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FISCAL MANAGEMENT GOALS

The quantity and quality of learning programs are directly dependent on the effective, efficient management of allocated funds. It follows that achievement of the school system's purposes can best be achieved through excellent fiscal management.

As trustee of local, state, and federal funds allocated for use in public education, the Committee will fulfill its responsibility to see that these funds are used wisely for achievement of the purposes to which they are allocated.

Because of resource limitations, there is sometimes a temptation to operate so that fiscal concerns overshadow the educational program. Recognizing this, it is essential that the school system take specific action to make sure education remains central and that fiscal matters are ancillary and contribute to the educational program. This concept will be incorporated into Committee operations and into all aspects of school system management and operation.

In the school system's fiscal management, it is the Committee's intent:

1. To engage in thorough advance planning, with staff and community involvement, in order to develop budgets and to guide expenditures so as to achieve the greatest educational returns and the greatest contributions to the educational program in relation to dollars expended.
2. To establish levels of funding that will provide high quality education for the students.
3. To use the best available techniques for budget development and management.
4. To provide timely and appropriate information to all staff with fiscal management responsibilities.
5. To establish maximum efficiency procedures for accounting, reporting, business, purchasing and delivery, payroll, payment of vendors and contractors, and all other areas of fiscal management.

ANNUAL BUDGET

The annual budget is the financial expression of the educational program of the school department, and it mirrors the problems and difficulties that confront the school system.

The budget then is more than just a financial instrument and requires on the part of the Committee, the staff, and the community orderly and cooperative effort to ensure sound fiscal practices for achieving the educational goals and objectives of the school system.

Public school budgeting is regulated and controlled by legislation, state regulations, and local School Committee requirements. The operating budget for the school system will be prepared and presented in line with state policy and will be developed and refined in accordance with these same requirements.

The Superintendent will serve as budget officer but he/she may delegate portions of this responsibility to members of his/her staff as he/she deems appropriate. The three general areas of responsibility for the Superintendent as budget officer will be budget preparation, budget presentation, and budget administration.

The Superintendent will provide such enrollment projections and other key information to enable the School Committee to make comparisons with past budgets, estimate future budgets and establish priorities.

The budget will contain an estimate of the revenue anticipated (by source) for the budget period and a computation of the appropriation required to fund the budget.

BUDGET DEADLINES AND SCHEDULES

Preparation of the annual budget will be scheduled in stages throughout the school year with attention to certain deadlines established by law and charter.

By October first of each year the Superintendent will submit to the School Committee for approval a calendar of events for developing a budget for the next fiscal year. The calendar will include, but not be limited to, the following events:

1. **Budget overview** - A general review by the Superintendent of the proposed budget emphasizing gross costs, programs to be added or deleted, and an estimate of total expenditures.
2. **Tentative budget** - The School Committee will adopt a tentative annual budget in sufficient time to allow for presentation of the budget in local news media and in sufficient time to allow the preparation of handout information for the school budget hearing. The tentative budget will contain all anticipated costs and will itemize all anticipated revenue so that the information presented at the school budget hearing will be as complete as possible.
3. **Tentative date for Public Hearing** - In reaching its decision on the budget amount that it will submit to the Town Manager, the School Committee will hold a public hearing on the proposed budget not less than seven days after the notice for this hearing has been published in a local newspaper. The public hearing will be at least thirty days before the scheduled Annual Town Meeting at which time the operating budget will be voted upon.
4. **Budget to Be Considered at Annual Town Meeting** - The School District operating budget that is forwarded to the Town Manager for inclusion in the Annual Town Meeting operating budget warrant article as certified by the School Committee prior to its transmission to the Town Manager.
5. **Final Budget** - The final budget to be adopted by the School Committee by formal vote in an open meeting.

The calendar year for budget preparation will be determined by calculating backwards from the final adoption date: the Annual Town Meeting. Close coordination with the Town Manager is essential.

BUDGET TRANSFER AUTHORITY

No transfer of funds from one cost center to another may be made except by vote of the School Committee.

Budget cost centers are identified and approved in the School Committees vote of the School systems annual budget.

- a. Re-allocations within any one account within the budget cost center may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent, but only for purposes included in the original budget.
- b. The decision not to expend funds for a budget item may be made by the Superintendent.
- c. Funds that exceed \$5,000 may be withheld from a budgeted item to be spent on something not in the budget only by vote of the School Committee.

FUNDING PROPOSALS AND APPLICATIONS

The School Committee encourages the administration to seek and secure all possible sources of state, federal, and other special funds that will enhance educational opportunities for Cohasset students.

The Superintendent will keep the School Committee informed of all possible funds available to the school system under the various state and federal programs, and in what manner these funds can best be used in the school system.

The Superintendent will be responsible for seeking out and coordinating the development of proposals for all specially funded projects and for submitting the proposals to the Committee for approval.

The Superintendent is authorized to sign all reports for these projects and will be responsible for the proper expenditure of funds received for such projects.

CROSS REF.: KCD, Public Gifts to the Schools

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

The chairperson of the School Committee and the Superintendent will sign payrolls presented for approval.

The town treasurer, who also serves as the school department treasurer, signs all checks drawn against school department funds. No other signature is valid.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 41:52

BONDED EMPLOYEES AND OFFICERS

Each employee of the school system who is assigned the responsibility of receiving and dispensing school funds will be bonded individually or covered by a blanket bond. The cost of the bond will be paid by the town.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 40:5

FISCAL ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING

The Superintendent will be ultimately responsible for receiving and properly accounting for all funds of the school system.

The accounting system used will conform with state requirements and with good accounting practices, providing for the appropriate separation of accounts, funds, and special monies.

The School Committee will receive monthly financial statements from the Superintendent showing the financial condition of the school department. Such other financial statements as may be determined necessary by either the Committee or the administration will be presented as found desirable.

LEGAL REF.: Board of Education 603 CMR 10:00

AUDITS

An audit of the school department's accounts should be conducted annually. In addition, the School Committee may request special audits of the school system's accounts at their discretion.

The Committee will consider recommendations made by the auditor for maintaining an efficient system for recording and safeguarding the school department's assets.

PURCHASING

The School Committee declares its intention to purchase competitively without prejudice and to seek maximum educational value for every dollar expended.

The acquisition of materials, equipment and services will be centralized in the Superintendent's office of the school system.

The Superintendent will serve as purchasing agent. He/she will develop and administer the purchasing program for the schools in keeping with legal requirements and with the adopted school budget.

School purchases will be made only on official purchase orders approved for issuance by the appropriate unit head and signed by the Superintendent, with such exceptions as may be made by the latter for emergency purchases.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 7:22A; 7:22B; 30B; 71:49A

PURCHASING AUTHORITY

Authority for the purchase of materials, equipment, supplies, and services is extended to the Superintendent through the detailed listing of such items compiled as part of the budget-making process.

The purchase of items and services on such lists requires no further Committee approval except when by law or Committee policy the purchases or services must be put to bid.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 30B

CROSS REF.: DJE, Bidding Requirements

BIDDING REQUIREMENTS

All purchases of materials and equipment and all contracts for construction or maintenance in amounts exceeding \$25,000 will be based upon competitive bidding.

An effort will be made to procure multiple bids for all purchases in excess of \$25,000. When recommending acceptance of a bid, the Superintendent will inform the School Committee whenever possible of the competitive price a reasonable substitute for the item specified.

When bidding procedures are used, bids will be advertised appropriately. Suppliers will be invited to have their names placed on mailing lists to receive invitations to bid. When specifications are prepared, they will be mailed to all merchants and firms who have indicated an interest in bidding.

All bids will be submitted in sealed envelopes, addressed to the Superintendent and plainly marked with the name of the bid and the time of the bid opening. Bids will be opened in public at the time specified, and all bidders will be invited to be present.

The Committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to accept the bid that appears to be in the best interest of the school system. The Committee reserves the right to waive any informalities in, or reject, any or all bids or any part of any bid. Any bid may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for the opening of the bids. Any bid received after the time and date specified will not be considered. All bids will remain firm for a period of 30 days after opening.

The bidder to whom an award is made may be required to enter into a written contract with the school system.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 7:22A, 7:22B, 30B

VENDOR RELATIONS

Representatives of firms doing or hoping to do business with the school system will be acknowledged and interviews granted or not, depending on the circumstances. Personnel charged with the purchasing function will not be required to put their time at the indiscriminate use of sales personnel, who will limit their visits to staff members designated by school officials.

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

All claims for payment from school department funds will be processed in accordance with regulations developed by the Superintendent. Payment will be authorized against invoices properly supported by approved purchase orders, with properly submitted vouchers, or in accordance with salaries and salary schedules approved by the School Committee.

As an operating procedure, the Committee will receive monthly lists of bills for payment from the school department funds. The lists will be certified as correct and approved for payment by the School Committee and then forwarded to the Town's Treasurer for processing and payment. Actual invoices, statements, and vouchers will be available for inspection by the School Committee.

The Superintendent will be responsible for assuring that budget allocations are observed and that total expenditures do not exceed the amount allocated in the budget for all items, following the Budget Transfer policy (DBJ).

The school building administrators will be responsible for observing budget allocations in their respective schools.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 41:41; 41:52; 41:56

CROSS REF.: DBJ, Budget Transfer Authority

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS

Personnel and school department officials who incur expenses in carrying out their authorized duties will be reimbursed by the school department upon submission of a properly completed and approved voucher and any supporting receipts for all expenses.

When official travel by personally-owned vehicle is authorized, mileage payment will generally be made at the rate currently approved by the Internal Revenue Service.

To the extent budgeted for such purposes in the school budget, approval of travel requests will be as follows:

1. Travel by School Committee members must have prior approval by the School Committee.
2. Any travel request with estimated expenditures of more than \$2,000 must be approved in advance by the Committee. Travel requests for less than \$2,000 may be approved by the Superintendent.
3. Each individual request will be judged on the bases of its benefit to the school system.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 44:58

DISPOSAL OF EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

The Cohasset Public Schools authorize the disposal of obsolete equipment in accordance with Section 15 of Chapter 30B of the General Laws of Massachusetts.

Obsolete equipment is that which is:

1. Beyond repair or too costly to repair;
2. Replaced by new equipment because the old equipment no longer serves our educational needs;
3. No longer usable or outdated for the curriculum and instruction standards or content needs

Procedure to be followed for discard:

1. All equipment must be declared obsolete by the building Principal and the Business Manager;
2. A list of the equipment, with a description of the condition or reason for declaring it obsolete, will be forwarded to the School Committee;
3. Upon approval by the School Committee, said equipment will be transferred to the control of the appropriate personnel or department for reissuing to the town or community or other school for repurposing or disposal as approved by the Committee.

A form with a description of the obsolete materials/equipment; a model number or serial number and date of acquisition (if applicable); and a description of condition/reason for declaring equipment obsolete shall be filled out and signed and dated by the relevant building Principal and the district Business Manager.

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