

MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD (MVSD)

Informational Meeting

MVU Library

February 25, 2020

7:00 PM

Present: Board members: Vice Chair, Don Collins, (Swanton), Steve Scott (Highgate), Devin Bachelder, (Franklin), Meaghan Conly, (Swanton) Eric Beauregard, (Franklin)

Others Present: Tim Magnant, Moderator, Julie Regimbal, Superintendent of Schools, Lora McAllister, Business Manager, Franklin, Northwest Access Cameraperson and Tamara J. Kelley, School Board Secretary Substitute along with many community members.

Meeting Start Time- Call to order 7:03pm

Power Point Presentation:

Presenters were very thorough and went through the lists of Missisquoi Valley School Directors, Franklin Central School Highlights, Highgate Elementary School Highlights, Swanton Elementary School Highlights, Missisquoi Valley Union MS/HS Highlights, MVSD Staff, PreK-12 Budget Overview. The expense budget is \$37,906,229 with anticipated revenues of \$9,161,226 with a per pupil spending of \$15,626. They went through Expense Budget Breakout, Expense Budget Breakout by Classification, FY21 Proposed Expenditure Budget Summary, Proposed Increases and Adjustments, Est. FY21 Homestead Equalized Property Tax, Comparisons, Est. Homestead Equalized Property Tax with CLA Adjustment, Est. Tax Rate Impact Homestead value of \$200,000, CLA's and Income Sensitivity, Article 1, Candidates for Elections, Article II, Proposed Budget Article III, Article IV and Polling Places and Times.

A summary of the budget breakout was as follows:

- ▶ Both union support and professional staff contracts are currently being negotiated
- ▶ Health insurance premium increase of 12.9% for all staff
- ▶ Facility Bond debt payments principal and interest for Highgate School
- ▶ Investments in building and grounds, repair and maintenance and capital improvements
- ▶ Increase to student transportation contracts, year 3 of 3
- ▶ Reduction of professional and support staff where possible and appropriate through attrition.
- ▶ Reductions in high school department budgets where possible

- ▶ Any areas of additional need were offset with other found reductions
- ▶ Expenses reorganized in merged MVSD Budget
- ▶ Expenses shifted to accommodate new statewide budget chart of accounts and business rules

Est. FY21 Homestead Equalized Property Tax

▶ FY21 Proposed Expense Budget	\$37,906,229
▶ Less estimated Revenues	-\$9,161,226
▶ Remaining is : "Education Spending"	\$28,745,003
▶ MVSD FY21 Estimated Equalized Pupil Count	\$ 1,839.61
▶ Education Spending per equalized pupil	\$15,626
▶ FY21 Estimated Equalized Homestead Tax Rate	\$1.436
FY20 Equalized Tax Rate	\$1.431

FY21 estimated tax rate is based on \$1.00 state tax rate, estimated \$10,883 property dollar equivalent yield and preliminary equalized pupil data. Legislature will act on the final yield later in the session and the equalized pupil data will be solidified, both impacting the final tax rate. The Common Level of Appraisal went down in Franklin to 96.89%, in Highgate to 102.89% and in Swanton to 100.76%.

Comparison to others

Spending Per Equalized Pupil:

- ▶ FY21 MVSD Proposed - \$15,626
- ▶ FY20 MVSD Actual - \$15,233
- ▶ State Average
 - ▶ FY19 - \$15,521
 - ▶ FY20 - \$16,235
 - ▶ FY21 Estimated - \$17,133

FY21 MVSD Proposed = \$1,507 LESS than the estimated FY21 state average!

Est. Homestead Equalized Property Tax With CLA Adjustment

- ▶ With an Estimated Tax Rate Impact
Homestead value of \$200,000 the annual estimated increase will be \$134 in Franklin, \$99 in Highgate and \$67 in Swanton.
- ▶ The decrease in CLA's in all of our belonging towns will negatively impact tax rates
- ▶ The schools district has no control over CLA's

- ▶ CLA is driven by property values state wide and within the community
- ▶ 70-80% of tax payers in Franklin county receive some level of income sensitivity on their tax bill therefore reducing their tax burden

*Candidates for Elections, Franklin is open for write in. Joanne Johnston has decided to run in Franklin.

*Absentee Ballots are available at your town clerk's office.

Public Questions and Comments

- Ty Choiniere: asked if with Act 6 & the state changing the Chart of Accounts, is the District close to what the state wants or are there more changes.
 - Lora McAllister answered that District is about halfway there realistically. The business rules came out later than expected.
- Brandi Maskell: asked what the line item under Principals Office "other" services that increased consisted of.
 - Lora McAllister explained that there was a lot of shifting, and the all communications was shifted to that line.
- Ty Choiniere: said that at regular meetings where the budget was discussed with working documents that Devin Bachelder asked for the number of positions to be listed. He would like to see the educators' salaries.
 - Don Collins asked if has looking for the number of people or the FTE.
- Ty would like to see how many people the dollar value represents, and that there is no reason not to include this.
- Connie Beyor: wanted to know what the tuition line on page 24, object code 1100, \$471,571 was for.
 - Julie Regimbal explained that this was for students not eligible for Special Ed and that had to be placed at other locations, for example Project SOAR.
 - Connie also asked about the tuition revenue for students MVU receives and educates
 - Lora explained it's close to 60 students that the District receives revenue from, but the estimates are based on 50 students to stay a little conservative with anticipated revenue.
 - Connie also wanted to say that she agrees with Ty and would like to know how many teachers etc. are in each category, the FTE making up the salary numbers.
- Jay Denault: Concerns were expressed with the first merged budget regarding the FTE. He would like to add his voice to Ty and Connie's. Jay doesn't think this version of the budget provides the correct information

and makes it hard for voters to know what they are actually voting on and if they are enough teachers to educate the kids.

- Jay would also like to add that under the Plant and Maintenance Lines, that it doesn't state which buildings or describe any projects that are being addressed at each of the schools. For example, Franklin has the same computerized HVAC system for over 30 years as well as the driveway needs addressing.
- He also states that this budget doesn't provide information to the voters regarding the reserve funds that were voted on and approved. Are the funds still available, or have they been committed to projects? He would like information regarding the status of these funds.
- Mr. Denault noted that there are currently 24 FTE's listed at the Central Office, how is it dispersed? This makes it very difficult to see what the cost is to run the Central Office.
- Jay also talked about a conversation he had with the legislation regarding Act 46.
- Don Collins asked if the public was looking for FTE numbers or the number of employees.
 - Connie Beyor stated that she thinks it's better to know the FTE.
 - Lora explained that factoring in part-time employees and insurance based on 30 hours that the FTE would be the most accurate number to get the best idea of how many positions make the salary numbers.
- Jim Messier: Wanted to say thank you to the school board for putting in AG program tuition, this is the first time it's been included and not just in "other". People assume it's the most expensive program to run, but it's actually the cheapest. Jim just wanted to say thank you for this.
 - Jay Denault thanked Jim Messier for all this time and effort with the program and for all the kids he has rescued through the AG program.
- Yvon Dandurand: Would like to know what is the health of the school and the students?. Where is the District at compared to the rest of the state. How are the students, and the faculty doing? What are the grade averages, the attendance, and is the District on par?
 - Julie Reginbal answered that the enrollment is stable, the equalized pupil rate didn't go down quite 4. As far as achievements, the District is doing well, making gains, growing and very solid. Focusing on making sure the teachers have the tools they need to teach the children.
- Yvon Dandurand also commented about the lack of people attending the meetings. He also expressed his feelings and concerns about where students are heading. He would like to know if anyone reaches out to them after graduation to see where they are at, how did the school system help them or what could be better to help students succeed. Did they go to trade

schools, colleges, universities, how much did MVU help, how could it help more?

- Brandi Maskell stated that as a teacher in Highgate, the school does anonymous student perception surveys three times a year to get a feel from the students where they are at.
- Jay Denault stated that although he is a critic, he ultimately just wants what's best for the students.
- Connie Beyor states that the kids have lots of opportunities now that they didn't used to and there are many programs available and lots of great opportunities.
- Ty Choiniere wants to know how the public is going to find out the results of the vote, the new board members etc. How will the public know if the budget passes and all the information.
 - Julie Regimbal said she will put the results on Facebook, the results will be on the website and she will email the town clerks with the results. She is happy for any other suggestions.

There was a small discussion about the Missisquoi Hall of Fame and new faces. There were new inductees in September and you can send an email to Lori Tougas with any nominations.

- Brandi Maskell wanted to know if the budget doesn't pass, will there be another informational meeting?
 - Julie explained that yes, there would be.
- Denis Boucher would like to say Thank you to the board for all the work over the last year and time with the merger.
- Louise Labombard asked when the meetings were held and where the information was posted.
 - Julie explained it's the first and third Tuesdays and that it's posted at the schools, the website and at the town clerks offices.
 - Louise suggested that it might be helpful to also post at the Swanton Village Complex!

The meeting adjourned at 8:13pm