

Town of Plymouth

80 Main Street, Terryville, CT 06786

www.plymouthct.us

Board of Finance

Telephone: 860-585-4001

Fax: 860-585-4015

1. Call Meeting to Order: Jim Kilduff, Chairman called the scheduled April 23, 2020 Board of Finance meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Zoom Meeting online- Meeting ID: 416 918 410. Members in attendance: Victoria Carey-Vice Chairman, Eugene Croce, Barbara Rockwell, Elizabeth Wollenberg, Dave Sekorski, Also present: Ann Marie Rheault - Director of Finance, Dr. Martin Semmel, Superintendent of Schools, and Paul Hendrickson, Business Manager, and Town Councilwoman Sue Murawski.

2. Pledge of Allegiance: Jim Kilduff, Chairman led the group and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Board of Education Budget Presentation to the Board of Finance

Dr. Martin Semmel, Superintendent of Plymouth Public Schools noted the following:

- ❖ Students in our schools are performing well.
- ❖ We do better than towns that have a higher median income.
- ❖ Due to staff-driven, teachers, paras, custodians, administrators that work very hard to make sure our kids are learning.
- ❖ Contractual obligations are the biggest part of our budget.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated the town increase is larger than the Board of Education increases over the past few years.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated working with Paul Hendrickson, Business Manager – we already locked in our fuel costs for the next year at a savings of \$21,000 and received word from our insurance provider that we can reduce our expected costs by \$130,000, moving forward with one less science teacher - additional savings of \$60,000 moves request to \$522,579.

Dr. Martin Semmel highlighted the following slides from PowerPoint presentation:*

***The Board of Education PowerPoint presentation can be viewed in its entirety at the Board of Education website.**

Overall Budget Change

• 2019-2020 Budget	\$24,487,790
• 2020-2021 Request	\$25,010,559
Difference:	\$522,769
% Increase:	2.135%

Eugene Croce
TOWN CLERK

2020 APR 30 PM 2:13

TOWN OF PLYMOUTH
CLERK'S OFFICE
80 MAIN STREET
PLYMOUTH, CT 06786

Board of Finance Meeting

April 23, 2020

Page 2 of 8

2020 - 2021 Superintendent's Proposed Budget

Budget Components

Salaries	59.6%
Benefits	17.4%
Transportation	7.2%
Everything Else	2.7%
Oil, Gas, Electricity	2.3%
Substitutes	0.8%

Dr. Martin Semmel stated the Primary Budget Drivers are for Certified and Non-Certified Salary which is \$554,000, along with transportation, electricity, and benefits which are all contractual.

2020-21 Budget Priorities

- ◆ Keep Elementary Class Sizes at current level
- ◆ Provide needed academic support at FES due to persistent achievement gap
 - ◆ Math Coach
 - ◆ Academic Tutor
- ◆ Provide needed support for students in crisis
 - ◆ 0.4 Social Worker
 - ◆ Allows 1 additional day at **each** THS and ETJMS
- ◆ Provide tutor support at ETJMS to help with large student population

Notable Staffing Changes

Math Coach (FES)	\$62,580
0.4 Social Worker (ETJMS / THS)	\$18,727
Tutor (HSF)	\$13,860
Tutor (ETJMS)	\$17,847

Dr. Martin Semmel stated the importance of all the above positions in detail.*

On-Going Efficiencies

- ◆ Facilities Study Completed and Next Steps in the Works
- ◆ Significant Health Care Increase Avoided By Moving to State 2.0 Plan
- ◆ Food Service Program – **was** operating in the black
- ◆ District Technology Department Supports town agencies
- ◆ Transition to Business Software being used by Town
- ◆ Selected for State Security Grant

Challenges We are Facing:

- ◆ More than 4 out of every 10 students attending our schools are living in poverty
- ◆ Schools made 122 calls to DCF/911/211 during 18-19
- ◆ A significant number of students need additional Tier 2 and/or 3 supports to catch up to their peers.
- ◆ We budget Special Education costs based on known student needs as of November 30.
 - ◆ Special Education can be fluid between Nov 30 and end of the following school year

Board of Finance Meeting

April 23, 2020

Page 3 of 8

Dr. Martin Semmel stated 43% of students are on free or reduced lunch.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated believe strongly as an educator that education provides significant support to all kids. It gives every child that chance to go beyond their current situation.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated if they take their education seriously graduate from high school and move on. They can change the trajectory of their life through the use of education. That is why what we do is so powerful for kids.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated we are not keeping up with inflation.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated the town side increases –Town Fiscal Year 8.83% compared to Board of Education – Town Fiscal Year 5.87%.

2019-2020 Town of Plymouth Expense Budget

Budget Components:

Board of Education (ECS/ECR)	24.5%
Town Government	39.4%
Board of Education (Local Taxes)	34.0%
Capital	2.1%

Summary

- ◆ The Plymouth Public Schools are both **effective** and **efficient** with the funds provided. We spend less per student than 90% of towns in CT but gains have been made in terms of student safety, academics, social emotional learning, and additional offerings to students.
- ◆ The budget is driven this year by contractual obligations.
- ◆ There remains a significant number of students who require additional support to catch up to their peers academically.
- ◆ Acute mental health and behavioral concerns have risen over the past 3 years.
- ◆ Without additional support the education system will likely begin to lose ground.

Vicky Carey questioned how does Thomaston compare to us in NCEP - since similar in a lot of aspects.

Dr. Semmel confirmed Thomaston per-pupil cost 17-18 spent \$15,641 per student.

Vicky Carey questioned if the Facilities part of the budget includes all of the schools (or just one school).

Paul Hendrickson, School Business Manager stated at the end of each individual school budget – a list of individual items that are facilities related, electricity, water, building expense, etc. – Also, a separate facilities tab – for Mr. Mazon’s direct reports – maintenance -custodian specific (each school) are carried in that school’s budget.

Board of Finance Meeting

April 23, 2020

Page 4 of 8

Vicky Carey questioned re. section – Grounds Maintenance - is that for all schools.

Paul Hendrickson confirmed that is for all schools in the District plus - Central Office.

Vicky Carey questioned re: Terryville High School -Athletic Trainer.

Paul Hendrickson stated we have an Athletic Trainer on a three-year contract, purchases training services for athletes both injury-related and preparatory for athletic events.

Vicky Carey questioned under District Wide Expenses – What Contingency is used for.

Paul Hendrickson stated Contingency has raises for contracts (recently negotiated) those raises haven't been farmed out to those specific line items, they include paraprofessionals, also include contracts that not have been agreed on yet- Dr. Semmel, my contract, Mr. Trudeau's contract aren't settled for the following year until May.

Vicky Carey questioned future class sizes, Plymouth Center School (14-18) are you realigning the teachers to correspond with the class sizes as they go up in the grades.

Dr. Semmel stated we let the principals look at their class sizes every year and they make the decisions about where they want to put their staff - that is part of the budget development process, something we do if we need to and briefly elaborated.

Paul Hendrickson stated that would change with our adoption of the option of the realigning the schools.

Dr. Semmel stated those numbers will get much easier to work with when we bring all the grades under one building.

Vicky Carey questioned number of Special Education outplacement students amount, noting transportation going up.

Lindsay Aronheim stated the total number in the district is 262, includes outplacement (11 students), transportation number went up is because students fluctuate, and transportation cost change.

Dave Sekorski questioned social worker (new position) do they administer programs for preventative measures to avoid those DCF calls and questioned if is to give more support to the current social worker.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated try to keep in-house, preventative measures, and check-in with kids.

Dave Sekorski questioned would moving schools plan correct larger class sizes.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated No since it is the Eli Terry Middle School (grades 6-8) - this issue is resolved as larger class moves to High School.

Board of Finance Meeting

April 23, 2020

Page 5 of 8

Dave Sekorski questioned Athletic Trainer part-time or full time and duties.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated at athletic events i.e. soccer game, therapist there - to access kids- as they come back, impact testing when first joining as athletes – it is a contractual full-time position.

Dave Sekorski stated re. Region 10 (Burlington –Harwinton) chart 13% noted they have a good deal.

Dave Sekorski questioned the total ECS number for 2019-2020 (dollar figure).

Paul Hendrickson stated \$10.4 M, ECS and ECR combined, ECR-\$400,000.

Ann Marie Rheault stated the importance of the Athletic Trainer - injury, concussion, to allow them back into sports, issues on fields, on-sight – attends to both teams and briefly elaborated.

Eugene Croce questioned the new positions (math coach, academic tutor) can be placed under Title 1 or Special Education funding.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated all of our Title 1 funding is spoken for.

Barbara Rockwell questioned librarian position at high school.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated have one certified librarian for the entire district (library media specialist).

Barbara Rockwell questioned administrative salaries on Plymouth Center School and Fisher School - placement in budget and different amounts.

Jim Kilduff stated that the Board of Finance was provided with all administrator's salaries prior.

Paul Hendrickson confirmed the last salary line in both elementary schools is for regular classes and not the specials such as (Art or PE).

Paul Hendrickson confirmed both administrator salary positions at Plymouth Center School and Fisher School are identical at \$141,000.

Paul Hendrickson confirmed the last budget line (Fisher School) \$1,180,000 that is the salary for the regular classroom teachers and it does not include administrators, it does not include teachers for specials (Art or Physical Education).

Barbara Rockwell stated the government has announced that they will be reimbursing anybody who let workers go or they're collecting unemployment at the moment – I understand the bus company did not keep employees on the payroll. Are you reaping benefits from All-Star bus, unemployment benefits, bus, and any savings?

Board of Finance Meeting

April 23, 2020

Page 6 of 8

Dr. Martin Semmel stated now working with All-Star Bus Company - President to come up with an amendment to the original agreement (to get reduction est. \$140,000) due to the laying off of their bus drivers.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated the bus drivers collecting unemployment, but the minute we come up with an agreement, they're going to hire their bus drivers back - and then we'd be paying more per day when they are hired back. The governor also wants us to pay overhead type cost (people and fleet cost), 7R -Executive Order, and briefly elaborated.

Barbara Rockwell confirmed there are no savings in this budget because of all the shutdown.

Dr. Martin Semmel confirmed this and noted there could be some additional expenses.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated CARES Act piece - Connecticut 111 M - districts will get a proportion of that money in line with our Title 1 funds, noting rules and briefly elaborated.

Barbara Rockwell questioned Emergency Repairs - if those come out of the Sinking Fund.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated Sinking Fund for big-ticket items (track at Terryville High School) received three quotes ranging from \$60-\$120,000 that is where the Sinking Fund is utilized.

Barbara Rockwell questioned sewer bills.

Paul Hendrickson stated we pay water, electricity, natural gas, and fuel.

Ann Marie Rheault confirmed one line item in the budget under town facilities for all town-wide sewer fees that are paid from the general fund (all buildings).

Ann Marie Rheault stated re. Pandemic - Covid 19 - define any costs that you have incurred other than PPE cost that might come from education cost (FEMA). Any reimbursable items, specifics - overtime, etc. that we may need to capture cost - that might be reimbursable to town and briefly elaborated.

Ann Marie Rheault reiterated the importance of tracking management, non-salary, volunteer hours reimbursement from FEMA is only at 75% and those hours can be added on to that and to supplement and potentially get back closer to 100%. Noting the importance of capturing and tracking overtime/costs Rich Trudeau, staff and technology costs, etc.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated now tracking expenses above and beyond.

Walter Semen stated any additional hours associated with Coronavirus above and beyond, well documented is open for reimbursable.

Elizabeth Wollenberg questioned the achievement gap from Fisher Elementary that needs additional educational assistance.

Board of Finance Meeting

April 23, 2020

Page 7 of 8

Dr. Martin Semmel stated hard to pinpoint one particular area, part of town –students move in and out of the area, more rentals, reduced lunch higher at Fisher Elementary – could be some of the contributing reasons.

Dave Sekorski stated fair to say due to socio-economic drivers and briefly elaborated.

Eugene Croce questioned any other costs, are they reported on the end of the year financial report.

Ann Marie Rheault we provide an in-kind report, costs we hold workers compensation that we do not charge back to Board of Education – any additional received bill \$10,000 –workers comp (half of that relates to Board of Education loss experience) insurances as a whole, property & casualty, all remain at town hall, additional plowing, salt, and sand for Board of Education (any school facilities), all reported on in-kind report.

Vicky Carey questioned is SRO on the in-kind report.

Ann Marie Rheault stated yes.

Vicky Carey questioned the budget increase.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated a \$522,769 budget increase, 2.135%.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated 0% based budgeting each year - always reviewing each line item.

Jim Kilduff questioned free reduced lunch and qualification guidelines.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated increase due to requirements, impacted others.

Barbara Rockwell questioned are any of the students using EdAdvance.

Dr. Martin Semmel stated no students placed there – although some savings if utilized, the second option, use for other special education services/resources, and briefly elaborated.

Jim Kilduff thanked Dr. Martin Semmel, Paul Hendrickson, and the Board of Education for their presentation.

Dr. Martin Semmel thanked the Board of Finance for your time and dedication.

4. Correspondence

Next meeting.

5. Public Comment

None

6. Board Member's Comments

Vicky Carey - None

Eugene Croce – Thanked everyone for their input.

Dave Sekorski - confirmed Mayor David Merchant and Dr. Martin Semmel (contract negotiation) leveraging everything available on the town side – opportunities and/or savings- money leftover towards request.

Dr. Martin Semmel – definitely partnering with all groups to move the town forward is important – order from the governor - we need to pay people, transportation savings – meetings re: Fisher roof (special request-other expense), insurance (not definitive number from the broker)

Barbara Rockwell - None

Elizabeth Wollenberg - None

7. Adjournment

There being no further business of the Board of Finance, a motion was made by Vicky Carey, seconded by Eugene Croce to adjourn at 8:24 p.m. This motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Yokubinas

Michele Yokubinas
Recording Secretary