

TOWN OF PRINCETON, MA
Princeton Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2024 – 6:30 p.m.

AC members in attendance: Peter Giumette, Michael Cote, Josh Tanenbaum, Forrest Finkler, Jennifer Greene

SB members in attendance: Karen Cruise, Phil Gott, Bob Cumming

The AC meeting commenced at 6:31 p.m. (via GoToMeeting)

Joint Selectboard & Advisory Committee meeting to hear the FY 25 Wachusett Regional School District Budget Presentation.

- Presenters:
 - Director of Business & Finance Michelle Grise
 - Superintendent Jim Reilly
- Meeting is recorded and will be posted to town website
- Have caught up with FY21 & FY22 audits. Completed FY23 year-end report & E&D. Working on FY23 Audit.
- Nearly \$4m shortfall in FY23, not properly budgeted for in FY24 since it was an unknown during FY24 budget development.
- Revolving Fund and Excess & Deficiency funds are nearly depleted so not available to alleviate increase in FY25
- Current E&D is at \$1.2m (1% of budget).
- State has put our district in “Hold Harmless” status for Chapter 70 funding – no increase from state
- Princeton assessment increases by 8.46% – state determined share.
 - \$6,101,079 Total Princeton share
 - \$476,456 increase from last year
- New transportation contract will have increases of 11.5%, 5.5% & 5.5% over 3 years
- Princeton has the largest growth in students across all the towns (16 new students). Rutland was the only other growth town with 13 new students.
- District putting \$75k back into Thomas Prince with improvements in food service equipment
 - Potentially up to \$115k with a few more items TBD
- Would it be possible to get a benchmark comparison using costs spent on different categories of employees rather than just a count of employees of different categories?
- District is working with the Central Mass Planning Commission on a 10 year forecast of population.
- There is a significant drop-out between 8th grade and high school. Some go to vocational schools or private schools. The district would like to understand how to keep students in the district during that transition.
- How are costs for sports budgeted? There are athletic fees in order to play. That covers most of the cost but FY24 does have an approximately \$100,000 shortfall which will be covered by E&D. The intent is that fees cover all costs. There is no specific budget item for athletics.
- What is the percentage of students at Thomas Prince from Princeton? – Will have to get that number, unknown at this time.
 - Jim: TP only has students from in-district. The district is not inviting out-of-district school choice.
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Next AC Meeting

The AC will meet next on Tuesday, April 2, 2024 6:00pm

Josh motioned to adjourn the meeting; Mike seconded: 5Y/0N/0A
The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Michael Cote (secretary)

Attachments: