

Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting

DATE: December 15, 2022

Official Minutes 12/22/2022

**Call to Order**

**Members Present:** Michelle King, Chair; Owen Friend-Gray; Michael Kelly; Jeffrey Morrison; John Decker, Vice Chair; John Morin, Select Board Representative; Karyl Martin, School Board Representative; Robert Kelly; Tom Butkiewicz; Sandra Jones.

**Members Absent:** None.

**Others Present:** Sue Levenson, School Board; Timothy Koumrian, Superintendent; Chris Sousa, Nottingham School Principal.

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

**Approval of Minutes**

*Mr. Butkiewicz made the motion to approve the minutes from the November 10, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leveille. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0-0.*

*Mr. Butkiewicz made the motion to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2022 meeting. The motion was then withdrawn due to a lack of review by some Committee members.*

*Mr. Friend-Gray made the motion to approve the minutes from the December 1, 2022 meeting with the caveat of two corrections in Committee attendance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Butkiewicz. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-1.*

**School Budget Draft and Default Budget updates**

Sue Levenson and Timothy Koumrian came forward on behalf of the school and the school's budget. Mr. Koumrian made the following points:

- Fixed cost pieces
  - Salary and benefits
    - Teacher contract negotiations for the next three years are taking place at this time. The steps are included in the proposed budget.
    - Paraprofessionals are going into their second year of their contract. The steps are included in the proposed budget.
    - Guaranteed maximum rates from HealthTrust have been received. The rates are relatively flat compared to previous years.
  - 1100: Regular education
    - An increase in paraprofessional salaries (based on the steps of the Collective Bargaining Agreement).
    - An increase in the cost of hiring substitutes (based on actuals).

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- An increase in teacher health insurance (reflective of changes in plan elections of specific individuals).
- An increase in tuition rates for both Dover High School and Coe-Brown Northwood Academy.
- A decrease in the cost of hiring a permanent substitute due to the position being eliminated.
- A decrease in the cost of teacher retirement due to fewer teachers retiring.
- 1200: Special Education
  - An increase in teacher salaries and teacher health insurance due to the cost of an added preschool teacher.
  - An increase in special education paraprofessionals and special education secretary salaries.
  - Increases in out-of-district tuition.
  - A decrease in the amount that is paid for paraprofessional support at the high school level.
- 2100: Guidance, Nursing, Contracted Specialists, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy
  - An increase in the area of English as a second language due to an increased need.
  - An increase in highly specialized behavior analysis support due to an increased need.
- 2300: School Board and Office of the Superintendent
  - The Office of the Superintendent total is based on proposed increases to the SAU lines and a recalculating of particular elements.
  - The default amount for the SAU was reduced based on conversations that the School Board had. The total is about \$3,000 instead of \$17,000.
- 2400: Office of the Principal
  - Overall, no significant increases.
  - Decrease due to staffing shifts and the elimination of a secretarial position.
- 2600: Facilities and Maintenance
  - An increase in the cost of electricity.
  - The SAU is in the process of accepting bids for new fixed propane rates for next winter.
- 2700: Transportation
  - The SAU has a multi-year contract with Dail Transportation.
  - An increase in the cost of transportation for the Elementary School due to the size of the route.
  - An increase in the cost of special education transportation that corresponds with the increase in the out-of-district tuition.

Ms. King asked Committee members to review each page of the proposed School Budget and raise any questions they have.

Mr. Leveille asked if the increase in substitute teacher salaries was due to an increase in the per-day pay that substitutes receive. Mr. Koumrian replied that the school was forced to increase the daily substitute rate from \$75 to \$100 due to the competitiveness of surrounding schools.

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Mr. Friend-Gray asked if the health insurance buyout is fixed by the Collective Bargaining Agreement or if it is a negotiable item. Mr. Koumrian replied that it is part of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Mr. Leveille asked how much the buyout is. Mr. Koumrian replied that it is currently \$2000 per teacher and \$1000 for paraprofessionals.

Mr. Friend-Gray noted that the cost of the Pinkerton tuition, Dover tuition, and Coe-Brown tuition vary greatly. He asked if the Town has to pay those in full or if they are negotiable. Ms. Levenson advised that the Town has contracts with both Dover and Coe-Brown, and that the Pinkerton tuition (whom the Town does not have a contract with) was for just one student.

Mr. Koumrian advised that the School Board is in the process of reviewing what areas of the curriculum need improvement now that the school is moving past Covid and online learning. They plan to use money from the Capital Reserve Fund to purchase new textbooks for Science and Language Arts. Ms. Martin advised that the current Science curriculum is coming up on its expiration date and therefore a new curriculum will need to be purchased.

Mr. Butkiewicz asked how many guidance counselors are covered under the guidance salaries. Mr. Koumrian replied that there are two guidance counselors.

Mr. Butkiewicz asked about the Contracted Services Behavioral Tech line and whether or not it is a new item. Mr. Koumrian replied that it is not a new item and that it has historically been paid out of grant funds. The Board is looking to balance the cost of the Tech with some money from grants and some money from the budget, because grant funds generally do not stay flat.

Mr. Butkiewicz asked if the slight increase in the Speech teacher line was just due to an increase in salary. Mr. Koumrian replied that it is.

Mr. [Robert] Kelly asked about the Curriculum Director health insurance line and how many people it covers. Mr. Koumrian replied that it covers one person.

Mr. Leveille asked about the budget and the current spending on technological equipment. Ms. Martin advised that it is largely students' and classroom computers. She explained that the School is able to use some covid funding on technology, but that this will not last forever, so the Board is looking to have money set aside to repair or replace the equipment as the need arises.

Mr. Butkiewicz asked for clarification about the printing line item. Mr. Koumrian stated that he would look into it.

Mr. Leveille noted that the audit costs have risen. Mr. Koumrian confirmed this to be true and stated that the School had been previously underpaying for auditing services.

Mr. Butkiewicz asked what the School gets for membership to the NHSBA. Mr. Koumrian advised that the School gets access to their policy index as well as professional development opportunities, amongst other things. Ms. Martin advised that the membership is very cost

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effective, as a Board would pay a lot more in legal fees should they need to consult an attorney on their own.

Ms. King inquired about the Superintendent salary line and the description that coincides. Mr. Koumrian reported that the description could be changed to indicate that it is for a consultant fee.

Mr. Butkiewicz inquired as to why the School has budgeted nearly \$12,000 for Zoom software and licensing when they are no longer doing any remote learning. Mr. Sousa reported that they would look into cutting it down.

Mr. [Michael] Kelly asked how many custodial staff the School has. Mr. Koumrian replied that they have three, plus the Facilities Director.

Mr. Leveille asked if the Committee is expecting a 4% budget cap from the School Board. Ms. King noted that the Committee had previously discussed the 4% cap being for the Town budget and not the School budget.

**Committee Updates**

Mr. Morin advised that the Town budget increase has been shortened from 7% to 5.1%. The Select Board figures that they will need to cut another \$64,000 in order to meet the 4% tax cap. He advised that the Board will be asking the Committee for recommendations as to what else should be cut.

Ms. King advised that she and Ms. Jones met with the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) prior to this meeting. She advised that they discussed multiple renovations that are needed to the Town Office building in the near future.

Mr. Morin advised that the Board is currently in the process of interviewing candidates for the Town Administrator position.

**Adjourn**

***Mr. Decker made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leveille. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 11-0-0.***

The meeting was adjourned at 10:02 PM.

*Transcribed per video*

Respectfully submitted,  
Rachel Dallaire