

**Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting**  
**Date: Thursday, January 3, 2024**  
**Un-Official Minutes**

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

5  
6 **Members Absent:**

7  
8 **Others Present:** Bill Roy, School Business Administrator; Ronna HasBrouck, Superintendent; Susan  
9 Levenson, School Board Chairperson

10  
11 **Call To Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

12  
13 **Approval Of Minutes:** 12/21/23 and 12/28/23

14  
15 ***Mr. Butkiewicz made the motion to approve the minutes of 12/21/23 as amended. Mr. Morrison***  
16 ***seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 10-0-1.***

17  
18 ***Mr. Owen Friend-Gray made the motion to approve the minutes of 12/28/23 as amended. Mr. Decker***  
19 ***seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 10-0-1.***

20  
21 **School Budget Continued**

22  
23 Ms. Sebasco stated that the School Board had seen some of the new numbers the previous night and as  
24 a result, had scheduled a work session for the next Tuesday. She asked if there were any suggestions,  
25 they would appreciate hearing them tonight so they could be discussed at the meeting on Tuesday.

26  
27 Ms. HasBrouck stated that they had found a miscalculation in their previously proposed budget having  
28 to do with health insurance.

29  
30 Ms. HasBrouck stated they had provided the committee with a one page summary of the changes to the  
31 budget since the last meeting with the Budget Committee. This summary did not include the warrant  
32 article she had suggested the prior night which would create a capital reserve fund for tuition (*for high*  
33 *school students*). The current tuition per student is around \$20,000. If new students move into the  
34 town, the town has to pay an additional \$20,000 per student added to the budget. This is a huge  
35 amount when dealing with such a tight budget. Enrollment data shows that it is trending up.

36

37 Mr. Butkiewicz asked what the current enrollment is. Mr. Friend-Gray stated it is around 515 or 518  
38 students and Ms. HasBrouck agreed. Mr. Butkiewicz asked what it was when the school first opened.  
39 Ms. HasBrouck did not know but stated that she would look it up.

40

41 Mr. Michael Kelly asked about the back page that was provided. Mr. Roy explained that he provided  
42 additional information on salaries including health insurance, buyouts, dental and FICA.

43

44 Mr. Robert Kelly asked what the difference was between what was presented before and what the new  
45 total is after correcting the miscalculation. Mr. Roy stated that it was about \$211,000 additional since  
46 the last time they met with the committee.

47

48 Mr. Roy stated that they amended the telephone budget. He said the \$900 was for the copper lines to  
49 the elevator and fax machine. The extra \$5,000 was miscellaneous repairs and the previous  
50 Superintendent's cell phone bill. They ended up removing all of that since there is a separate line item  
51 now for the Superintendent's cell phone.

52

53 There was discussion regarding the insurance GMR and how the school has no control over the  
54 percentage change each year. It is what the insurance companies tell them. And therefore, they do not  
55 include that in the budget to be voted upon.

56

57 Mr. Decker stated that he felt that the addition of the Math Interventionist should be brought out of the  
58 budget and put on a warrant article.

59

60 Ms. Jones clarified that even though the school is working to stick with the 4% cap on the budget  
61 increase, they do not legally need to do that since the tax cap is only on the town budget; not on the  
62 school budget.

63

64 Ms. Jones asked what the Math Interventionist's salary is. Mr. Roy stated it is \$86,684.88 not including  
65 benefits. So, it is actually closer to \$90,000. Ms. Jones stated she supports putting that position on a  
66 warrant article.

67

68 Mr. Tweed asked about how much Ms. HasBrouck was thinking of putting on the warrant article for  
69 tuition. Ms. HasBrouck stated that she thought \$40,000 would be a good start. Mr. Tweed clarified how  
70 the capital reserve fund works in that the money in those funds can only be used for the specified  
71 purpose. The School Board can approve the use of the money.

72

73 Mr. Robert Kelly asked if the school had any more warrant articles to add. Ms. HasBrouck stated that  
74 other than the traditional ones, they were not prepared to discuss any others at this time.

75

76 Mr. Butkiewicz suggested making grade 6 (six) a two-teacher grade instead of a three-teacher grade  
77 since there are only 49 kids in that grade. He stated that would eliminate one whole position and leave  
78 the classroom sizes at 24 kids per class. Ms. Sebasco explained that at the middle school level, the

79 teachers teach specific courses such as math or science. To remove one would remove that subject  
80 from the grade. Mr. Butkiewicz asked why teachers cannot teach more than one subject. Ms.  
81 HasBrouck stated that one of the teachers in grade 6 (six) does already teach two subjects.

82

83 *(Ms. Levenson's comments were mostly inaudible due to not speaking into a microphone.)*

84

85 Mr. Butkiewicz stated he felt that the middle school classes were very small from 16-18 students and  
86 that some of the teachers were very expensive.

87

88 Ms. Fyfe stated that she did not think that removing the position was good for the students and the  
89 board should not be going back and forth discussing it.

90

91 Mr. Butkiewicz commented that since there are 5 (five) special education teachers and 22  
92 paraprofessionals, why not hire another special education teacher to take some of the students who  
93 require paraprofessionals including, what he presumed to be some of the "chair flippers that are causing  
94 disruption in the classes", so that some of the paraprofessional positions could be removed.

95

96 Ms. HasBrouck stated that they could look into the IEP's of all the students and see if that was an option  
97 in the future. But, right now, it is not an option since the paraprofessionals are IEP driven. She also  
98 spoke directly to Mr. Butkiewicz regarding his statement about "chair flippers" and that he should not  
99 be speaking about students in that manner. Mr. Michael Kelly requested that the board move on.

100

101 Mr. Tweed stated that he supported Mr. Butkiewicz' questions. He asked for the law or statute  
102 regarding the requirement of paraprofessionals in the classroom. Ms. Sebasco stated that it is under the  
103 IDEA 94:142 Law, a federal law, which requires that students be educated in the least restricted  
104 environment, which means that the students need to be in a classroom with other students of their age.  
105 Putting the special education students in one room away from the other kids is against this law. There  
106 was further discussion on this topic.

107

108 Ms. HasBrouck asked the board to please trust in the school's budget since they are the professionals in  
109 their area and know what needs to be in the budget and what does not.

110

111 Mr. Friend-Gray asked what the difference of the numbers was from last year to the current proposed  
112 budget this year. Mr. Roy stated that last year the budget had a 4.06% increase and the proposed  
113 budget increase for this year was 5.33%. Mr. Friend-Gray wanted to know what the difference was after  
114 taking out the math interventionist and putting it on a warrant article. Mr. Roy answered that it would  
115 be around 4.5-4.75%. Mr. Friend-Gray stated he supported the budget with those figures and felt  
116 comfortable leaving it that way.

117

118 Mr. Michael Kelly stated his disagreement with how the school is dealing with the disciplinary actions  
119 within the school, such as the social emotional learning and having the white space. He also expressed  
120 his concern for the library books that are being allowed in the school. He suggested cutting the budget

121 for the library books by \$3,000. Ms. Jones asked Mr. Michael Kelly to confirm that he was suggesting  
122 the library not buy any books. Mr. Michael Kelly confirmed that yes that is what he was suggesting. Mr.  
123 Tweed supported Mr. Michael Kelly's comments on the content of the books.

124  
125 Mr. Robert Kelly suggested combining the grounds maintenance line for the school with that of the  
126 town. It was stated that it was a contracted amount at this time.

127  
128 Mr. Friend-Gray suggested reducing the equipment line.

129  
130 Mr. Butkiewicz suggested reducing the budget for the Athletic Department. Ms. Sebasco stated that the  
131 coaches are part of the collective bargaining agreement.

132  
133 Mr. Butkiewicz also suggested eliminating the Curriculum Director position.

134  
135 On Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, the school board will be meeting at 5:00 in the school library to discuss the  
136 school budget and line items. Then, on Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, the final school budget will be presented  
137 to the Budget Committee. This is the official public hearing.

138  
139 Ms. Sebasco explained that there was discussion of an additional warrant article for technology. She  
140 stated this would be an additional capital reserve fund but they did not have the details on that yet since  
141 it was just suggested the night before.

142  
143 Mr. Butkiewicz stated that according to the document he was looking at, the Curriculum Director was  
144 costing \$233,000. It was discussed that this was a mistake. Mr. Butkiewicz asked what the true cost  
145 was. There was no answer.

146  
147 Ms. Jones pointed out that this is a public school and if students need to start paying for things, such as  
148 sports, that creates a differentiation and that is not public. Mr. Tweed agreed that was a good point.

149  
150 Mr. Butkiewicz suggested removing the School Board Moderator stipend from the budget.

151  
152 *Ms. HasBrouck, Ms. Levenson, and Mr. Roy left the table at 9:20 as did Mr. Morin.*

153  
154 **Sub-Committee Reports.**

155  
156 Mr. Robert Kelly stated that the CIP Committee will have many upcoming warrant articles. Ms. Sebasco  
157 stated that the school will be putting a warrant article in for 2025 for the modular additions at the  
158 school.

159  
160 The BOS will be having a meeting on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> to finalize their budget.

161

162 The next Budget Committee meeting is Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, when the BOS will present their budget to  
163 the committee. This is an open public town budget hearing where anyone can speak. The Budget  
164 Committee can make amendments to that budget that night or Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup>. The Budget  
165 Committee can only recommend or not recommend the warrant articles from the BOS. The Budget  
166 Committee has to the 25<sup>th</sup> to do this.

167  
168 Mr. Michael Kelly said he looked into the School Board stipends and Nottingham was the highest among  
169 the surrounding towns.

170  
171 Mr. Michael Kelly confirmed that Saturday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> is the Town Deliberative and Wednesday,  
172 February 7<sup>th</sup> is the School Deliberative Session.

173  
174 Mr. Friend-Gray stated that he had summed up some of the budget from the last meeting on a  
175 spreadsheet for the other committee members to review and work with.

176  
177 ***The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Decker. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robert Kelly. The***  
178 ***motion passed by a vote of 10-0-0.***

179  
180 The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

181  
182 Transcribed per video.  
183 Respectfully Submitted,  
184 Alana J. Kenney