

Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting

12/29/20

Official Minutes as of 1/7/21

1 Call to Order

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

5 Absent: Michael Koester

6 Others: Lorraine Petrini, Monica Henson, Nate Byrne, Susan Levenson, Chris Sousa, ET Reed,
7 Preston Hunter, Cristopher Salomon, The Cains, Kathryn Brosnan, Kristen Cloutier

8 Chair opened the meeting at 6:30pm.

9 Review Schedule

10 Mr. Dabrieo said they are going to discuss what dept. heads the BC would like to request to
11 attend the Jan. 7 meeting. Mr. Morin said the town dept. head are not asking for much in the
12 budget but if the BC would like to meet them, the BC can invite the town dept. head to come in.
13 Ms. Jones suggested having the new police chief join the meeting. Mr. Morin said the police
14 dept. would not be asking for anything large this year but in the next few years, the police dept.
15 will be asking for higher ticket items. Dr. Butkiewicz agreed with having the police chief join the
16 meeting. Mr. Decker suggested the highway dept. Mr. Morin said they have not finalized the
17 warrant articles for the town. Mr. Dabrieo asked if the warrant articles will be ready for next
18 Thursday; Mr. Morin said he will get back to the BC. It has yet to be decided whether the
19 deliberative sessions for the town and school will be in person or online. Mr. Reed said the state
20 passed a temporary law due to COVID for how the meetings will take place for SB2 and town
21 meeting. It states that there will not be an opportunity to review the warrant articles via zoom or
22 in person. Mr. Reed said the rights of people are being infringed upon because they will not be
23 able to discuss the warrant articles.

24 School Facilities Presentation

25 Ms. Levenson introduced Monica Henson, Nate Byrne, Susan Levenson, Chris Sousa, Karyl
26 Martin, Preston Hunter (engineer), and Cristopher Salomon (architect). Ms. Levenson said that
27 there may be a need for 2 deliberative sessions and there may not be as much discourse as
28 normal.

29 Ms. Levenson said there is a website dedicated to the school addition detailing the deficiencies of
30 the school. She said they have used every square inch of the school. The school addition in 2012
31 failed. The students are doing very well academically in the school as the school board has
32 focused on academics the past years. There are students still being taught in the hallways.

33 Mr. Sousa said in the past 7 years they have maximized the school as much as they can. They are
34 in the top ranking of schools in the state right now and have schools coming to Nottingham to
35 see what they are doing; the schools that do come to Nottingham ask about students being taught
36 in hallways. Currently specialists are doubling in small spaces that were former closets. They are

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37 teaching in hallways as well. In order to meet programming, they revamped the computer room
38 and computers are taught from a cart. Health is on a cart. Storage is a huge issue. Paper is stored
39 outside. A storage container is being rented as well. The locker rooms are used for storage. They
40 would like to develop science and STEM further and need more space to do that.

41 Ms. Levenson said they have repurposed rooms. Computer and health are both on carts. The
42 kindergarten classrooms do not meet state standards. The preschool program is currently in
43 Northwood and are in small classrooms. The SPED dept. is undersized and are using staircase
44 and hallway learning. Teacher's room was reduced to accommodate office space. Music
45 classroom is undersized. The tech director has a small office in the library.

46 Mr. Salomon said they will know after the bond vote if the state will reward the town with the
47 30% state aid.

48 Mr. Preston said the locker rooms are used for storage. In the addition, it would allow them to be
49 used for PE and locker rooms. The music room is undersized and will have a new room in the
50 addition. It lacks instrument storage space and cafeteria noise disrupts instructions. The current
51 music room would become the health room in the addition. The teacher's room is currently
52 subdivided into 2 offices as well as the teacher's room. In the addition, the teacher's room will
53 regain that space. Security will be updated in the addition and there will be a reconfiguration in
54 the main office. Kindergarten classrooms currently don't meet standards; they are supposed to
55 have bathrooms, etc. One of the current kindergarten classrooms would become a STEM
56 classroom. Title 1 office is currently located in the art room storage closet. There would be a
57 STEM/computer lab in the addition. Currently there is a grade level with only 2 classrooms
58 instead of 3 due to no classroom space; there would be 3 dedicated classrooms in each grade
59 again with the addition. Special ed breakouts are also doubly used as janitor closets currently.

60 Mr. Salomon went over the addition. The music classroom would become the health classroom.
61 The teacher's room was returned to full size. The main entrance would be upgraded with security
62 upgrades so they can enter the offices without coming into the school. Special Ed classrooms and
63 offices will be reconfigured. There will be 3 kindergarten classrooms and a preschool added on
64 off the back of the school. STEM classroom would be a former kindergarten classroom. This
65 gives the school 3 classrooms per grade. Off the library, there will be an outdoor courtyard.
66 There would be a back entrance to the school. Buses and parents would have separate entrances.
67 There will be a new world language classroom on the 2nd floor and a new science classroom.
68 Music room and science labs will be new classrooms off the front area of the school.

69 Mr. Stevens asked if they were going to eliminate the front areas of the school. Mr. Preston said
70 they decided to keep those. Mr. Stevens asked why they are keeping the courtyard. Mr. Salomon
71 said they didn't want to create an internal classroom space and wanted to preserve the daylight so
72 they decided to have the courtyard outside. Mr. Stevens asked why they didn't make the
73 courtyard more classrooms. Mr. Salomon said they would make the library an internal space with
74 no daylight. Dr. Butkiewicz said the building would be more efficient to heat if they utilized that
75 space and asked if it is a legal requirement to have daylight. Mr. Salomon said it is required to

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76 have daylight for classrooms. There are 2 structures within the school although it will look like
77 there is only one so the school does not have to have sprinklers per state law. Dr. Butkiewicz
78 asked about maintenance costs and heating costs. Mr. Salomon said they will add solar panels
79 and it will be a net zero for operating costs. Mr. Stevens asked for mechanical plans. Mr.
80 Salomon kept mechanical systems as is. Mr. Stevens asked about pumps, etc. Mr. Hunter said
81 there will be new pump systems in the new areas and other areas will be reconfigured. Dr.
82 Butkiewicz asked if the solar panels are included in costs. Mr. Hunter said they are not included.
83 Dr. Butkiewicz asked about the heating costs. Mr. Salomon said there was an evaluation done
84 and it was completed. Dr. Butkiewicz asked if they will have to hire a 4th custodian. Ms.
85 Levenson said they don't have plans to hire anyone else. Mr. Sousa concurred. Dr. Butkiewicz
86 doesn't believe they will be able to clean the school effectively with added classrooms with
87 current janitorial staff. Mr. Sousa said he believes the custodians can handle the increased work.
88 Mr. Stevens believes they will need additional custodian hours. Ms. Levenson said the
89 committee took off a tower in the addition and a few other minor changes. She said they did take
90 a 2nd story piece off the back of the school. Dr. Butkiewicz asked about the towers. Ms.
91 Levenson said the first floor has music and on top of that, on the second floor, there would be a
92 STEM classroom in the front of the school. This was going to happen in the back of the school as
93 well however they removed that portion of the addition. Dr. Butkiewicz asked about putting the
94 space in the courtyard instead of putting them in the front of the school. Mr. Hunter said that
95 would not give daylight and in order to get the state aid, they have to comply to the laws. Dr.
96 Butkiewicz said they could build it without the state aid and forgo the windows. Mr. Stevens
97 asked about using the interior space. Dr. Butkiewicz said the courtyard is wasted space and that
98 they could remove the front space. Mr. Green said they could remove the front area and put it in
99 the back. Mr. Decker said they could make the courtyard smaller, it would afford some space
100 even if they didn't need it right now. Dr. Butkiewicz said that nurse's office and library don't
101 need windows. He said that they don't know if state aid will come through for Nottingham. Mr.
102 Decker said that getting state aid is a huge part of this addition being successful. It was
103 confirmed that building the preschool classroom would not qualify for state aid. Mr. Salomon
104 said that the preschool classroom should have daylight. Ms. Levenson said that perhaps they
105 could flip technology lab and preschool so that the preschool would be in an existing space. Mr.
106 Decker said that would maximize getting state aid since the state aid can't be used for a
107 preschool classroom. Mr. Salomon said that it's \$42K for the preschool classroom. There would
108 be no sprinklers needed in this as it's two structures. Mr. Stevens asked if this is all electric heat.
109 Mr. Salomon said they did a full evaluation, and they could get that to the BC. Dr. Butkiewicz
110 asked if they can put the state aid application on the website. Mr. Hunter said this is 15-20% of
111 the design process. They get price costs so they can get this on the ballot. It could need additional
112 design work in the future. Mr. Stevens asked at what level this design is at. Mr. Hunter said they
113 can give a cost at this point. Mr. Stevens asked if the estimate given a few months was at the
114 same level. Mr. Salomon said they are going to detail the costs out shortly. Mr. Hunter said this
115 is schematic estimate.

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116 Dr. Butkiewicz asked about the Title 1 office and admin offices in closets. He asked about
117 moving SAU offices in the town. He asked if the Title 1 can be moved to the building with the
118 SAU. Mr. Sousa said some of the SAU needs don't need to be in the school building but Title 1
119 is a teaching space. They work with the students and the space needs to be on-site. The grant
120 work can be done off-site. Dr. Butkiewicz asked if the SAU office space can be in the interior
121 courtyard space. Ms. Levenson said that could be a good thought. Mr. Sousa said that he agreed.
122 Dr. Butkiewicz said using the courtyard space would be cost efficient for heating, etc.

123 Mr. Stevens asked about the schedule for completing the design. Mr. Salomon said they would
124 take feedback tonight and have a successful March vote and do more work over the summer. Mr.
125 Hunter said the town is running out of time for changing the warrant article. Major changes will
126 need to made right away. Once the warrant article is established, the architects and engineers are
127 on hold but they can present at public meetings. Until the project is approved, Chris and his team
128 won't be advancing the design. After it's approved, they will do an analysis to review costs.
129 They would do earth work and foundations in the first summer. Eckmann acts as the general
130 contractor and works with the school to find the contractors. The warrant article is the top dollar
131 number amount that the addition will be.

132 Mr. Hunter shared his screen which had overall cost of the addition. The hard costs (construction
133 costs) will be \$5,341,600. The soft costs are \$906,131. The total cost \$6,247,731. The
134 transformer will need to be moved.

135 Ms. Levenson went over the costs with 2.5% interest on the 20 years and 2% on the 15 years.

136 Dr. Butkiewicz asked if the tax impact will be noted on the warrant article. Ms. Levenson said
137 they should go over what they want to share to be transparent. There are several schools going
138 for school aid. The state gives out money to 3 schools. They give out up to 30% of the cost. Mr.
139 Salomon said the last time that the state gave aid, it was \$15M and sometimes one school gets it
140 all or it's split between several schools. Mr. Hunter said some of the money also is given to
141 schools they agreed to fund previously. Mr. Stevens asked how is change management handled.
142 Mr. Hunter said they will update the construction costs and they have already given some
143 alternates. He said they are running out of time to make many changes. Once the contract is
144 signed, if there is a design change, they will come back with a price adjustment. Mr. Stevens
145 asked if the \$90k will be enough for furniture for the new parts in the school addition. Mr. Sousa
146 said this will be sufficient. The preschool will require new furniture.

147 Ms. Levenson said they are meeting with the space advisory committee tomorrow and the School
148 Board meets next week. Mr. Stevens said if there are more space needs, they should look into
149 now as it will be the cheapest now vs. in the future. Mr. Dabrieo asked what the courtyard is for.
150 Dr. Butkiewicz said it would provide daylight for the library. Mr. Sousa said it would be an
151 outdoor based classroom and provide daylight to the library. It could be used for usable space in
152 the future. Dr. Butkiewicz said that for most of the school year it's not warm enough to sit
153 outside so it's not usable for an outdoor classroom. He said he is not in favor of the courtyard.
154 Mr. Hunter said there are roof drains. Mr. Morin said Exeter HS has courtyards and they are

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never used till this year when they needed the outdoor space due to COVID. Dr. Butkiewicz would like to know the cost for the courtyard to be office space. Mr. Hunter detailed where the sewer lines, pump chamber are and where they will be relocated. The leech fields don't need to be modified as there are not additional students. The transformer will be moved. It is underground electrical. The mechanical information will be made available.

Ms. Levenson said there was valuable information from tonight and they will discuss the information at their upcoming facilities meeting and SB.

2021-22 Proposed School Budget Review and YTD Financials

There was a change in Dover transportation that was not on the information the BC has.

Ms. Levenson went over the financials. Dr. Butkiewicz asked if the \$1.3M is the state education tax. Ms. Levenson said yes. Dr. Butkiewicz said that the local townspeople are also paying that. Ms. Levenson said the tax rate is \$14.69 per \$1000. Dr. Butkiewicz said the home values on the sheet were low on the list. Ms. Levenson said she agreed and thought they could update those. Dr. Butkiewicz suggested having the total amount divided by the number of taxpayers. He said there are about 2000 households in town. Ms. Levenson said they have not finalized warrant articles yet. With the capital reserve warrant articles, there is no tax impact listed but that is money that won't go back to the taxpayers so there is a tax impact. In the teachers' contract, the teachers are allowed to tuition their children into the Nottingham School for a cost of around \$2500 per student. Ms. Levenson went over the rest of the revenues. There was discussion from Mr. Dabrieo about where to put the COVID grants as revenue. Ms. Levenson said she will look into that. Mr. Byrne spoke to Medicaid reimbursement.

There are two out of district student placements. There are also out of district transportation placements. Mr. Byrne said he is hopeful there will be a ride share which will reduce the cost. Mr. Dabrieo stated that the next two tabs are the collective bargaining agreements where the Teachers Contract is set to be renegotiated in 2023 and the Para in 2022. Dr. Butkiewicz asked about the contracts being approved by the voters. The teacher and para contracts are approved as part of the school district ballots. Dr. Butkiewicz asked if the warrant article for the contract included a statement that it had been recommended by the school board; he doesn't believe that voters read the 20-page teachers union contracts. Mr. Decker said shame on them as people should understand what they are voting for.

Dr. Butkiewicz asked if the SB saw the increases coming from the state when they negotiated the contracts. Ms. Levenson said they were trying to get the teachers and the paras would get their pay to be in the middle of the pay range in the state. She didn't anticipate the retirement increase from the state and that was a large cost added to this year. Dr. Butkiewicz asked if there were exit clauses for the contract. Ms. Levenson said that is not possible. Dr. Henson said Dr. Butkiewicz's problem is with the state. Dr. Butkiewicz said he believed that the SB did a bad job negotiating the contract and recommended it to the voters. Dr. Henson said the townspeople approved it. Dr. Butkiewicz said the voters were largely ignorant because they probably didn't

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193 read the 20-page teachers union contract and relied on the school board's unanimous
194 recommendation. Mr. Dabrieo said that this was article 3 last year and listed the increases from
195 the contract. Ms. Levenson said the SB does take responsibility for the contracts.

196 Dr. Henson said they were down 41 students this year. Parents are keeping them at home from
197 the primary grades this year. The current enrollment is 478 students and there are 31
198 homeschooled which bring it to 509. Typically, it's 510-535 students.

199 DHS has one year left on contract. DHS and CBNA are both 7-year contracts.

200 Dr. Butkiewicz displayed a 12-year enrollment graph for Nottingham from the NH Dept. of
201 Education's website and noted that enrollment appears to be flat. He read from Nottingham's
202 Capital Improvement Plan a number of predictions made by the town: that it will be 25 years
203 before the town adds another 1000 residents, that the population is getting older, and that
204 population growth is not translating to increased K-8 school enrollment, which is flat according
205 to the town's capital improvement plan. Mr. Morin said there are 16 new houses that will be built
206 next year. He believes Nottingham will get another 1000 residents much quicker. Mr. Green said
207 the school is 25 years old and they are teaching kids in the hallway. Ms. Levenson said there was
208 a faster growth rate in Nottingham rather than Northwood and Strafford. She said there are many
209 new developments coming and there will be larger enrollment in the school. Mr. Decker said
210 Nottingham had a higher growth rate than other towns. Mr. Leveille said it's a great location and
211 close to highways.

212 The BC discussed the preschool budget for the SAU. The last tab is CIP.

213 Dr. Butkiewicz said that Dr. Henson gave them a budget with 7% and she said that it would get
214 down to 4% however it ended up being 8.5%. He is wondering why. Dr. Henson said that was
215 her error. Dr. Butkiewicz asked if there was an effort to get it down to 4%. She said it was one of
216 the numbers they had discussed, and it was in her notes. She reiterated that it was her error. Ms.
217 Levenson said when they first talked about the budget, they were targeting 4% but they saw that
218 high school tuition, retirement, and sped transportation were increasing by large amounts. Dr.
219 Butkiewicz said that 2% should be the maximum for increases as that is the rate of inflation
220 which people's income rises. He said the budget cannot continue to increase at triple and
221 quadruple the inflation rate, as it has year after year. This means school taxes are taking up a
222 much larger portion of taxpayer's income, which does not rise as fast as the school's budgets. Dr.
223 Butkiewicz said it is important to consider the impact of these budget increases on taxpayers, the
224 proposed 8.6% increase is an extra \$700 per household on top of the thousands they already have
225 to pay.

226 Approve Minutes

227 Mr. Dabrieo has not an opportunity to read the minutes. Dr. Butkiewicz said he is suggesting a
228 collaborative Google document. Mr. Dabrieo said that previously they went over the edits in

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229 actual BC meetings. The google documents are considered public meetings. Mr. Dabrieo will
230 look into the state laws regarding this.

231 **Ms. Jones made a motion to table the meeting minutes till next meeting. Mr. Decker**
232 **seconded.**

233 Dr. Butkiewicz asked if the minutes need to be approved due to the minutes getting older. Mr.
234 Dabrieo said as long as they have a draft of the minutes, it is fine to hold off approving the
235 minutes.

236 **Unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0.**

237 Dr. Butkiewicz asked about the excel spreadsheets from the school. Ms. Martin said the concern
238 is if the SB allows an excel format, it can be manipulated and distributed. If there is assurance
239 from the committee that the information would not be distributed, the SB would be more
240 comfortable providing an unlocked excel spreadsheet. Mr. Decker and Mr. Stevens both agree
241 they would like an unlocked excel spreadsheets. Dr. Butkiewicz said he doesn't understand why
242 the SB can't provide this to them. Ms. Martin said there are different versions as well and it's
243 important to use the most up to date version. She will discuss it with the SB. Mr. Reed said he
244 suggested the document is available through 91a request. Ms. Martin said it's not required to
245 release the document unlocked.

246 **Other**

247 *Parting Thoughts*

248 *Next Meeting: January 7 at 6:30pm*

249 **Adjourn**

250 **Mr. Decker made a motion to adjourn at 9:21pm. Dr. Butkiewicz seconded. Unanimously**
251 **approved by a vote of 10-0.**

252