

Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting

Date: Thursday, January 11, 2024

Un-Official Minutes

Members Present: Michael Kelly, Chairman; Owen Friend-Gray, Vice Chairman; John Decker, Member; Sandra Jones, Member; Jeffrey Morrison, Member; Brent Tweed, Member; Thomas Butkiewicz, Member; Charlotte Fyfe, Member; Robert Kelly, Member; Megan Sebasco, School Board Representative; Steven Welch, BOS Representative

Members Absent:

Others Present: Bill Roy, School Business Administrator; Ronna HasBrouck, Superintendent; Susan Levenson, School Board Chairperson; Christine Boston; Linda Przychodny

Call To Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval Of Minutes: The Board chose to table the minutes to the next meeting.

School Final Proposed Budget

Ms. Levenson stated that the School Board met with Ms. HasBrouck and Mr. Roy again to review the budget and the suggestions from the Budget Committee. From that meeting they had brought an adjusted budget and default budget. She stated that they were able to reduce the budget to \$168,534.91 and increase revenues by \$8,000. They removed the math interventionist from the budget. They removed one regular education para-professional. They are going to be looking for other sources to fund the textbooks. They also reduced and removed some annual dues. This brought the budget down to \$4.16 million.

Mr. Robert Kelly asked if there was an open para-professional position now. Ms. HasBrouck confirmed that there was a recent opening in the past few weeks.

Revenues

Mr. Roy stated that they increased interest income by \$5,000. They added a thousand to direct costs (?). They added \$2,000 to lunch sales.

Mr. Michael Kelly stated that the proposed revenue for the General Fund was \$16,454,484.53. The food service revenue was proposed to be \$211,956.57. Total proposed revenue was \$16,666,441.20.

Mr. Butkiewicz made the motion to approve the proposed budget revenues as read. The motion was seconded by Owen Friend-Gray. The motion passed by a vote of 11-0-0.

Proposed Budget Expenses

Mr. Michael Kelly read off the total regular school proposed budget expenses to be \$9,183,947.72.

Ms. Levenson stated there was an increase (?) of \$103,528.96. This included where the math interventionist and para-professional were removed.

Mr. Michael Kelly then read off the total special education proposed budget expenses which were \$2,669,554.68.

Mr. Butkiewicz asked for the total number of special education students. Ms. Levenson stated that pre-school has ten (10) students, the elementary school has 57 students with four (4) active referrals, Coe-Brown has fourteen (14) with one (1) active referral, Dover High has thirteen (13), a charter school has one (1) special education student, and there are seven (7) out of district placements for a total of 102 special education students with five (5) active referrals.

Mr. Michael Kelly continued to read off the totals as follows ...

Medicaid \$4,000.00

Co-Curricular Salaries \$25,458.02

Athletic \$45,533.98

Summer School \$17,047.70

Guidance \$249,243.50

Nurse & Health \$122,424.14

Special Contracted Services \$50,127.16

Contracted Eval \$0

Speech \$250,032.36

Contracted OT & PT \$117,876.16

Other Physical & OT Therapy Services \$3,400.00

Student Service Support \$82,209.68

Improvement Of Instruction \$81,206.23

Instruction & Curriculum Development \$151,605.44

Library & Educational Media \$149,823.08

Computer Assisted Instruction \$206,763.60

School Board Services \$39,247.56

District Secretary Clerk Services \$2,960.38

District Treasury Services \$2,153.00

Election Services \$0

Audit Services \$23,250.00

Legal Services \$31,000.00

SAU Expense \$535,369.13

Office Of Superintendent Services \$0

81 Principal's Office \$421,959.80
82 Business & Financial Service \$12,150.99
83 School District Bookkeeper \$42,758.69
84 Supervising Fiscal Services \$166,543.65
85 Operation and Maintenance of Plant \$686,730.05
86 Care Of Ground Services \$25,950.00
87 Regular Education Transport \$734,662.08
88 Special Education Transport \$361,659.31
89 Athletic Transportation \$5,826.02
90 Field Trip Transportation \$12,209.69
91 Homeless Transportation \$28,801.00
92 Food Service \$211,956.67
93

94 Ms. Fyfe wanted to clarify that House Bill # 1656 would increase the special education grant from \$2,100
95 to \$27,000 per student.
96

97 Mr. Butkiewicz asked how much that proposed budget would need to be reduced to hit the 4%. Mr. Roy
98 stated that it would need to be reduced by \$21,000.
99

100 Mr. Michael Kelly opened the public hearing at 7:36 p.m.
101

102 Christine Boston, 7 Shannon Drive, stated that she wanted to make sure everyone fully understood the
103 district's obligation under IDEA, Federal Regulations, and New Hampshire rules for students with
104 disabilities, ED 1100. Ms. Boston stated that in 20 USC Chapter 33, From Title 20 Education, Congress is
105 clear about the purpose of educating students with disabilities. She read quotes directly from the
106 regulations. She spoke about the previous meeting that the school had with Budget Committee where it
107 was suggested to hire a full-time special education teacher who would take on multiple special
108 education children in a separate classroom. This would allow the school to then remove some of the
109 para-professionals from the budget. She read off the regulations from IDEA about the least restrictive
110 environment. Ms. Boston stated that only the school district could legally remove children from the
111 classroom but only after proving that the disability is so severe that the general education environment
112 is no longer the student's least restrictive environment. This could not be done by a board, an
113 administrator, or any town entity.
114

115 Ms. Boston stated that if she did have any suggestions to make for the budget, she would ask that they
116 look at increases in staffing, mental health support, professional development, and library funds. She
117 stated that she did not feel that the budget, as presented, is enough to provide what our students need.
118

119 Linda Przychodny, of 16 Camelot Court, asked about the pre-school and if it was run by the school. Ms.
120 Levenson responded that it was run by the school. Ms. Przychodny asked what it costs to run the pre-
121 school. Ms. Sebasco stated that the school district is required to provide special education services to
122 children starting at the age of three (3). Therefore, the pre-school is not just a public pre-school, it is

also a requirement. Ms. Levenson explained that it is a mixed classroom of special education and general education children. Ms. Sebasco added that the students who are not in special education pay tuition to go there. Mr. Roy stated that the salaries are about \$138,000 for one teacher and one para-professional. He stated that the revenue is around \$20,000 for the students that pay.

Ms. Przychodny stated that she was trying to figure out if the taxpayers were subsidizing the general education children at the pre-school. Mr. Butkiewicz stated that the school charged well below market rate. She stated that most pre-school age families that she knows of have to pay for pre-school. She wanted the taxpayers to know that it sounded like they are subsidizing for children to go to the Nottingham pre-school.

Ms. Levenson stated that they consider the general education children at the pre-school to be part of the special education children's IEP's, which help them grow into the school environment.

Ms. Przychodny asked if the parents of the non-special education children could pay more. Ms. HasBrouck stated that they could charge more. She also pointed out that it is a half-day pre-school.

Ms. Przychodny asked what the homeless transportation was. Ms. HasBrouck stated that it is a Federal law that the school district is required to pay for transportation for any children that are deemed homeless. This could mean that they are temporarily staying in another town and were still enrolled in Nottingham School.

Mr. Robert Kelly left the meeting at 7:56 p.m.

Default Budget Revenues

Mr. Michael Kelly read off the default budget revenue totals.

General Fund \$16,322,219.90

Food Service \$194,952.16

Total \$16,517,172.06

Default Budget Expenses

Mr. Michael Kelly read off the total default budget expenses as \$16,517,172.06.

The motion was made by Ms. Jones to accept the school's default budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Butkiewicz. The motion passed by a vote of 10-0-0.

Mr. Kelly asked if there were public comments regarding the default budget.

Ms. Boston returned to the table to speak. She asked if the default budget includes any increases in the actual costs for special education for new students, placements, and needs. Mr. Roy stated that it does include that for the ones that are IEP driven or mandated.

Mr. Butkiewicz stated that there is a Special Education Fund that can cover those costs for move-ins. He stated that there is \$173,000 in that fund.

Ms. HasBrouck stated that the current amount in the Special Education Fund would only cover one (1) student. She stated that she thought Ms. Boston was pointing out that the default budget is extremely risky since there are five (5) students who could be coming in with special education needs.

Warrant Articles

Mr. Friend-Gray and Mr. Kelly read off the warrant articles.

Mr. Friend-Gray invited the inhabitants of the school district of Nottingham to the Deliberative Session on Wednesday, February 7th at 6:00 p.m. This session would consist of explanation, discussion, and debate of warrant articles 1 – 6. The warrant articles could be amended subject to limitations. The second session of the annual meeting would be held on Tuesday, February 12, 2024, from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Both sessions would be held at the Nottingham School.

Article 1

To choose the following school district officers ...

School Board Member – Term of 3 Years

School Board Member – Term of 3 Years

Article 2

Shall the Nottingham School District raise and appropriate an operating budget not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately the amount set forth on the budget proposed within the warrant or as amended by vote at the first session for the purposes, set forth therein, \$16,666,441. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$16,516,172, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Nottingham School Board or by law ...

The estimated tax impact is \$15.48 per \$1,000. The estimated tax impact if this article does not pass is \$15.31 per thousand.

Article 3

To see if the Nottingham School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be added to the Building Repair Capital Reserve Fund previously established. The current balance on 12/31/23 was \$266,648.

The estimated tax impact is \$.06 per \$1,000.

206 Article 4
207 To see if the Nottingham School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to \$25,000 to
208 be added to the Text Book Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum is to come from the
209 June 30, 2024, Unassigned Fund balance available on July 1, 2024, with no additional amount to be
210 raised by taxation. The current balance on 12/31/23 was \$11,925.96
211 The estimated tax impact is \$.00 per \$1,000.
212
213 Article 5
214 To see if the Nottingham School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to \$25,000 to
215 be added to the Special Education Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum is to come from
216 the June 30, 2024, unassigned fund balance available on July 1, 2024, with no additional amount to be
217 raised by taxation. The current balance on 12/31/23 was \$173,394.88.
218 The estimated tax impact is \$.00 per \$1,000.
219
220 Article 6
221 To see if the Nottingham School District will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund under the
222 provisions of RSA 35:1-C to be known as the Tuition Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of
223 unanticipated student tuition costs and further raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000 to be placed in
224 the fund with such amount to be funded from the June 30, 2024 year end Unassigned Fund balance and
225 further to appoint the School Board as agents to expend from the fund.
226 The estimated tax impact is \$.00 per \$1,000.
227
228 Mr. Butkiewicz asked about what the actual cost of the Curriculum Director was. Mr. Roy stated that it
229 was \$147,766.44.
230
231 There was discussion regarding the Unassigned Fund balance. Ms. Levenson stated that they were not
232 able to fund some of the Capital Reserve Funds last year because there was not enough in the
233 Unassigned Fund. Mr. Butkiewicz stated that the better the Committee does their job, the less there will
234 be in the Unassigned Fund. Ms. HasBrouck stated that it is a concern because the budget is so tight that
235 there may not be enough money to fund the warrants.
236
237 Mr. Butkiewicz asked if it was too late to change the warrant articles to remove the portion about
238 paying them from the Unassigned Fund balance. Mr. Kelly stated that it would be a legal question but
239 they would have time to look into it.
240
241 Mr. Kelly opened up the public comment on the warrant articles.
242
243 Linda Przychodny, of 16 Camelot Court, stated that if the school were charging more for the pre-school,
244 about \$142 per week, there could potentially be no need for Article 3 since they would be raising
245 enough money to cover that.
246
247 Mr. Michael Kelly read of the tax cap worksheet.

248 Proposed Budget \$16,666,441 offset by revenue of \$3,786,582.
249 Amount to be raised by taxes \$12,879,859.
250 Assessed Valuation \$832,146,848
251 Tax Rate Per Thousand 15.48%
252 Current Tax Rate 14.86%
253 4.16% Increase
254
255 Default Budget \$16,517,172 offset by revenue of \$3,776,582.
256 Amount to be raised by taxes \$12,740, 590.
257 Assessed Valuation \$832,146,848
258 Tax Rate Per Thousand 15.31%
259 Current Tax Rate 14.86%
260 3.03% Increase
261
262 Estimated tax impact is \$15.48 per thousand not including warrant articles and \$15.54 per thousand
263 including the warrant articles.
264
265 Mr. Michael Kelly ended the public hearing.
266
267 The Committee decided to continue to deliberate about the school.
268
269 Mr. Butkiewicz questioned why the school was only planning on getting \$97,000 in special education aid
270 when his calculations were much higher. There wasn't a specific answer but Ms. Sebasco stated that is
271 what they received the previous year and they would not want to overestimate revenues.
272
273 Mr. Butkiewicz asked if the school had a dog. Mr. Hasbrouck answered that the guidance counselor has
274 a personal dog that is a therapy dog that she sometimes brings in. It is more of a school mascot.
275
276 Mr. Butkiewicz asked if having it's own SAU, the Town has saved any money compared to having a
277 shared SAU. It was discussed that it was still hard to tell but it looked like a small amount had been
278 saved so far.
279
280 Mr. Butkiewicz asked what the school has done to reduce the use of paper. Ms. Sebasco answered that
281 the school uses Chromebooks and workbooks, but there are still pencil and paper activities since the
282 school wants to balance that use with technology.
283
284 Mr. Butkiewicz asked for the current enrollment K-8. Ms. HasBrouck answered that it was 516 including
285 the pre-school. He also asked about the district wide enrollment. Ms. Sebasco stated that it was 806,
286 not counting home school. She also stated that the school district does not financially support any
287 home-schooled children. But they just like to be aware of the number just in case they do decide to
288 come to the school.
289

Mr. Michael Kelly asked about the “Teacher Pay Teacher” program but the school had already removed that from the budget.

Mr. Michael Kelly asked about the \$20,000 to pay staff to develop and update curriculum, technology, and other lesson materials over the summer. He thought this was a large amount. Ms. HasBrouck stated that it is mostly due to helping the IT person update the technology. It is also used to pay teachers to work on their own curriculum. Teachers must apply to be a part of this. It is not part of the teacher’s 184 day contract. Ms. HasBrouck stated that this is also supplemented with grants whenever possible.

Mr. Friend-Gray stated that in previous meetings, the school had the need for a math interventionist. But, since then, the position was cut out of the budget and not added to a warrant article. He asked how the needs of the students would be met without that position. Ms. Sebasco stated that the School Board decided to think outside of the box to look for other enrichment services. She also stated that there would still be one math interventionist.

Mr. Butkiewicz pointed out that according to his calculations, the percent increase of 4.16%, as stated earlier in the meeting, was incorrect and that the school’s proposed budget was really a 6.7% increase. His chart showed that the school’s budget increases have been much more than the Town’s budget increases.

There was a lengthy discussion about how large the school budget is and how fast it is growing compared to the Town budget. This brought in opinions on a variety of topics other than the budget. Mr. Michael Kelly felt that it was o.k. to let the discussion continue as many of the current members of the Committee would still be there next year. The main discussion was on the cost of Special Education and why it can be so expensive for the taxpayers and the community.

Mr. Tweed explained that he would like to see the budgets increase at a rate closer to the inflation rate. Ms. Sebasco said that is not always possible since most costs are not tied to the inflation rate and often increase at a much higher rate.

Mr. Michael Kelly stated that he was concerned about the culture of the school and the sexualization of children in the library books. He asked the school to reach out to the community to get more opinions in regard to these topics.

Mr. Butkiewicz spoke about how social emotion learning is infused throughout the school budget. He explained that many parents are concerned about this new approach to learning and that many parents disagree with it. Ms. Sebasco stated that parents do have the right to ask about their children’s curriculum if they are concerned.

330 Mr. Decker asked if the School Board had reviewed their stipends. Ms. Levenson stated that they had
331 not. Mr. Decker stated that he felt that the Board Of Selectmen and the School Board should be paid
332 equally.
333
334 Mr. Butkiewicz suggested reducing the Moderator's pay. Mr. Decker and Mr. Welch disagreed. Mr.
335 Friend-Gray suggested lowering the budget for material items before personnel.
336
337 Mr. Butkiewicz asked if the school has thought about ways to use up the impact fees before they expire
338 such as shipping containers for storage. Ms. Sebasco stated they could not be used for that. She said
339 the Facilities Committee had been asking about that as well and would be looking further into options to
340 spend the impact fees.
341
342 Mr. Michael Kelly stated that the Committee would meet about the school budget next Thursday,
343 January 18th at 7:00 p.m. to do their recommendation on the proposed budget and warrant articles.
344
345 Mr. Michael Kelly stated some updates that Ms. White had sent including re-naming the line in the
346 budget for pistol permits. He said that she had provided an updated form MS-1, which is the Town
347 official filing to the State. Ms. White had provided new methodology for the tax cap worksheet as it was
348 calculated differently in the past. There was discussion about whether the calculation should use
349 warrant articles or not.
350
351 Mr. Michael Kelly listed the additional items to be addressed at the next meeting in addition to the
352 school budget.
353
354 Mr. Decker made the motion to adjourn. Motion seconded by Mr. Tweed. The motion passed by a vote
355 of 10-0-0.
356
357 Transcribed per video.
358 Respectfully Submitted,
359 Alana J. Kenney