Ms Schaeffner stated the prepayment was not clear to her. Mr Harris agreed and said he felt we were talking too much about the mechanism of funding and wanted to leave that up to Ms Cresta.

Ms Schaeffner noted there was a much longer list of requests for the capital outlay from the facilities subcommittee, the list presented was already a prioritized list and she was uncomfortable further reducing that list. Mr Harris stated he was in full agreement but he feels it is irresponsible to press on with the idea that this is the budget we were in FY20 and spend every last dollar of it rather than returning some to the town and being a team player.

Ms Schaeffner asked if the Finance Committee had identified what the budget shortfall was for them next year. Ms Taylor answered, yes, \$1.6 million. Ms Schaeffner noted that was town wide and asked what specifically what the town side was reducing their budget by. Ms Fox said she got the sense the town was hoping we would have a consensus from our committee of how we were funding these Capital items whether it be by surplus, the capital article or other means. Ms Taylor said she believed that we had agreed on the four priorities and the funding source would be the surplus. Ms Schaeffner stated she had not agreed that those were the four priorities.

Ms Fox noted there was an additional one time expense that could be identified, that being Google Blackboard which would allow better teacher and student engagement during distance learning. Ms Fox noted that if we purchased this program, pending educator feedback, it would take pressure off the Unanticipated Covid expenditures line item while giving our educators and students a tool to maximize success. Mr McCaulduff noted the staff would want some time to look at these platforms and that it was something that could be part of the reopening plan discussion. Mr McCaulduff stated he felt the cost of a program like this could be covered in the current proposed FY21 budget.

Mr McCaulduff summarized there are four items totaling \$115,000 currently being discussed as part of the capital outlay and that he felt it was a reasonable plan to bring forward to the finance committee liaisons at the end of the week.

Ms Gold noted Ms Schaeffner seemed to not be comfortable with the proposed capital ask. Ms Schaeffner asked for clarification. Ms Gold stated the committee was asking Ms Fox and Ms Taylor to tell the Finance Committee liaison we wanted to fund the Coffin and MHS new doors, a capital needs assessment and a new bus and that we wanted to utilize the surplus to fund these via other one time expenditures.

Mr McCaulduff asked Ms Cresta if she felt holding back \$50,000 for unanticipated expenses through the end of FY20 was a safe estimate.

Ms Schaeffner asked if there would be a further reconciliation of the numbers. Mr McCaulduff said he would have a revised line item budget for the committee to review next week that was reflective of what had been decided tonight.

Ms Fox asked if we should take a formal vote. Ms Gold stated we did not need a vote. Ms Taylor asked if Ms Schaeffner was comfortable moving forward and Ms Schaeffner replied yes.

Ms Taylor asked Ms Fox if she felt they were ready to move forward to Fridays finance meeting.

Ms Fox said yes but had a few concerns.

III. FY21 Budget Discussion

Ms Fox noted she wanted the Kindergarten tuition revenue number revisited and also asked if the number we are using for circuit breaker is conservative enough. Mr McCaulduff said he and Ms Cresta would have more to report on Kindergarten tuition next week. Mr McCaulduff stated as far as circuit breaker he was unsure if we are being conservative enough but if we reduced that revenue line further we needed to identify where that money would come from.

Mr McCaulduff informed the committee of a new Kindergarten teacher retirement and suggested we move that \$30,000 in projected savings to the Covid 19 unanticipated line item for a new amount of \$165,699. Mr McCaulduff also noted Eric Oxford was currently budgeting some the anticipated compensatory services to the IDEA grant. Mr McCaulduff stated that as we identify further savings they should be moved to the Covid 19 unanticipated line item.

Ms Gold asked if Mr McCaulduff wanted to discuss the COLA increases for the administration. Mr McCaulduff said that needed to go back to the committee for further discussion.

Ms Taylor said COLA increases for administration did come up in the last finance liaisons meeting and her understanding was the town was making a very strong suggestion that the school committee not give COLA increases to our administration so that we are in line with what is happening on the town side. Ms Fox stated the town clarified they are not giving any COLA increases to any non union employees but the School Committee had decided not to copy this and to only withhold the COLA increases from administration level non union personnel. Ms Taylor stated that personally it is not something she came to lightly. Ms Gold said it was unfortunate but a reality of where we are at and as she understood it the administrators were more concerned about their employees rather than themselves and that they were ok with forgoing their COLA increases. Mr McCaulduff stated he does not recall this being part of the regular meeting conversation. Mr McCaulduff said what is being recommended is that the \$43,000 is reflective of withholding the administrative level COLA. Ms Schaeffner said it is very hard for her to support this and that she would not. Ms Schaeffner is upset that we just discussed giving back \$50,000-\$110,000 to the town and she feels that is done in the spirit of being part of a team but that we need to advocate for the school department including our staff. Ms Schaeffner noted it had been a very hard 15 months for all our staff and that our administrators had worked very hard to help get us through. Ms Schaeffner said that given we just discussed giving back a surplus to the town she is not comfortable taking away the COLA from administration. Mr Harris stated he is also not comfortable but that he believed despite being a tough decision he felt

having been on Fincom and given there were people in the town side not getting COLA increases he felt the schools needed to move forward with taking back administration's COLA. Ms Gold stated she felt the same way. Ms Fox asked if Mr McCaulduff had a recommendation. Mr McCaulduff stated there were several ways to look at the situation but he guesses it is his recommendation to forgo COLA raises for admin. Mr Harris noted that we have never given raises on the town side and not for the schools and vice versa. Ms Schaeffner noted she hears a lot of this is what we have always done, in a lot of ways the schools are doing our fair share and she would not be supporting withholding COLA increases for administration. Ms Scaeffner stated our biggest assets are our staff and administration. Mr Harris stated he disagreed with Ms Schaeffner and that Marblehead is the town it is because we work collaboratively. Mr Harris said the override is coming and we will work collaboratively with the town then too.

Ms Fox stated she believed the town was realizing a \$82,000 savings by forgoing COLA for their non union personal and asked if there was a discussion about finding a mechanism to use our surplus to help the town fund their FY21 COLA increases therefore making all the employees on the town and school side all or somewhat whole. Ms Fox asked if there was room for negotiating from the originally budgeted 2.5 COLA to something less so as to still provide some type of raise. Mr McCaulduff said he did not know because there were so many moving parts to that. Ms Schaeffner noted it would be up to the town what they did with the surplus. Ms Fox clarified she was stating that if the reason for taking away our admin COLA increases was that the town was doing it rather than we could not fit it in our budget then is there a creative way for the schools to help the town provide COLA increases so that everyone is doing the same thing while keeping staff whole. Ms Taylor said any way to work together is good but that she would not want to fund an ongoing expense with a one time adjustment and that we would be affecting the long term base if we were to potentially help fund COLA for the town employees. Ms Fox stated her point is that we are not taking millions of dollars here rather we are talking a drop in the bucket for both the town and the schools.

Ms Gold asked if a vote was needed. Mr McCaulduff stated a vote would be beneficial given the School Committee determines the salary and benefits for administrators in particular. Ms Schaeffner asked why we need a formal vote, Mr McCaulduff stated we did not need a vote because we would be voting on the final budget. Ms Schaeffner was prepared to vote but was questioning the logistics. Mr McCaulduff said logistically the committee did not need vote.

Ms Fox stated to add to Ms Taylor's point, by withholding these COLA increases for school administrators we were negatively impacting their long term base as well and we need to keep that in mind when we negotiate their contracts in the future. Ms Taylor and Ms Gold agreed.

Ms Fox asked if we still had a need for an executive session. Mr McCaulduff answered no. Ms Schaeffner asked if the administration's COLA was the reason the Executive session was posted and Mr McCaulduff stated no.

Ms Fox made a motion to allow public comment given so many people from the public had sat through the entire meeting. Ms Schaeffner seconded the motion.

Ms Schaeffner asked if she could make a comment prior to voting the motion.

Ms Schaeffner noted she had heard from a number of parents since the budget hearing and they are asking for the school committee to formulate a reentry plan now. Ms Schaeffner asked Mr McCaulduff to consider doing that as soon as possible. Mr McCaulduff stated he will present a plan regarding the structure of the reopening plan at the next meeting. Mr Harris stated the motion was for public comment and called for a point of order to stop Ms Schaeffner from speaking further regarding reopening plans. Ms Gold asked Ms Schaeffner to take the discussion offline. Mr Harris reiterated a call for point of order. Ms Gold called for a vote.

A roll call vote on the motion was taken.

David Harris	yes
Sarah Gold	yes
Meghan Taylor	yes
Jenn Schaeffner	yes
Sarah Fox	yes

Ms Fox stated for clarification her motion was for public comment at some point, not to shut the meeting down. Ms Gold stated there was a motion on the table so needed to move forward.

Ms Gold called for public comment.

Meredith Tedford, Locust St. Ms Tedford appreciated the difficult spot we all were in and how challenging it is to make tough decisions. Ms Tedford stated that in her mind difficult decisions continue to be down stream solutions to a problem and she is waiting for upstream solutions to these problems and big picture thinking so that every single year it does not need to be repeated “next year, in the future, maybe later” Ms Tedford stated this year was a unique year but that she felt if we had been doing the work all along that once again we would not have been in this tight of a bind. Ms Tedford asked again for upstream solutions to avoid every year being death by a thousand cuts.

Erin Noonan, Beverly Ave. Ms Noonan agreed with Ms Tedford. Ms Noonan noted there is a lot of good will in our town and we are fortunate to live in a town with many people with expertise in fields useful to the schools like technology and facilities management. Ms Noonan hoped we would put out a call asking for help in a volunteer advisory capacity and tap into the towns many human resources,

Jennifer Eaton, West Shore Drive. Ms Eaton noted with the new standards coming out regarding cleaning procedures she is concerned about sourcing PPE. Ms Eaton asked how much thought and guidance was put into availability and budget for PPE and cleaning.

Ms. Gold adjourned the meeting at 9:12pm

Approved 11/5/2020