

TO: School Committee

FROM: Don Sawyer, Business Manager

DATE: September 28, 2007

RE: September 2007 – Business Manager’s Report

Finance

- The YTD FY08 Budget Report is provided to the Committee and includes the Business Manager’s commentary under separate cover.
- The final FY07 Budget Report is provided to the Committee and includes the Business Manager’s commentary under separate cover.
- Three meetings were held during September, including the Town Manager, Town Finance Director, the School Committee Chair, Superintendent of Schools, and Business Manager, with discussion revolving around FY09 Town Revenues and shortfalls, Town Manager’s draft balanced summary budget to be presented, and the School Department’s 5-year budget forecast.
- A series of meetings were held with the Town Finance Director and Town Accountant to discuss current and future financial processes and targeted objectives in an effort to avoid negative impact incurred in the prior year’s close. Topics included Grant Funding / Expenditures, Retirement Benefit expense relating to Revolving Account Programs, Prior Year Encumbrances, Reconciliations, VADAR System, etc.
- In an effort to provide the School Committee with effective and meaningful budget information, tools and processes, a meeting was held with the School Committee’s Budget Subcommittee on September 17th for future clarification and consideration. Topics discussed included a review of the initial meeting and reorganization process, potential budget preparation options, current fiscal year participation and roles, communication and updates with the full Committee, monthly School Committee agenda recommendations, potential requests and options for budget reporting, etc.
- The Business Manager attended the bi-monthly MASBO (Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials) Meeting on September 20th. In conjunction with attendees from the DOE’s Department of Finance, major topics included the new Grant Funding process and the GIC Insurance program.
- The first Budget Summit Meeting, consisting of the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Town Manager, Town Finance Director, Superintendent of Schools, and Business Manager, was held on September 19th. The School Department will present information on future capital and operational costs (new school facility, SPED costs, School Choice, Chapter 70 State Aid, etc.) for use in compilation of a multiple year financial forecast.

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Finance (continued)

- An internal feasibility assessment was initiated to investigate the use of contract services for custodial and food service operations. The Committee will be provided with a cost benefit analysis of this option upon completion. Target date for completion of first draft is November.\
- The Business Office is on schedule for the upcoming October 1st SIMS filing with the DOE. Required filing by November 1st, this critical submission is the foundation for the District’s Enrollment, Chapter 70 State Aid, School Choice, and Special Education data.
- The Business Manager is scheduled for several presentations with the NEASC Visitation Team during their visit September 30 – October 3, 2007.

Technology

- The School Committee meeting packets are now online. With the exception of Executive Session Meeting documents that will be delivered manually, all regular meeting documents will be provided via this online method. This process also allows the Committee access to additional information, including but not limited to, presentations from various Employee Memberships, DOE documents, standard reporting, archived documents, etc. Through various industry sources, to our knowledge, it is the first of it’s kind. Recommendations from the Committee to enhance this potential valuable tool are always welcome.
- Several technology meetings were held during September, including the interim District Technology Team, formulating steps necessary to reach targeted objectives outlined in the District Technology Plan.
- As outlined in the District’s Strategic Plan and the 3-Year District Technology Plan, the Fiber Optic WAN (Wide Area Network) is in the process of implementation and should be completed in October 2007. Benefits of this advanced infrastructure include immediate cost savings and operational efficiencies. Every attempt was made to include all Municipal Buildings unfortunately Municipal approval was never received. Since major funding for the project is derived from eRate funding with time constraints before losing such funding, further delays risked the entire project.
- A “PayPams” module was installed for the Food Service Department adding real-time payment transaction processing providing cost savings through operational efficiencies.

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Plant Operations

- After failing internal inspection, and therefore, resulting in non-compliance of the School Committee’s LTA (Life Threatening Allergy) Policy, we are in the process of replacing student lavatory faucets at Taft Elementary and Whittin Middle Schools. Estimated cost for replacement totals \$24,000. Although identified in the District’s 5 Year Maintenance & Facilities Plan, this project along with all other projects identified in the plan were referred to the Capital Committee. Funding is not available in the FY08 School Budget; however, a “Town/School Maintenance Account” funding agreement has been reached with the Town Manager.
- The security camera and keyless lock security systems have been completed and are now operational. All Uxbridge Public School District Employees have been issued security identification cards with applicable security access. School building doors are now locked during the day in accordance with the District’s Security Procedures. Non-employees and/or those without security clearance may only be granted access via the door buzzer systems by building offices during the school day.
- Upon completing the initial “lining” of all Athletic Fields through School Department funding (payment of overtime salaries to Department of Public Works Employees) after communication that the Parks Department did not have the FY08 budget monies to cut grass, line, and maintain the fields, we have contracted the lining services and reached agreement with the DPW to cut the fields for the remainder of the 2007-2008 school year. The total cost of contracting the field lining including paint materials is approximately \$1,000 more than current budget for paint only, a cost benefit to the Municipal Budget. Beyond FY08, funding must be secured for the mowing and maintenance of the athletic fields.

Food Service

- Food Service Director, Janice Watt will continue with Year 2 of the NEW LIFE Leadership hosted by Framingham State College. The most recent class in August focused on marketing your program to students, staff and parents.
- Blue Cross/ Blue Shield has awarded the Uxbridge Public School District \$3,000 this year in grant funding to continue the “Jump Up & Go” program.
- The Food Service Department has made many cuts this year to the program and currently analyzing costs in all areas of the food service operation and upon completion, will submit a full report to the Business Manager and Superintendent for review.
- The Uxbridge High School’s kitchen steamer, installed in the 1989 renovations, has a leak in the boiler and is not repairable (boiler is no longer made). Taft Elementary has the same unit with the same problem and anticipate it to fail this year (per our repair company). The approximate cost to replace these is \$10,000 for each unit. These steamers are the single most-used piece of equipment in our kitchens, and are necessary for volume cooking. With the Food Service Revolving Account depleted, we are seeking alternative funding sources for replacement of this critical operational equipment.

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Bus Transportation

- EPI Training Meeting was held on September 18th at the Uxbridge High School Library. All current bus drivers attended and were trained in the use of EPI Pens.
- Analysis of current Bus Routes along with total student passenger volumes is under review and upon completion will be provided to the Committee for consideration.
- With the closing of the Hartford Avenue Bridge to school bus traffic, and since a 72 passenger standard bus had not turnaround, Vendetti Bus Company added a small bus route to accommodate those students impacted by the closure. At this time, absorption of the additional cost into the existing transportation budget account is probable but will monitor for possible Spring Town Meeting transfer / funding action.