

RTM Education Committee Meeting Minutes  
May 6, 2024  
7:00 Community House

*Isa E. Arpin*  
BRANFORD TOWN CLERK

1. Call to Order - Rep. Keefe, Education Committee Chair called the meeting to order @ 7:04 pm.
2. Rep. Laich called Roll:
  - a. Representatives Present: Keefe, Laich, Maresca, Soomro, Loffredo
  - b. Representatives Absent: Brooks, Greenberg
3. Budget Presentation: 1st Selectman Cosgrove presented the Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library budget highlighting a brief explanation of the "personnel line item". There were no questions. Rep. Loffredo motioned to send the presented budget to the full RTM for approval, 2nd by Rep. Laich.
4. Katy McNicol (Director of the James Blackstone Memorial Library) presented the proposed budget for the Library. She emphasized the high demand for community spaces explaining that rental space requests may be boosted with some help from Woodwinds. There is an application for a construction grant to build a balcony. There were questions and discussions regarding rental opportunities and public use of the building. Rep. Loffredo motioned to forward the proposed budget to the full RTM for approval, 2nd by Rep. Maresca, and unanimously approved in a voice vote.
5. Dr. Christopher Tranberg (Superintendent) presented the Bd. of Ed. budget proposal. Peter Berdon (Bd. of Ed. Chair), Michael Lopes (Financial Acct.), and Blaize Levitan (Chief Operating Officer) were available for questions and to aid in the presentation, as needed. Board of Education members attending the meeting included Marie McNamara, Ellen Michaels, and Sean Tiernan.
  - a. P. Berdon presented the budget supplying a brief history of the process and highlighted a few new items. The final budget request (after the process was completed and tweaked by the Bd. of Finance) resulted in a 4% increase.
  - b. A lengthy discussion continued with questions, and comments, from committee members, RTM representatives, and residents. Dr. Tranberg provided thoughtful, detailed explanations to all of the questions presented to him. He emphasized that we have a new team working together to improve and bring new ideas to Branford's education system. He explained some of the changes, currently underway (i.e. in the Mental Health area with the ending of the ESSR grants). Much discussion continued regarding teacher salaries, special education needs, paraprofessional salaries, etc.
  - c. Resident G. Jerolman came forward to advocate for increasing the proposed budget to 5.67% rather than the current 4% increase. He provided his thoughts and the reasoning behind his suggested increase. Discussion continued with comments from RTM representatives present at the meeting.

- d. J. O'Connor (Principal of Tisko) provided thoughts and comments and spoke positively about the new leadership. Additional comments made by paraprofessionals present (O'Neil, Van Winkle) highlighted excitement around the new leadership team.
  - e. Rep. Keefe read a memo from Finance Director J. Finch regarding the budget. Rep. Laich motioned to forward the proposed budget to the full RTM, 2nd by Rep. Loffredo, and unanimously approved in a voice vote.
6. Budgets for Adult Learning and Early Childhood were presented. With no questions or comments, Rep. Loffredo motioned to forward the proposed budgets to the full RTM, 2nd by Rep. Laich. The motion was unanimously approved in a voice vote.
  7. Rep. Loffredo motioned for adjournment, 2nd by Rep. Maresca, unanimously approved.

D. Laich - Ed. Committee Clerk  
May 10, 2024