

# Budget Levy Committee

March 29, 2022 / 5:00 PM / MSD Boardroom

## Notes

- Kim Whitworth, acting Superintendent, gave an overview of the plan for the meeting
- Welcome, Agenda, norms, tools
  - Introduce/re-introduce yourself
  - Review 7 norms of collaboration
  - What did we do well in Meeting 2 and what do we need to pay attention to for meeting 3?
- Kim Whitworth made observation and reflection statement
  - What we knew we wanted to do was to provide an opportunity to get input from our community on what reductions are proposed to the school board to balance the budget for the 2022-2023 school year.
  - We wanted to provide an opportunity for everyone to learn together about the budgeting process for a public school district, including how the Monroe School District budgets its allocation from the levy, state, grants, and the federal government
  - The idea was to have the advisory committee and the DO staff generate a list of potential cuts and then rank them for cuts and for bringing them back if the levy passes in November
  - In an effort to be transparent, we wanted to include things the levy pays for and highlight them so people could see that connection; we also wanted to include the list the committee generated even if it was something we couldn't cut (we should have done a better job of explaining why); and we wanted to include reductions that we had already been considering before the levy didn't pass, like EvCC, Shoreline, and right sizing staffing.
  - We wanted to have the list have three sections:
    - What we could do in the processes we have in place to balance the budget
    - What decisions had already been made that would help with the reductions
    - And then a list of what the advisory committee could use to consider for their recommendations

- It obviously became more complicated than we had originally intended and the time we really needed to do this work was not available to us
- We are going to continue to be collaborative and transparent as we work towards building consensus
- We are also going to be considering a more robust budgeting process that begins in September, includes stakeholders, and provides the time needed for collaboration and transparency as an ongoing practice
- Brenda Hunt made observation and reflection statement
  - How can we be more creative and build budget with what we have instead of making cuts
- Moving forward - 3 possibilities
  - Make all the cuts we need this year to balance the budget - no use of fund balance and ESSER Dollars
  - Make half the cuts and budget o use appx \$7M of fund balance
  - Make fewer cuts and use ESSER and fund balance to present a balanced budget
  - The use of fund balance and ESSER dollars will not eliminate the need to make reductions this year.
  - Decision was made to recommend cutting half the deficit and using the fund balance to make up the rest of the needed cuts to balance the budget. \$7M required to cut.
    - Committee wanted to know who “We” was that made this decision
    - “We” was the Executive Cabinet and subsets of executive cabinet
    - Timeframe for budget decision - July 10th
    - Need feedback from committee
    - Proposal of 2nd option will minimize the impact to students and building budgets next year
- Question was asked about the ramifications of of the Levy not passing in November
  - If levy does not pass we will be back in the same position as right now but no fund balance available.
- Unanswered questions and details from last meeting
  - The committee was concerned that with the plan moving forward there is agreement from the committee
  - Committee is worried they will take the fall for decisions without complete committee agreement

- Committee is concerned they will be the fall guys for painful cuts - community blaming them for what cuts are made
- Committee is worried that the lists of cuts keeps getting moved forward without them agreeing the them
- The train is barreling down the track without the committee being on board
- Advisory committee needs to give feedback to advice cuts to present to the board
- The committee will not be blamed for making decisions
- The committee does not want “We” posted to the website and “We” needs to be more clear
- Kim stated that they need to be more transparent.
- If committee members don’t want document on website then it will not go on website
- Kim doesn’t want anyone to feel they are being thrown under the bus
- What does Fund Balance mean for the district?
  - Has different categories
  - Money we have received for things this year
  - Inventory - food products that weren’t used this year
  - Care over - for program and building budgets
  - Unreserved - monies left after all categories have been populated
- If using the Fund Balance is approved how will that affect future Levies?
  - It will affect the bond rating and bond sales.
- List of Recommendations (see attachment) Questions/discussions
  - Is para support for IEP is in Gen Ed classroom - Sped pays for this para
  - What do class sizes look like pre Covid?
    - Less students per teacher ratio that we are being funded for
    - Unaware of class sizes at 37 students
    - District is not intentionally overloading large classrooms
  - The district could cut to CBA but they are not
  - Overload vs. Hiring new teacher
    - Projections in spring and then again in fall after registrations
    - Once enrollment is done - district will review class sizes and balance them
    - District tries to keep class sizes per CBA but sometimes it doesn’t happen - then you have overload

- EVCC and Shoreline have been informed about eliminating the Youth Re Engagement programs
- Move 3 TOSA gen ed funding to grants
- If Levy passed or does pass - district would still have right sized the teachers and classified staff
- 5 furlough days - these are 5 unpaid days - not sick days
- Why were alot of the digital learning was not on the list
  - L&T reviewed and removed items that were needed by policy
- Talking Points - why on list?
  - This is tool to let staff text message with families and translate those messages
  - It is a great tool but very expensive (\$1.52 per message) and the translations is not always good and only goes to 1 phone
  - Looking into other options
  - No immediate solution
  - Might be able to move the categorical funding but it would be very restrictive
- How many teachers is \$2.7M
  - Appx 16 teachers
  - 55 hours per day - classified staff
  - Typical para is 6.0 hours per day/ 180 days per year plus 11 holidays
- If Levy does not pass - no fund balance will be available
- 6:15 - break for table conversations
- Table Conversations
  - Table 1
    - Increase from 3% department cuts to 7%
    - Keep furlough days
    - Pause Solution Tree
    - No new lease vehicles
    - Keep all items
    - If starting cuts at the DO the community would be more willing to pass levy
  - Table 2
    - How do we show cuts at the TOP?

- What value does a 8 period day bring to students
  - How do we deal with the public's perceived image of the expense of the Monroe Administration office building
- Table 3
  - No matter what cuts happen - we will lose staff/people
  - Need more support for the levy
  - Transparency has been good
  - No changes to the list - don't see how making changes will improve
- Table 4
  - If Talking Points is taken away it would decrease diversity, equity and inclusion
  - Increase % for department and building budgets from 3%
  - Ask for furlough volunteers beyond administration
- Table 5
  - Equity needs to be important and minimize student impact
  - Don't like 3% building budget cuts - it would affect students too much
  - Don't cut Talking Points
  - Agree with Table 1 - it would minimize impacts on students
- Table 6
  - Agree with other points - show community that cuts are away from kids
  - This is a short term fix if Levy doesn't pass
  - Next steps would be to make cuts like athletics
  - Increase % cuts to departments - but not all departments should be the same
  - Move eliminated people to open positions
- Question was asked about how going to 6 period day would affect students
  - Students like ELL and Sped students have more options for electives with an 8 period day. Equity!
- Brenda Hunt is planning on creating a budget advisory committee to go year round. They would report to the board and it would be an ongoing committee. Members will change over time. Unknown when it will be starting

## Attachments

- List of Recommendations Reductions - Meeting #3
- Item for possible reductions ranking order

## Action Items

- Next meeting will be Wednesday, Apr 13, 2022
  - Will continue to work to identify a list for the budgeting process
  - Committee will review and comment on final recommendations to the school board which will include feedback from meeting 3 and the District Office team
  - Presentation to the School Board Apr 18, 2022