

Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting

12-17-20

Official Minutes as of 1/7/21

1 Call to Order

2 Members Present: Tim Dabrieo (Chair), John Decker (Vice Chair), Tom Leveille, Michael
3 Koester, Michelle King, Sandra Jones, Tom Butkiewicz, James Stevens, John Morin (Select
4 Board rep), Karyl Martin (School Board rep)

5 Absent: Shawn Green (excused absence)

6 Others: Lorraine Petrini, Nate Byrne, Chris Sousa

7 Chair opened the meeting at 6:30pm.

8 Presentation of School Budget and Financials

9 Teacher salaries have been reduced due to 2 retirements. Family medical plan will be budgeted
10 for the two replacements.

11 The step increases are guaranteed for the teachers. Dr. Butkiewicz asked if they are not able to
12 get out of the union-mandated raises, can they fire people and hire at lower steps or encourage
13 people to retire. Mr. Sousa said they could put in a retirement incentive in the future but not into
14 this budget since it would increase the budget further. There are more students in 8th grade going
15 into high school than seniors graduating next year. The 6th-8th grade in Nottingham School have
16 higher enrollment numbers than previous grades. Mr. Byrne said there are mandated costs for
17 tuition, NH retirement, etc. that are higher than in previous years.

18 Mr. Byrne went over the meeting that was held with actuaries the other night to speak about
19 teacher retirement and why it is going up. He said there are increased number of teachers who
20 are retiring across the state and a decrease in number of teachers who are going into the
21 profession. Therefore, there are less current teachers to pay the retired teachers' salaries. Also the
22 mortality rate has changed and people are living longer. Ms. Martin said that there was poor
23 investment planning by the Retirement System in the 80's/90's. Mr. Dabrieo asked if we will get
24 these large changes every year. Mr. Byrne said they are hoping to catch up but it won't be
25 instantaneous and there will continue to be increases.

26 Musical shelves were removed from the budget for this year. Mr. Koester asked about the
27 enrollment report and if there were 75 8th graders. Ms. Martin said there were 63 seniors. Mr.
28 Koester asked if there were some kids who transferred. Mr. Sousa said they try to account for
29 where every student will attend high school, even the homeschooled students.

30 Mr. Byrne said almost \$700K in the Line 1100's are contracted. They reduced as many of the
31 supply lines in here as possible. Ms. Martin said that is why the proposed budget is lower than
32 the default budget. Mr. Byrne said Line 1200's have many contracted obligations. Tuition rate
33 for CBNA for reg. ed. is 3.99%. Special ed. for CBNA is 4.53%. Paraprofessional need has also
34 increased. Mr. Stevens asked if the percentage increases included paras. Mr. Byrne said they are
35 included elsewhere in Line 89.

Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting

12-17-20

Official Minutes as of 1/7/21

36 Mr. Decker asked how many special ed. teachers in Line 56. Mr. Byrne said there are 5. Mr.
37 Decker asked about the decrease in Line 62. Mr. Byrne said they can use a grant for a preschool
38 aid if needed.

39 Dr. Butkiewicz asked about special ed. students at the preschool. Mr. Byrne said that there are
40 other students who attend who pay to go to the preschool. There are 3 more students that are on
41 track to enter the preschool; as soon as they turn three, they enter the preschool.

42 Mr. Sousa said that retirement costs are going up 20% which is required by the state for the town
43 to pay. Mr. Byrne explained the teachers pay in 7% and that is a statutory level.

44 Mr. Sousa said that skiing is offered through a club-based system. The parents pay for that. Dr.
45 Butkiewicz asked why all athletics are not club based. Mr. Sousa said the athletics are inter-
46 scholastic and not club based. Ms. Martin said the ski program is not competitive. Mr. Sousa said
47 some clubs such as Wider Horizons, ski club and other clubs like archery, etc. are paid for
48 through co-curricular fees. Wider Horizons programs are paid for through user fees, fundraised
49 or the PTA has chipped in. Dr. Butkiewicz asked about moving all athletics to fundraised. Mr.
50 Sousa said it's a good conversation to have but it's not that way in the budget now. Mr. Dabrieo
51 said the club sports and interscholastic sports are different; interscholastic sports are not as
52 competitive and tend to be more inclusive regardless of skill level. Dr. Butkiewicz said it's \$40k
53 that could be cut. Dr. Butkiewicz had questions about the \$1k for a video gaming club. Mr.
54 Sousa said it is educational and they support educational clubs and activities. Mr. Dabrieo said
55 that inter-scholastic sports/activities are not competitive and there are club teams as well. Mr.
56 Byrne said this allows students who don't have economic advantages to be in the sports. Mr.
57 Dabrieo said the gaming club has students learning programming. Dr. Butkiewicz said they are
58 required to provide an adequate education and that doesn't have to include athletics, and that the
59 taxpayers shouldn't be responsible for buying video games and Legos. Mr. Dabrieo said that this
60 is something that Dr. Butkiewicz may feel differently than others. Mr. Sousa encouraged Dr.
61 Butkiewicz to come to the school board meetings as well.

62 Mr. Sousa said that Line 141 is for guest speakers to speak to students and parents. Dr.
63 Butkiewicz suggested reducing that line by \$5k. Mr. Stevens said perhaps they can reduce this
64 line by some. Mr. Byrne said he expects that they may need additional funds for social emotional
65 needs due to the pandemic. He will bring it back to the school board to consider reducing.

66 Mr. Sousa said the new nurse is outstanding. Staff is trained every two years with epi-pens and
67 they need to have two epi-pens at the school.

68 Contracted services consists of doing outside evaluations at the request of parents. The school
69 works hard with parents to explain issues so that outside evaluations are not needed as the
70 evaluations are very expensive. Mr. Byrne said they will use that line on the school's behalf as
71 well if they don't have a particular person in the school to do an evaluation.

Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting

12-17-20

Official Minutes as of 1/7/21

72 There is a \$2k increase to curriculum/resource dev/rev stipend. Mr. Sousa believes this will be
73 needed and moved those funds from the staff development stipend. Dr. Butkiewicz asked if this
74 is extra salary and is looking at the provided list of what each teacher receives in salary. Mr.
75 Sousa said it was extra salary. Mr. Byrne said that this line is not included in the salary list as
76 they don't know who will get that money. Mr. Sousa said these are stipends for staff to go above
77 and beyond; they do have high expectations for their teachers for their positions. Dr. Butkiewicz
78 is suggesting cutting these stipends. Mr. Morin asked if this is the same as teaching summer
79 school. Mr. Byrne said yes and using these funds has allowed our school to be in the top 25 and
80 top 5 distinctions.

81 Mr. Sousa detailed the grants that they received this year including COVID grants.

82 Dr. Butkiewicz asked if the curriculum director position was required. Mr. Sousa said this is an
83 administration position. Dr. Butkiewicz asked if this is a position that could be cut. Mr. Sousa
84 said it is possible to cut, but that this position has allowed the school to become a school of
85 distinction. Seven years ago, the school was in need of improvement and Mr. Sousa credits the
86 school becoming a school of distinction in part to having the curriculum director. Dr. Butkiewicz
87 noted that the school taxes have increased significantly in the last seven years.

88 Mr. Sousa said that internet connection bandwidth needed to be increased and this was the rate
89 they could get in order to get the increase. After next year, they believe they will be able to
90 negotiate a better contract and that line will decrease. Mr. Stevens asked what the cost was for
91 breaking the contract to get the lower cost earlier. Mr. Sousa said he did not know and said he
92 will contact them however Consolidated Data is the only company he believes they can use for
93 this. Dr. Butkiewicz asked about using Comcast and they may pay to break the contract with
94 Consolidated Data.

95 Dr. Butkiewicz asked about the \$18k stipends for the school board members. Dr. Butkiewicz
96 suggested cutting it to \$1 or making the school board stipends merit-based on the board's ability
97 to control budget increases. Ms. Jones said they have always paid people to be school board
98 members. Mr. Byrne said they will bring it to the school board.

99 Mr. Byrne went over the SAU costs. There is a 36.5% increase due to two towns covering costs
100 instead of three. Ms. Martin said that there are positions that will be eliminated at the SAU once
101 Strafford leaves.

102 Dr. Butkiewicz recommended that Mr. Sousa get in touch with the library about their phone
103 costs.

104 Mr. Leveille asked about course reimbursement and if that line can be reduced. Mr. Sousa said
105 this is contractual and the principal and assistant principal are able to take classes up to that
106 amount. He was able to write a grant for the classes he had taken in the past few years.

107 Ms. King asked about printing line. Mr. Sousa said they are printing handbooks for the younger
108 kids.

Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting
12-17-20
Official Minutes as of 1/7/21

Ms. Martin said there are 3 custodians plus the facilities director. Mr. Sousa said the facilities director works as the only custodian during the day. There is one custodian in the afternoon and 2 at night.

Mr. Sousa said that the town is middle of a contract for their trash removal. When they are out of their contract, the school will speak to the town to see if they can work together.

Dr. Butkiewicz asked about the storage container and said that was a great price. He asked if there is still need for storage. Mr. Sousa said they still have storage issues. Dr. Butkiewicz said they may want to increase the budget for more storage containers. Ms. Jones said they will be speaking at a future meeting about storage and classroom needs.

Mr. Sousa said that they reduced the grounds repairs line as they will not reline the parking lot next year. They do need to replace some signs and woodchips to meet state standards.

Dr. Butkiewicz asked about buying buses and hiring drivers. Mr. Sousa did look at the costs previous and it didn't seem feasible at the time. Ms. Martin said they are looking to do a one-year extension of the current contract.

Mr. Byrne read an email about special ed. transportation.

“Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”): explains at 20 U.S.C. § 1401(26)(A) that “transportation” is a related service under the law for students identified with a disability under the law and explains that:

- The term “related services” means **transportation**, and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services (including speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, social work services, school nurse services designed to enable a child with a disability to receive a [free appropriate public education](#) as described in the individualized education program of the child, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, and medical services, except that such medical services shall be for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only) as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes the early identification and assessment of disabling conditions in children.

The IDEA implementing regulations located at 34 C.F.R. § 300.34(a), further define “related services,” stating:

- General. Related services means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes.

Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting

12-17-20

Official Minutes as of 1/7/21

149 Related services also include school health services and school nurse
150 services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training.
151 34 C.F.R. § 300.34(c)(16) of the implementing regulations states that the definition of
152 transportation includes:

- 153 • Travel to and from school and between schools
- 154 • Travel in and around school buildings
- 155 • Specialized equipment (such as special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps), if
156 required to provide special transportation for a child with a disability.

157
158 **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:** The pertinent portion of the law states
159 that the school district must provide non-academic and extracurricular services in such
160 a manner to afford handicapped students an equal opportunity for participation in such
161 services and activities. Non-academic and extracurricular services and activities
162 include transportation.

163 For specific interpretations of these rules and regulations, the following websites are
164 helpful: Department of Education's Office of Special Education, the Department of
165 Education's Office for Civil Rights, federal laws, states laws, and judicial decisions."
166

167 Mr. Byrne explained ride sharing with other districts. If we lose a ride share with another district,
168 we had to pay the full amount for our student's transportation. Mr. Byrne explained how special
169 education transportation is a related service and offering transportation reimbursements could up
170 the district to potential litigation.

171 Dr. Butkiewicz said the first proposed budget was a 7.5% increase, and now it's 8.7%. Dr.
172 Butkiewicz said that Dr. Henson said she was trying to get the budget down to a 4% increase.
173 Mr. Dabrieo said Dr. Henson emailed him after the last meetings and apologized for saying the
174 goal was 4% increase; she had misspoken. Ms. Martin said the school board thought they would
175 be able to get it lower but they cannot. Dr. Butkiewicz said they can find places to cut this
176 budget. Mr. Sousa said the staff is fiscally responsible. The tuition costs and retirement costs are
177 driving this budget. He would not cut anything to maintain the programs. Dr. Butkiewicz said the
178 budget already increased 7.6% and 6.6% for the past two years, these tax increases are not
179 sustainable and will price people out of their homes. Mr. Leveille said that if they back out the
180 retirement costs, it would be around 7%.

181 Dr. Butkiewicz would like to know what Mr. Sousa would reduce or eliminate to bring the
182 proposed budget increases flat or with a nominal increase cutting \$1M from the proposed budget
183 increases. Mr. Sousa felt there was not anything he could cut from the K-8 budget and still
184 maintain the current education programs. The major increases are coming from sunk costs,
185 retirement and health care and that the administration does need to do some brainstorming to
186 figure out how to absorb these in the future. Dr. Butkiewicz urged Mr. Sousa to provide items,
187 some that were identified in this meeting like clubs and staff reductions, to bring the increase to
188 2% over last year. Mr. Dabrieo reminded Dr. Butkiewicz that at the 12/3 meeting he brought
189 forward a motion, that failed, to have an alternative budget like that presented today. Mr.
190 Dabrieo said he wanted to move on and not continue discussing potential cuts or reducing budget

Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting
12-17-20
Official Minutes as of 1/7/21

increases. Dr. Butkiewicz asked if the responsibility of the BC was to be a fiscal watchdog, control spending, and make sure budgets do not increase beyond the rate that taxpayers can bear? Mr. Dabrieo went over the role of the BC, stating that the budget committee does not control spending, is just responsible for looking at the taxes and making sure that they're being spent in an appropriate manner. Mr. Dabrieo went on to explain that there are professionals hired in the administration and SAU to spend the money on programs in the budget but the budget committee cannot tell them how to spend the money.

Dr. Butkiewicz discussed the 2015 “Brentwood School Board vs Brentwood Budget Committee” Rockingham Superior Court case (Docket No. 218-2015-CV-150) that had been presented in the BC’s training. Brentwood BC reduced the Brentwood school budget total amount by \$650,000 and left it up to Brentwood school board to decide what items to cut. The school sued BC, claiming it was an arbitrary cut and they did not specific line items to cut. Judge ruled in favor of BC. Judge said that BC’s role is that of a “fiscal watchdog”, and that BC can seek to make budget cuts that result in a more manageable budget for taxpayers.

Dr. Butkiewicz would like apply the Brentwood precedent and direct the school board to present a budget that is limited to a 2% increase, in line with the inflation rate, as the town has done with its budget this year. Dr. Butkiewicz said the BC “has a responsibility to the taxpayers of Nottingham to control budget increases.”

Dr. Butkiewicz made a motion to direct the School Board to turn in a budget to the BC with the 8.6% increase reduced to a 2% increase.

There was no second. Motion failed.

Dr. Butkiewicz remarked that the committee members would have to answer to the voters of Nottingham when their taxes go up again.

Mr. Sousa said the food service in the budget was an increase of 0.6%. This is a combo of the school needs and the food. Mr. Leveille said the prior draft of the proposed 2020-21 budget was quite a bit higher than it was tonight.

Mr. Stevens asked if there is incidental cost for construction costs. Mr. Sousa said none of that is in the budget. Mr. Stevens asked if they are in the facilities cost. Mr. Sousa said it will be included in the bond discussion.

Approve Minutes

Mr. Decker made a motion to approve the public minutes from 12/1/20 as written. Mr. Leveille seconded. It was approved by a vote of 9-1 with Ms. Martin abstaining.

Mr. Decker made a motion to approve the public minutes from 12/10/20 as written. Dr. Butkiewicz seconded. Unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0.

Other

Parting Thoughts

Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting

12-17-20

Official Minutes as of 1/7/21

228 Ms. Martin said the SB is discussing the format for deliberative session for the school. Mr.
229 Morin said the BOS is discussing the deliberative session for the town as well. The school bond
230 hearing has not been set up. The final price for the school addition has not been finalized. The
231 school facilities committee are changing the addition details.

232 *Next Meeting-December 29*

233 **Adjourn**

234 **Mr. Decker made a motion to adjourn at 8:51pm. Ms. Jones seconded. Unanimously**
235 **approved by a vote of 10-0.**

236