

Minutes
Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting
December 10, 2015

Members Present: Anthony Dumas, Suzanne Edin, Jeff Wheeler, Miska Hadik, Michael Koester, Gene Reed, Jennifer Biron, Dawn Fernald, Carrie Lee, Mark Carpenter – BOS Rep, Susan Levenson – School Board Rep

Excused Absences:

Other in Attendance: Secretary Dawn Wirkkala, Jackie Snow, Chris Sousa, Scott Reuning, Robert Gadomski, Marjorie Whitmore,

Mr. Wheeler called the meeting to order and introductions were completed.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: by Mr. Hadik, second by Mr. Dumas to approve the November 19, 2015 minutes as amended.

Vote: 10 in favor and 1 abstained.

2ND DRAFT SCHOOL JULY 2016/JUNE 2017 BUDGET: Dr. Gadomski stated handouts were distributed and he would review the changes in the December 10, 2015 budget presentation according to the first draft presentation and this meeting today. The materials included the regular budget, default budget, preschool budget, and enrollment report.

Dr. Gadomski stated the amount to the Teacher Salaries account was reduced, due to an adjustment with retirements not taking place until the 2017/2018 budget year. The Reg Ed Paraprofessional Salaries account was reduced, due to removing one of the proposed positions.

Mr. Carpenter asked if the number of students that shifted from Dover to Coe Brown because of the change in tuition requirements was available, for the current year and an estimate for the 2016/2017 students for budget preparations. Mr. Reed asked how the number of students was calculated.

Dr. Gadomski and Ms. Levenson stated they would have to determine if there has been a shift in the number of students changing schools. Dr. Gadomski stated he would verify if there was a shift of students from one school to the other. Dr. Gadomski stated the school will also receive a few students who move out of the high schools and a few who move in, but the intent of planning for anticipated move in students is to make sure funds are available without having to take money from other accounts if more than an anticipated number move in; the number is kept as low as possible.

Mr. Carpenter asked if the historical average surplus of approximately \$300,000.00 was enough to cover any additional anticipated move in students, eliminating the need to have a separate budget account for anticipated move-in students; this has been questioned by Mr. Koester for the last several years. Dr. Gadomski stated he doesn't want to plan on any possible surplus, because it could mean pulling funds from the elementary school budget if the number of high school students is higher than planned for.

Mr. Reed asked when or if the committee members would be able to make recommended changes to the school budget. Chair Wheeler stated the committee could make recommended changes during the school hearing. Chair Wheeler agreed that the school budget would be reviewed on a line by line basis at their final presentation during the public hearing. Dr. Gadomski stated any concerns expressed during Budget Committee meetings are reviewed by the School Board during their future meetings for budget change considerations.

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Chair Wheeler asked about the budget reduction in Classroom Textbooks: Language Arts (textbooks) of approximately \$100,000.00. Dr. Gadomski stated the School Board decided they would remove the textbooks from the budget. Mr. Sousa stated the request would become a warrant article in an attempt to replace the existing 8 year old books/program, which is not Common Core compliant with updated materials.

Mr. Reed asked why it was removed from the budget and changing to a warrant article. Dr. Gadomski stated it was to give the general population the option to decide on the issue; warrant articles would be available at the final draft presentation, or emailed earlier if they become available.

Mr. Reuning stated after review of current student individual education programs (IEP) recommendations it was determined only one additional SpEd Paraprofessional would be budgeted for in the account.

Mr. Reuning also explained that the Special Education Coordinator position is 50% of the total cost, which is shared with the Northwood school district.

Mr. Hadik asked about the new Extended school Year Program: High School account. Mr. Reuning explained there are a few accounts throughout the budget that were previously grouped together for both high school and elementary, and they have recently been separated into two separate accounts, one for high school and one for elementary. Another example of the shifts can be seen in the Teacher of the Deaf:Elementary account to Teacher of the Deaf: High School account.

Discussion took place about the format and amounts listed in the school budget reports, specifically the changing amounts shown in the 1 Year Prior Revised column, for the 2015/2016 school year. It was stated the amounts will change based on a couple of different reasons. For staff positions some of the amounts have been increased due to the warrant article for the teacher's contracts and for other staff positions the amount increased based on the 3% merit salary pool and raises, which has been distributed for applicable employees. Ms. Whitmore explained the School Board has a policy and approves adjustments to the amount shown in the prior year budgeted accounts so that no individual account line is over expended, the funds are moved from one account to another decreasing one and increasing the other. The amount listed in the 1 Year Prior Revised column are the amounts actually spent in the account and not the budgeted amounts, all transfers are approved by the School Board; but the grand total amount that can't be changed does not change.

Mr. Hadik asked about the changes in Special Education New Furniture and Replacement of Equipment accounts. Mr. Sousa stated these are budget cuts between the first draft and second draft. Ms. Levenson stated these are typical changes seen in accounts as new items are brought forward and priorities are determined in the budget process.

Dr. Gadomski reviewed the largest change for the Co-Curricular accounts, with increases seen as two new Volleyball teams and all the needed equipment are added for the students.

Mr. Sousa reviewed the increase in Guidance Salaries is moving one of the counselor from a four-day a week position to a five-day a week position. This change is due to the additional duties seen for counselors in addressing the emotional and behavioral needs and additional educational assistance for students, including assistance in the special education IEP process.

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Mr. Reuning suggested the American School Guidance Counselor website in order to review the changes in duties and roles for school counselors.

Ms. Fernald asked if other school districts utilize the use of clerical staff/secretary to assist in the paperwork process needed for special education teachers. Mr. Reuning stated there is a Secretary for each school and they do help in the paperwork process; these positions make sure the processing of paperwork is completed timely to ensure proper billing takes place and reimbursements are received.

Mr. Reed asked about the retirement notation in the Nurse's Salary and changes in the proposed budget amount. Ms. Whitmore explained when staff retires they are paid the balance of their sick leave and vacation leave in the year they will retire. They will be paid their early retirement bonus from the next budget year; retirement in June 2016 from the 2015/2016 budget year, with the bonus payment being paid from the 2016/2017 budget. As part of the early retirement clause individuals can not withdraw their retirement plans.

Mr. Reuning reported the Speech accounts (2150) are billable to each school district on an hourly basis. The first bill was just received and the proposed 2016/2017 budget amount is expected to change.

Discussion took place about the Curriculum Development, Course Tuition Reimbursement, and Staff Development Workshops accounts in Improvement of Instruction. Mr. Sousa reviewed the needs and benefits of providing these funds, especially for teacher course reimbursement and staff development workshops. Summer workshop and training provides the teachers with designing and learning new curriculum. These funds allow the teachers to focus and work together to write new curriculum plans for the students. Dr. Gadomski reported this Curriculum Director also helps to coordinate the curriculum development between the elementary school and high schools.

Mr. Sousa reviewed the changes in the Computer Assisted Instruction account (Technology #2225). As technology changes it is becoming more integrated into the classroom, providing the students the ability to an increase in science based programs, as well as providing the ability for students to access materials at home. There is a decrease in the Software account, but programs are still being provided, but there is an increase seen in the New Equip account with the purchase of new laptops and computer carts to move forward with the Technology Plan from 2014. The purchase of laptops in the previous budget was based on a warrant article.

Dr. Gadomski reported the Contracted Services Atty & Negotiator account for School Board Services is currently an estimate. The SAU budget is the final approved amount; the Joint School Board voted on the contract earlier in the day.

Chair Wheeler asked if the prior year and proposed budget amounts for the Principal's Office account (2410) staff positions provided for the merit pool increases. Dr. Gadomski reported the prior year is the current contract amount and the proposed budget amount includes the additional 3%.

Mr. Sousa reviewed that while the Contracted Services account is increasing, the renegotiated contracts will mean savings in other tech supply accounts throughout the budget.

Dr. Gadomski reported one position in the Asst. Custodian-Salary account is being moved from part-time to full time. Mr. Reed asked about the 24% increase seen in the Maintenance Health

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Insurance account. Dr. Gadomski reported overall the school has seen a decrease in health insurance costs, but this increase is the addition of insurance for one more custodian.

Dr. Gadomski stated a full year contract has been signed for Lawn care, increasing that account. Bids have been received for Propane, to heat the school; a locked in lower price means current cost savings.

Mr. Dumas asked about the previously anticipated savings in electricity after upgrades to lighting fixtures and light bulbs, but a shown increase in actual expenditures over the prior two years. It was stated the increase is primarily due to an increase in electric supply charges.

Mr. Reuning spoke about the Special Education Trans. Elementary and High School accounts, stating that although there is a decrease; the amount can change with any IEP changes for out of district placements.

Mr. Reed asked about the work of the Transportation Committee. Dr. Gadomski stated the committee is still active in trying to reduce transportation expenses.

Ms. Edin asked about the increase in the HS Dover Transportation expense. Dr. Gadomski stated it is a change in contract costs for a total of three busses. A dilemma for the Transportation Committee isn't the number of students needing transportation, but establishing the correct number of busses needed to help reduce the length of time students are on a bus. The students will fit on two busses, but it can mean they spend a much longer amount of time on that bus. Ms. Whitmore explained with contract changes worked on by the committee a budget change is being presented to the school board next week, which should result in an approximate \$4000.00 increase and not an \$11,889.00 increase.

Ms. Levenson and Mr. Reuning stated there is a goal is to try and reduce the amount of time students are on the bus, preventing the kids from being on the bus for several hours in addition to addressing the concerns long bus rides can have on students with sensory issues.

Mr. Reed asked how new federal government criteria for the food service programs affects the school. Mr. Sousa stated food service changes come from the federal government frequently, including some recent changes coming from the State of NH. There are reductions in the food and milk expenses, but it has more to do with a thorough review of the program and available options.

Dr. Gadomski stated there has been some difficult discussion between the School Board and the school administration about budget expenses, trying to balance continued movement forward for the student's education, continue with future technology plan, while maintaining the needs of the school plant.

Mr. Carpenter asked about the changes between the first and second drafts of the budget. Dr. Gadomski and Ms. Levenson stated the 1st draft was presented knowing additional budget changes coming with the 2nd draft providing a much tighter proposal. Ms. Levenson stated there were also some accounts in the 1st draft that had place holder amounts, which have been received.

General discussion took place about the data provided on the worksheets and possible changes to assist in the budget planning process.

Ms. Whitmore reviewed the distributed financial report, which is presented to the School Board on a monthly basis. This 2015/2016 financial report shows the original budgeted appropriation, the

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revisions and amendments made to each account, actual year to date expenditures, and expected encumbrances and the possible remaining balance/surplus, which is \$578,067.42. The current surplus amount will change, as the school year is only ½ over.

Dr. Gadomski reviewed the SAU budget, stating the budget from 2015/2016 to the proposed 2016/2017 grant total remains unchanged. However, some of the adjustments to the overall budget include changes to the bookkeeping positions. These positions were previously individually funded by each town, and then shifted to the SAU operated and budgeted, going from a total of four positions to two. It has been determined that the current number of staff members is not enough to complete the work load for all three towns and an additional bookkeeper position is being added.

Mr. Wheeler asked about salary increases for SAU staff. Dr. Gadomski reported he and the Mr. Reuning declined to take a raise for the 2016/2017 year and the remaining staff will receive increases based on a salary pool of 3% with individual raises based on employee reviews.

Dr. Gadomski explained the SAU does have some health insurance buyouts which have helped with an overall health insurance decrease; the health insurance decreases have helped provide the additional position while keeping a level budget.

Mr. Carpenter asked about the decreases in retirement expenses. Ms. Whitmore explained there was a misunderstanding in how the retirement rate was calculated and after clarification they were determined to be lower than expected.

Mr. Carpenter asked why the health insurance expenses have decreased so significantly. Dr. Gadomski stated he believed it was a change in the chosen plans and buyouts, but it also includes a decrease in the insurance premiums.

Chair Wheeler asked about the changes in Superintendent Unemployment over the prior several years. Ms. Whitmore explained the changing amount is based on different payment holidays that are not always a guarantee; it is something that needs to be budgeted.

It was stated the SAU budget was approved only three hours prior to the Budget Committee Meeting, at the Joint School Board meeting today; the Pre-School budget was also approved at the same meeting.

Ms. Whitmore reviewed proposed Pre-school budget, including changes in revenues. A big change for pre-school is a shift from having a Paraprofessional for each town to splitting the services of one Paraprofessional between each of the towns, reducing the expenses as well as reducing the amount received from each town.

Mr. Reuning reviewed how the preschool expenses are calculated, which is to use a three year rolling average, which helps to eliminate some of the peaks and valleys seen in budget planning.

Dr. Gadomski stated if there were any additional questions and concerns over any part of the budget committee members could call anytime.

Ms. Levenson reviewed the school has seen a positive change in test scores and higher education results for the students. These positive things being seen with the student and at the school are based on the classroom changes and shifting taking place at the school, the introduction of technology and changes in curriculum. A lot of hard work has been done producing great results.

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Budget Committee members expressed their thanks for the hard work in helping improve the level of instruction.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES:

MPEC: Mr. Hadik reported the committee has almost concluded their process and after the three interviews have recommended hiring one company. The Selectmen previously approved appropriating funds from the Recreation Revolving Fund for the design company and has an upcoming meeting to sign a contract. There is the expectation to have weekly meetings to move the process forward quickly to come up with a working plan for the Marston Property Development.

CIP: Mr. Reed stated the committee will meet next Monday and continue discussion about the proposed Quint.

Ms. Levenson stated the School Board will continue the School Board work next Wednesday and will send the report to Mr. Sterndale when it is complete. The School Board does have questions about field improvements and where the expenses should be considered, especially with the improvements proposed at Marston.

Transportation: Ms. Snow reported additional information has been received about route consolidation and consideration given about when those route changes should take place. There is concern about bus consolidation creating longer bus rides for some students and not providing enough time to introduce the route changes.

Ms. Levenson stated the best work completed by the committee is the work on the contract that will allow potential cost savings with route consolidations.

Mr. Dumas stated it is a delicate balance between consolidating routes while making sure students don't spend such a long time on the bus. The committee has done a lot of work to establish routes that are equitable, but the changes should be well received.

OTHER BUSINESS: None

ROUNDTABLE:

Ms. Edin stated she is learning a lot and has received a lot of past information that will help.

Mr. Carpenter reported the Town has signed a five year contract with the assessing firms at an overall lower cost.

ACTION ITEMS:

ADJOURNMENT: Having no further business,

9:18 PM Motion: by Ms. Lee, second by Mr. Hadik.

Vote: 11 – 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Calley-Murdough