



**BUDGET COMMITTEE**  
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**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING**

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Wednesday, January 14, 2015 – 6:30 p.m. – Greenland Central School

*Members Present:* Chair Mary McDonough, Alyson Baryames, Chris Halligan, Bob Krasko, Steve McKenzie, Don Miller, John Penacho - Selectmen's Rep, Mark Raque, Pat Walsh – School Board Rep

*Members Absent:* Toby Fedder, Steve Gerrato

*Also Present:* School Board, Peter Smith – Principal, Kelli Killen – Assistant Superintendent, Jim Katkin – Business Administrator

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**SCHOOL BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING**

Chair McDonough thanked those present for taking an interest in the budget process. Chair McDonough opened the Budget Committee meeting at 6:35 p.m. and a roll call was taken. The Chair stated that a quorum was present and the meeting was being recorded. The audience was asked if anyone was recording the meeting; there was no response.

Chair McDonough stated that the purpose of the meeting was to gather comments from the public regarding the proposed 2015-2016 school budget. She announced that the Town budget would be reviewed in a public hearing on Tuesday, February 10, 2015, if residents would like to give input. She also explained the role of the Budget Committee was to work on behalf of the Town's residents to ensure prudent appropriation of public funds. She added that they try to represent all residents of Greenland, from young families to retirees.

Chair McDonough thanked the School Board, Principal Smith and J. Katkin for their efforts in putting the proposed budget together. She also stated that many people move to this Town because of the school system; however, residents needed to keep in mind how the school and Town budgets affect the tax rate. Approximately 80% of every tax dollar supports the school; the remaining 20% covers Town and County expenses. The school budget, as presented to the Budget Committee is anticipated to raise the tax rate \$1.47 per \$1,000; Warrant Article 4 would increase it an additional \$0.11. Chair McDonough further explained that this is a bottom line budget.

Chair McDonough asked that anyone speaking would need to come to the microphone and state their name and address. She added that speakers must be a resident of Greenland and that they be respectful in their comments.

Stephen Farhn, 10 Spring Hill Road: Concerned about class size and the need for a third Grade 1 teacher.

Nicole Connelly, 22 Charles Drive: She is a teacher by training; the need for the additional teacher next year is based on J. Katkin's "expert opinion" and calculations for the anticipated increase in class size (she believed there will be an additional six to ten Grade 1 students).

## DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Chair McDonough reminded those present this is a bottom line budget. The Board was instructed by J. Katkin that line items needed to be changed. The Board was trying to adjust the overall budget to reflect a lower tax rate increase; however, it doesn't mean that the school cannot spend more in that particular line.

Sandy Tague, School Board Chairperson: The budget reflects "needs not wants", and the goal was to keep class sizes below 20 students. She stated it would be impossible to absorb that \$60,000 since the salary line also affects FICA and benefits. S. Tague continued that since the school has grown and there are now common core standards, there is a need for an Assistant Principal. The common core standards require each new minor have a full week of testing. She further stated that there are problems at the school that require an Assistant Principal position.

Talley Westerberg, 15 Holly Lane: See attached prepared statement she read.

Steve McKenzie, Budget Committee: Replied to her statement, stating that T. Westerberg referred to a motion which was made at the previous budget meeting. S. McKenzie clarified for those present that the motion was made by one member of the Board; it was not seconded and not moved. He continued that her comment to the Board, based on the fact it was made by only one member, is disrespectful to the Board as a whole.

Jeff McNally, 54 Maple Drive: He is a teacher in SAU 21 and a parent of a student at Greenland School. He stated that the increased class sizes are difficult for the teacher and asked if the Board felt the school didn't need the teacher.

John Penacho, Selectmen's Rep on the Budget Committee: Stated the Budget Committee could ask the school to reduce their overall budget by a percentage vs. line-by-line. He continued that they needed to look at one of the largest growing areas of the budget, tuition to Portsmouth High School.

Chair McDonough added that the Budget Committee did ask the school to reduce their budget by a percentage several years ago. There weren't parents at that meeting, and members of the community criticized them for not going line-by-line.

Alyson Baryjames, Budget Committee: People may be confused about the Grade 1 position since the School Board is stating that the position will not be hired if the money is not reinstated.

Mark Raque, Budget Committee: The overall increase in the budget is 12.5% over the previous year.

Chris Evilsizer, 804 Portsmouth Avenue: Understood the concept of a bottom line budget; asked for clarification of the "Support Services- Other", which J. Katkin explained.

Beth Vischer, 13 Ridgecrest: She is a teacher who is now home taking care of her children who are not in school yet. She was in favor of hiring an additional Grade 1 teacher to keep class sizes low as stated in the Greenland School standards on its website.

Eric West, 32 Holly Lane: He has benefited from the Greenland School in that he has two children. He moved here in 1995, is a former realtor and in favor of Town growth. He felt the Town should institute impact fees on development and manage continued growth. People should be able to continue to afford to live in Greenland, and they needed to consider if residents can afford the increases. He further stated that being on the Budget Committee is a thankless job. He was in favor of keeping the tax rate down.

## DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Glen Westerberg, 15 Holly Lane: Restated J. Katkin's estimation of the probable increase in Grade 1 students from 50 to 53. He also felt there is not a lot of wiggle room with the teacher and Assistant Principal positions. There were cuts made to last year's budget and now they anticipate a deficit.

Sandy Tague, School Board Chairperson: Doesn't feel the Assistant Principal position should be a warrant article; personnel issues should be part of the school budget.

Jon Wendell, 15 Great Bay Drive: The Budget Committee has done a good job of keeping the Town and school budgets as a whole in line over the past few years; it's a challenge to manage budgets and it's a tough year. They are in agreement with the school on all but three lines, and the Town has an attractive tax rate.

Todd Kade, Bayside Road: Spoke to high school tuition, asking what was being done to keep PHS accountable. J. Katkin responded that they don't get the rate until October 2015, and outlined the area agreement SAU 50 has with Portsmouth.

Vaughan Morgan, Selectman, 16 Holly Lane: He has received phone calls from his peers who are concerned about the tax rate increase. It's estimated that the average household increase would be \$450. He continued that the Town Administrator doesn't have an assistant and she runs a town of 4,000 people. She makes \$75,000 per year; all other Town office employees make \$40,000 or less. It's the Selectmen's job to keep the Town safe and run efficiently as well as to keep taxes down.

Bob Krasko, Budget Committee: Echoed what V. Morgan said, stating that it costs \$15,000 per year to educate a student at PHS. Retirees are getting a 1.7% increase in their benefits this year.

Katie Curtis, 79 Tidewater Farm Road: The burden needs to be shared; she has children in Grades K, 1 and 2.

Nicole Connelly, 22 Charles Drive: She appreciated the concern regarding the tax rate. She has lived here a long time and felt that the growth in Town was due to the excellent school system; people want to move to Greenland because of the schools.

Charles Ireland, 380 Post Road: His family has been paying taxes in Town for 150 years. His first tax bill was \$240. He has six more years to live in Town before he has to move because he's getting taxed out.

Mo Sodini, 18 Sunnyside Drive: Asked J. Katkin how much money is in the unassigned fund balance. J. Katkin responded that the 2.5% retainage can only be used for emergency expenditures. It would have to be approved by the Budget Committee, School Board and Department of Education. It can be used to offset the tax rate. M. Sodini responded that SB2 threw us for a curve. He also addressed the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan), calling it the "road map to the future". The purpose of the CIP is to help level the tax rate by spreading project funding over several years. M. Sodini was frustrated that the school didn't fully participate in the CIP process.

Eric West, 32 Holly Lane: Asked if there was any discussion between the SAU's to address high school tuition since we make up almost 50% of the PHS population. J. Katkin responded that the area agreement was first established in 1969, and clarified in 1996 and 2009.

Jon Wendell, Great Bay Drive: The teacher position will increase the average household by \$56.

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Pat Walsh, School Board Rep on the Budget Committee: It takes 12 houses to pay for one high school tuition. The over 55 community at Bramber Valley may not help our situation with paying tuition since it can't be assured there won't be high school students living there.

Henry Salaun, 13 Barrett Farm Drive: Described how growing up, the town he lived in didn't look long term. He built several schools that are now closed.

Glen Westerberg, 15 Holly Lane: Thanked the Board, stating he appreciated the dialogue and asked for the funding to be reinstated into the budget.

There being no further comments, Chair McDonough closed the public hearing. Warrant articles were reviewed; Article 4 would increase the tax rate an additional \$0.11.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

### NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, January 21, 2015 – 6:30 p.m., Town Hall Conference Room, School Budget Final Review

Respectfully Submitted – Mary McDonough, Chairperson

Approved: 