

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BUDGET WORK SESSION

VIA ZOOM
DATE: WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2021

PORTSMOUTH, NH
TIME: 6:30 PM

PRESENT: Mayor Becksted, Assistant Mayor Splaine, Councilors McEachern, Whelan, Lazenby, Kennedy, Huda, and Tabor participating from their respective homes.

ABSENT: Councilor Trace

PARTICIPATING STAFF:

Karen Conard, City Manager; Steve Zdravec, Supt. of Schools; George Shea, Asst. Supt. of Schools; Nathan Lunney, School Dept. Business Administrator; Robert Sullivan, City Attorney; Valerie French, Deputy City Clerk

Mayor Becksted called the Work Session to order at 6:31 p.m.

City Manager Conard introduced Supt. Zdravec, Asst. Supt. George Shea and Business Administrator Lunney who gave a brief slide presentation.

Discussion ensued regarding the effects of COVID-19 on the past school year and students and proposed options and opportunities for funding and programs to help students who may need extra help coming back. Discussion was held regarding the drop in projected enrollment and the proposed reduction in teaching staff at Little Harbor Elementary School.

Mayor Becksted stated he appreciates the education his children and himself have received in the Portsmouth School system and would like to see the Career Technical Education program expanded which matches students with community businesses for various training opportunities.

Public Comment:

Mayor Becksted opened the public comment session:

Andrew Bagley – stated he supports the school department budget and the Career Technical education program stating that we need trades people and feels collaborative programs like this are the future.

Kelly Cioe – stated she supports the school department budget and that our community benefits from spending money on education and producing productive members of the community.

Richard Bagley – stated it was helpful to hear the information provided but feels that instead of comparing budgets year to year, we should be working in actual numbers. He feels that if there is a surplus of money it should be spent where it is needed in the City, such as a new police station, and not kept in individual department budgets.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Mayor Becksted closed the public comment session.

Councilor McEachern moved to adjourn at 7:55 p.m., seconded by Councilor Huda. Motion passed on an 8-0 roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted by:
Valerie A. French. Deputy City Clerk