



TO: Framingham Charter Commission

FROM: Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management

DATE: August 12, 2016

RE: School Committee Budget Provisions

Most charters do not contain extensive direction to the school committee as to the preparation of its budget. If the Framingham Charter Commission wants to give the school committee and Mayor more direction through the charter, the following may be helpful:

Weymouth:

SECTION 6-2: SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET

- (a) Public Hearing - At least twenty-one days before the meeting at which the school committee is scheduled to vote on its final budget request, the school committee shall cause to be published in a local newspaper a general summary of its proposed budget. The summary shall specifically indicate any major variations from the current budget and the reasons for such changes. It shall further indicate the times and places at which complete copies of its draft proposed budget are available for examination by the public, and the date, time and place, not less than seven nor more than fourteen days following such publication, when a public hearing will be held by the school committee on the proposed budget. The school committee shall not take its final vote on its proposed budget until all persons who desire to be heard concerning the budget proposal have had a reasonable opportunity to be heard.

This provision should probably be rewritten for clarity (the first direction is to publish something in the newspaper, not to direct a public hearing to happen). The last sentence may be considered problematic – who decides what is reasonable? At least it directs the committee to identify “major variations” and the reasons for them. This is one of few charters providing some sort of “direction” to the committee re: budget preparation.

Additionally, these provisions might bring more clarity to the current draft --

From Northampton, Everett, Pittsfield, and others:

At least 60 days before the beginning of the fiscal year, the mayor shall call a joint meeting of the city council and school committee, including the superintendent of schools, to review the financial condition of the city, revenue and expenditure forecasts and other relevant information prepared by the mayor in order to develop a coordinated budget.

Everett:

The school budget, as adopted by the school committee shall be submitted to the mayor at least 30 days before the submission of the proposed operating budget to the city council. The mayor shall notify the school committee of the date by which the proposed budget of the school committee shall be submitted to the mayor. The mayor and the superintendent of schools shall coordinate the dates and times of the school committee's budget process under the General Laws.