

Chariho School Committee Budget Workshop
Regular Session Minutes – January 5, 2017

Committee Members Present: Chair Sylvia Stanley, Vice Chair Ryan Callahan, Donna Chambers, Catherine Giusti, Stephen Huzyk, Clay Johnson, Craig Louzon, Georgia Ure (left at 8:10 PM), Melania van der Hooft and Andrew Webb. Absent: Ronald Areglado and Lisa Macaruso.

Administrators Present: Superintendent Barry Ricci, Assistant Superintendent Jane Daly, Interim Director of Business and Administration Susan Rogers and School Committee Clerk Donna Sieczkiewicz.

I. Meeting Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Silent Meditation

Chair Stanley called the meeting of the Chariho School Committee, which was held in the Chariho High School Library, to order at 6:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was followed by a moment of silent meditation.

II. Budget Workshop

Superintendent Ricci reviewed Budget Update #1. He explained item #3 on the Budget Update (You may reduce rubbish removal by \$7,500 (bid) and additional information about tipping fees will be provided). We will no longer be allowed to use municipal tipping fees. We have to speak with the towns to see if they use less than what they are allotted, will they pass on the extra to us. This will be allowed. Sue will check and if there is nothing left to use, more money will need to be budgeted. Georgia requested item #5 (the top ten accounts that are overbudgeted or underbudgeted). He stated that review by line items will begin on line 586. Barbara Capalbo requested an opportunity to go back to line items that were covered on Tuesday as she just received the budget from her Town and just reviewed it. She has about 10-12 questions.

- Barbara began with line 41. Superintendent Ricci explained that this was a half-time teacher funded through a federal grant which is no longer available.
- Next concern was on line 50 – is this an additional teacher to which the Superintendent replied that it is not an additional teacher but a different one on a different step.
- Line 78 – PE/Health – about three years ago we increased PE time at the High School which resulted in movement of staff. We budgeted at that time based on the staff we knew. Barbara suggested that maybe a cut could be made here. The Superintendent cautioned all that if there is staff movement, it will result in a difference somewhere else.
- Line 101, Barbara's next concern, was the same issue. A veteran teacher left and a lower step teacher was hired.
- Line 137 – When we started the Welding Program, we moved a carpentry teacher to this program and hired a teacher assistant for carpentry.
- Line 159 – we haven't filled the position yet so we are using a sub.
- Line 201 – a resignation; not able to fill the position.
- Line 227 – staff movement; we have a vacancy right now.
- Line 235 – reassignment of psychologists and social workers in District.
- Line 252 – Graduation by Proficiency - two staff members who work on graduation portfolios.
- Line 323- Assistant Special Education Director hired at .8 for this position and .2 Development. We had to divide the salary on two line items.
- Line 331 - Number of Academic Fellows? Superintendent replied there are 2 – they work on technology integration. This is really not new; it used to be sabbatical and the language was changed.

The Superintendent noted that lines 586-636 are all sub lines, generally speaking. We take a three-year average (unless someone is out for the entire year). As we don't know what staff will be absent, we have to transfer money to where it is needed. Barbara felt the subs, overall, are

handled well and asked if the Superintendent kept track of employee absences. Superintendent Ricci responded that the District keeps data on all absences and substitutes. Craig questioned the daily rate for subs which is now at \$85. Barbara wondered if there was an increase in OT for custodians as the District has already spent more year-to-date. The Superintendent explained that when they do the budget, they have no idea if an employee will be out so they may have to move staff. There is no change in overtime. We are having difficulty getting subs in all positions. This is not unique to Chariho. Lines 724-742 are all department head stipends. Barbara asked if line 901 could be cut. The Superintendent explained that he budgeted for five people to retire next year. This is a guess. He does not believe there will be much money left in this account at years end. Barbara questioned why the District still had Performance Based Compensation for administrators when the teachers refused it. Superintendent Ricci explained that there is an agreement made by the School Committee with administrators as longevity was taken away. The Superintendent moved to lines 955-997; there were no comments. Lines 998-3173 were reviewed. Barbara commented on line 998. She feels extracurricular advisors should get more as athletic coaches receive a higher stipend. Superintendent Ricci noted that lines 998-3173 are dental/health line items. These have been condensed as each employee has a separate line item for each. If anyone would like the entire printout, we can provide it. Craig questioned if there was any change to line 1450. The Superintendent stated that Sue will check it and an update will be provided. Barbara questioned if the Superintendent felt that line 2557 will be this much (medical buy-backs). Superintendent Ricci replied that he has no idea on how many will take the insurance or refuse it. Lines 3579-5264 are collapsed like the above. There were no questions on these or on lines 5265-5313. Lines 5314-5365 – Barbara questioned line 5307 which is up \$48,000. Superintendent Ricci explained that this is for the RYSE clinical program. The contract was under 2% but we have had to add a half-time person. Bob Cardozo asked about the amount the District receives from Medicaid to which the Superintendent replied that it depends on whether or not a student is eligible. We are talking with Medicaid about a few other areas that we may get money for. He does not have any answers on this yet. Georgia questioned line 5305 – number of psychologists to which the Superintendent noted that he will need to look at the contract and will get the number. Bob asked for the number of CDP students. The Superintendent stated there are between 25 and 27 now; it is not only the number but also the magnitude of services needed. Lines 5314-5366 – Barbara stated that overall line 5366 stayed close to budget; she expected this to go up. Superintendent Ricci noted that this is very fluid and has not settled yet. If the electronic version is more expensive than the paper copy, we go with paper. Lines 5367-5419 – Barbara asked why line 5406 was up \$10,000. Sue replied that this is a result of GASB (actuarial study) which is required every other year. Ryan wanted to know if conference/workshops (line 5404) was expected to be \$81,000 for this year as well. Sue noted that dues for the Superintendent's Association went way up but they will check this. Georgia noted her frustration with the fact that they still don't have an audit for this year and questioned when it would be received. The Superintendent was hopeful they would have it for the January 17th meeting. Jane explained that line 5315 covers three teachers' training for AP courses and training for AP Capstone. Bob questioned AP course selection – do kids still have to be recommended for AP courses? The Superintendent replied that the District is now encouraging more students to select these. Bob asked about the cost for AP exams. Superintendent Ricci noted that we budget for the lower cost so we do not receive any money back for them. There is a possibility that the state will begin picking up the cost. Barbara questioned if the Superintendent had received a report from Shelley Kenny for an increase to the Arts Program (after school). She would like to see more money added to this. Ryan asked about the increase in line 5445. The Superintendent stated that this is due to the increase in nursing requirements – we have two students who require a 1:1 nurse (one student is new to us). This is something that we just can't predict. Students come and go. Superintendent Ricci moved to lines 5473-5525. Barbara noted the increase in official/referee fees. She was informed that this is out of the control of the District. The fees are set by RILL. Lines 5526-5578 – Craig asked about line 5526. The Superintendent noted that the District would like to move to a more user friendly website. It is not necessary that we have to do it this year. Line 5573 was questioned by Craig. Superintendent Ricci commented that

school districts should not have been using the municipality tipping fees. This is a little more difficult for us as we deal with three towns. Ryan asked about line 5525 – Sue informed the Committee that services from Keystone, AESOP, etc. are all covered under this line item. Superintendent Ricci stated that lines 5579-5631 are all maintenance accounts. Barbara suggested that they take some money from this year to cover expenses in line 5623. There were no questions on lines 5632-5684. Lines 5685-5737 – Barbara questioned line 5709. The Superintendent explained that, per state law, if school districts hire an electrician, he/she can only repair existing electrical problems. If we need to put in a new plug or something on that idea, we have to go out and contract for this. We used to have a full-time electrician on staff but it was called to the state's attention that he was performing this type of service so we now have to contract outside for this work. Lines 5738-5790 – Barbara asked if line 5754 could be cut to which the Superintendent explained that it couldn't be cut because there is no longer e-rate money to reduce it. There were no questions on lines 5791-5896. Lines 5897-5949 – Barbara asked that they check on line 5917 as more is added each year. Craig noted that line 5907 seemed low year-to-date to which Sue responded that they have only billed for September, October and November (1/4 of the year). Lines 5950-6161 – Craig asked about traveling psychologists. The Superintendent explained that if we have a psychologist cover more than one building, the state required that we break this out on different lines. They changed their minds and are telling us they want them grouped together. Ryan noted a concern on line 6138 – looks like it is coming down. The Superintendent stated that this budget is for 87 students. That is one reason and the other is that Brian took \$83,000 from this line item in 16-17 for anticipated fund balance and Sue has taken it from salaries. Craig asked how many teachers would the District have to hire if Kingston Hill and Compass closed. Superintendent Ricci stated that he figured this out a year ago and at that time we would have had to hire two additional teachers. As staffing has changed this year he would have to look at the numbers again. Lines 6162-6320 – Barbara was pleased that more money was added. Sue noted that this was for STEM activities at Artessy. Lines 6321-6373 – Superintendent Ricci called attention to line 6331. This is to replace band uniforms (from 1992). This is not the full cost. He is hoping that the Band Boosters can fill in the gap. Barbara commented on line 6349 – awards for athletes. She would like to see more money applied to awards for other things, not just athletics. The Superintendent clarified that this line item also included supplies, not just awards. Lines 6374-6426 – Ryan noted on line 6404 that it was trending down to which the Superintendent stated there were things budgeted in this line item that should have been budgeted in another line item – but it is less money. He explained that during the summer the District posts for painters. Usually teacher assistants, who do not work during the summer, apply for these six positions. They do all the painting which saves a considerable amount of money. Lines 6427-6638 – Barbara requested that line 6595 be looked at for cuts along with electricity and gas. Lines 6639-6797 – Craig asked about line 6776. The Superintendent responded that the District is required by law to purchase textbooks for parochial/non-public school students. Ryan questioned if the trend was down looking at line 6789. Superintendent Ricci noted that this was unsettled. We are looking at English curriculum next year so there could be a substantial increase the following year. Jane noted that on line 6785 we were able to get a multi-year savings. Lines 6798-6850 – Barbara questioned line 6826. Jane reported that the science curriculum was just adopted and this is for the new science kits for the Middle School next year. We do not buy textbooks, they are included in the kits. Lines 6851-6903 includes furniture replacement for the Middle School library and fitness center equipment. Bob requested the total athletic budget for the next meeting. Lines 6904-7058 – Barbara asked about line 7045. Superintendent responded that this is for the Affordable Care Act Transitional Reinsurance Fees. Barbara questioned if the District could bill people for psychological or social work to which the Superintendent replied “no”. Mrs. Bryson, from Richmond, noted the concern of many parents of the class sizes in Richmond. They would like to see more staff. Bill Day explained how the School Committee tried a few years ago to give the Superintendent flexibility to move students over boundary lines. This cannot be done per the Chariho Act so the Act would need to be changed. The only town that supported this was Richmond. He suggested that the School Committee investigate this again. Georgia stated that the Chariho Act is law and they

can't do what Billy suggested. They would have to change the law. Steve asked how the other two Town Councils felt about this. Barbara stated that she has always agreed to it. Frank Landolfi asked if this wasn't being done now to which the Superintendent explained that a student can voluntarily transfer to another District school so long as there is space available and the parent provides transportation. What Bill is referring to is having a student from one town attend school in another town with the District providing transportation so as to even out class size. Craig agreed with Bill and noted that the Chariho Act can be changed if all three towns want to change it. Richmond just did it. The School Committee could pursue it. Discussion ensued on the issues the District is having with the Commissioner's freedom of choice stance. The Superintendent asked is there were any other questions or concerns. Barbara stated that overall the District is keeping the budget tight and doing quite well. Bob felt that \$2 million needed to be cut for Richmond to get down lower. Frank felt the budget was not sustainable. Every year it goes up. The District should hire a Procurement Manager. He is not happy with the budget. Chair Stanley responded that there is a problem when a Town Council promotes Charter Schools and the District has to pay for these students. This amounts to over \$1 million in this year's budget. Catherine asked if there was a way that the Superintendent could break down what they can cut and what are contractual obligations or mandates? The Superintendent explained some of the contractual obligations and noted that the last five budgets averaged a .55% increase per year. The problem this year is driven by healthcare costs; mainly the Affordable Care Act. He is sure the School Committee will go through this budget but he would prefer if people would not insinuate that there is "stuff" in this budget. Frank suggested the District look at The Trust for insurance. Superintendent Ricci responded that they have and the cost was more. If you have suggestions, he encouraged all to please share them. Andy asked "What if the Affordable Care Act is appealed?" The Superintendent replied that he cannot predict what will happen so he has to budget based on what he knows today. Andy asked if the Superintendent could do a level-funded budget to which Superintendent Ricci replied that the School Committee can do what it wants. He asked Andy what he would like for him to take out to make it level-funded. The School Committee can decide what they think is not necessary. Craig felt that all the people who can be cut are necessary to the success of the District. Andy replied that the taxpayers can't handle it. The Superintendent stated that collectively as a School Committee they should agree on what they can support. Steve suggested they all go home and think about it. The long-term repercussions are that people will move and the remaining taxpayers will end up paying more taxes. Melania responded that they can think long and hard but they are not going to convince the taxpayers in Richmond to support the budget. Chair Stanley noted that everyone sitting at the table is concerned with taxpayers and the education of our students. It is a tight rope they walk on. Barbara again complimented the District on how well it is doing and suggested that they work towards professions for all students as there is weight value to all.

VI. Adjournment

Craig Louzorn made a motion, seconded by Clay Johnson and it was

VOTED: To adjourn at 8:13 PM. In favor: Unanimous (Ure was not in attendance for the vote).

Donna J. Sieczkiewicz, Clerk