**PETERSHAM CENTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**PETERSHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**

**PUBLIC HEARING ON FY15 BUDGET**

 **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16 7:00P.M.**

**LIBRARY, MEDIA CENTER**

**AGENDA**

1. **CALL TO ORDER- Chuck Berube, chair called the meeting to order at 7:06pm.

Members Present**: Chuck Berube, Russell Fontaine, and Lynn Peredina.

**Members Absent**: None.

**Others**: Superintendent Thomas, Principal Christopher Dodge, and Alyssa Roberts.
2. **HEARING FOR VISITORS**
3. **OLD BUSINESS**
4. **NEW BUSINESS**

**Presentation of Budget Information-** Tari explained the 3 handouts briefly. Tari stated that she wanted to point out some of the Key Metrics of Petersham Center school such as the enrollment of 110 students, the attendance of 95%, the average class size of 16, and that 100% of the teachers are highly qualified. Tari mentioned that one piece to look at is that there are 3 students per computer and they are looking to make this ratio even better in the next few years. Tari went on to explain that Petersham has some internal factors and external factors that affect the FY15 Budget. Tari stated that the internal factors are contracted increases, and health care cost increases. Tari explained that some of the external factors are local, state, and national economic issues, state and federal education revenue decreases, energy and utility costs, and no reduction only increases in mandates such as the common core, teacher evaluation, district determined measures, PARCC implementation,, 21st century skill integration, and new science, technology and engineering frameworks. Tari stated that the FY15 Budget Overviews represents an operating budget of $1,218,660 which represents a 0% increase over the 2013-2014 budget. Tari stated that the school choice budget is $361,000 which will be funding a variety of salaries. The Health Care Increases were budget at 8% above FY14. Also this supports contractual salary obligations of 2.75% for licensed staff and a 0% increase for non-unionized employees per the town’s request. Lastly Tari explained that this budget focuses on the “Big Rocks” which are personnel, professional development, assessment and technology integration.
Tari’s next slide discussed the School Choice Budget. Tari stated that the estimated revenue received in FY14 from the School Choice Program is $361,000 and the FY15 plan is to utilize $361,000 from School Choice to fund teachers’ salaries. Tari stated that the district will receive $5,000 for each Choice student and any student with Special Education Needs has additional dollars that follow them from the sending district.
Tari explained that they are being fiscally responsible by continuing to implement the reorganization of the central office which includes the hiring of the Direct of Finance and Operations, the increased role and authority of principals as instructional leaders, and the elimination of a year-round Director of Curriculum and Instruction PreK-12 to be replaced with a PreK-6, 194 day Curriculum Coordinator to be shared with Orange. Tari also stated that they are maintaining a level funded budget without losing any services or programming. Tari stated that they are looking to be cautious with School Choice account and FY14’s reserve is at $30,000 and ideally you want to see 5% of your budget which would be $60,933 to deal with unanticipated costs.
Tari went on to explain the pie chart on ‘Where does Petersham Center School Spend Its Money’ pie graph. Tari explained that you can see that 49% is all for instructional salaries and materials which is where schools should be spending about 50% of their operations. Tari explained that 6% of the budget is focused on transportation, and 12% on operations and maintenance. Tari stated that this is really healthy pie graph and this hits the averages that you would like to see in school finance.
Tari explained in the next slide you can see the revenue sources for the Petersham Center School from FY12-FY15. The purple is Chapter 70, the light blue is local contribution, and the green is school choice.
Tari explained that the next slide is School Choice History at a glance from 2005-2014 and the yellow represents school choice in and the blue represents school choice out.
Tari stated that to summarize the budget this is a re-organization of the central office admin to address fiscal and asset management as well as Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment and Learning. Also this shows an improved bandwidth for internet access and increased options for mobile devices. Tari opened up the budget and her presentation for any questions the committee or the public might have.
Bridgette Koetsch asked if there is any more information on students being homeschooled. Chris Dodge stated that we do have 3 students that are homeschooled and phone calls and letters have been sent to these families and they have heard no response. Tari explained that we are actually working on a new protocol to work with families that want to consider homeschooling their children. Tari stated that even though they are being homeschooled it is still our responsibility to make sure they are proficient. Chuck stated that it is troubling to think that there are people homeschooling their children and we have no adequate information if this is being done properly. Tari stated that we have to look into a lot of different things and first create a protocol and look at truancy as well and see how we can partner with local authorities if families are unresponsive. Chuck stated that he would love to have an update regarding this at the next meeting.
Ann Townsend asked about more information about pre-fall enrollment into the kindergarten. Chris Dodge stated that nothing has change and that this information is still consistent. Chris stated that this year they are going to put information in the newspaper for parents that have students coming into Kindergarten next year to come in and fill out registration during the month of May. Chris stated at th4e last look it looks like there are 9 students on the census entering kindergarten and out of those we know that 4 of them are definitely coming to Petersham Center School. Ann Townsend asked about school choice students. Chris stated that normally in June we know about the school choice number. Bridgette Koetsch asked how we can make it known to other people what we do here at Petersham. Chris thinks that those conversations are ongoing and the website is helpful. Chris stated that he will be sending home frequently asked questions which should help and we are working on a brochure for the school at large.
Nancy Allen asked regarding the budget you describe the 1.2million and not the 1.5million as the operating budget and shouldn’t this amount include the school choice. Tari explained that the 1.2million is the town appropriation budget and the 1.5million is including the school choice and because it is the school committee that has total purvey and control over the school choice budget. Nancy stated that she is just pointing out a phrasing that she thinks it does a disservice to the transparency. Nancy explained that we have always seen the operating budget at the bigger number. Tari stated that is good feedback and she can look into changing the summary and making it state the operating budget at 1.5million and breaking it down from there.
Ann Townsend thinks that one of the questions that would come up in town meeting would be what portion of the total budget is school choice, meaning if you took school choice out would the total operating budget still be 1.5million because this is an ongoing question. Chuck thanked Ann for this helpful information.

**1000 Admin. $20,269**

 **2000 Instruc. $594,206**

 **3000 Other Serv. $105,281**

 **4000 Maint. $160,845**

 **5000 FixedCharg $176,871**

 **7000 FixedAssets $1,003**

 **8000 Debt Service $1**

 **9000 Spec.Ed. $160,184**

 **Total $1,218,660**

Chuck stated that they have heard no requests to alter the proposed gross budget so they will move on to take the necessary votes.

***Russell Fontaine moved to approve the tentative proposed 2014-2015 Town Appropriation Budget of the Petersham Center School be set at 1,218,600. Lynn Peredina seconded. VOTED: Unanimous.

Russell Fontaine moved to approve the tentative proposed 2014-2015 School Choice Budget be set at $361,000to be used from School Choice Revenue. Lynn Peredina seconded. VOTED: Unanimous.***

1. **ADJOURNMENT- *Russell Fontaine moved to adjourn at 7:35pm. Lynn Peredina seconded. VOTED: Unanimous.***

 **The listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.**

Minutes Recorded by: Alyssa Roberts APPROVED: May 28, 2014