



BUDGET COMMITTEE
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MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING

Wednesday, January 06, 2016 – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

Members Present: Chair Mary McDonough, Alyson Baryames, James Connelly, Bob Krasko, Steve McKenzie, John Penacho - Selectmen's Rep, Mark Raque, Kristen Syphers, Pat Walsh – School Board Rep

Members Absent: Toby Fedder, Don Miller

Also Present: Jim Katkin – Business Administrator; Salvatore Petralia – Superintendent of Schools; Peter Smith – Principal, Greenland School

Chair McDonough opened the Budget Committee meeting at 6:30 p.m. and a roll call was taken. The Chair stated that a quorum was present and the meeting was being recorded.

Chair McDonough reminded members that three positions will be open on the Budget Committee. The sign-up period is from January 22, 2016 through January 29, 2016; anyone interested should see the Town Clerk. Members were also given revisions to the Town budget. Warrant articles were not included; the Board of Selectmen will review them at their meeting on Monday, January 11, 2016. The Budget Committee will receive Town warrant articles next week.

1. School Budget Review

Chair McDonough explained the review process for the School Budget. M. Raque requested input from members regarding the overall budget. He stated that the budget as proposed, without teacher contracts, was approximately a 4.5% increase. That increase was not doable for him, and teacher contracts still had to be included. He felt it may increase their budget to a 5.5% increase. He continued that by decreasing the budget by 1% (approximately \$96,000), the increase would be 3.5%. The teacher contracts may come in at an additional 1%, bringing the total increase to 4.5%. Chair McDonough added that School and Town budgets, including warrant articles, should be combined for the overall impact on the tax rate.

M. Raque stated that the overall budget increase was \$412,000. He clarified that the budget includes approximately \$364,000 that has not been identified as major increases and untouchable. Removing the Assistant Principal position (\$129,000 with benefits) from the \$364,000 brings the discretionary amount to \$235,000. If a decrease of \$96,000 was agreed upon, it would be taken from the \$235,000.

J. Katkin stated that the Teacher's Association arrived at a tentative agreement of five years. For teachers on the schedule: the first year is a 2.6% raise, a 1.9% increase the second year, 2.6% in the third, 1.9% in the fourth, and 2.6% in the final year of the contract. For teachers off the schedule, it is a 3% increase for each year of the five year contract. J. Katkin explained Greenland's schedule. The current collective bargaining agreement includes longevity, which is based upon the number of teaching years; the number of years teaching is inclusive of all years teaching, not just those in Greenland. After ~~five~~ 10 years of teaching in Greenland, those years are multiplied by \$106 and added to the entire

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salary. J. Katkin explained the longevity portion of the contract that was negotiated by the School Board as well as the major health insurance concession made by teachers. In addition, one work day has been added to bring the total to 189 days as well as increasing the work day by 15 minutes. J. Katkin stated that collective bargaining agreement increased 16.98% over a five year period. The overall consensus of the School Board was that there were some substantial give-backs made by the teachers.

M. Raque questioned the 15 minute increase in the teacher's work day if the school day wasn't extended. P. Walsh explained that extra time would be used for parent meetings, after school help for students, etc.

Chair McDonough asked for an update on Portsmouth changing their schedule next year. J. Katkin responded that he didn't have any new information. He was hoping to have a decision by the Deliberative Session on February 02. Ann Mayer, School Board member, added that based on the Portsmouth schedule of meetings a decision may not be made by Town voting day on March 08, 2016.

There being no questions for J. Katkin, S. McKenzie made the following motion:

MOTION: *S. McKenzie moved to reduce the overall School budget by \$129,000. Second – B. Krasko*

DISCUSSION: S. McKenzie clarified that the amount of \$129,000 was the Assistant Principal position with benefits. He felt that amount of money did not need to be spent with everything else coming into the picture. He reviewed School budgets back to 2011, and found they have increased 30% over the years. The impact on the tax rate from the School and Town budgets make the \$129,000 an unnecessary expense. K. Syphers disagreed, stating that the Assistant Principal is crucial if looking at some of the legal issues the school has had. It was her feeling that the position may stop potential problems. It was important to look at other schools in the State. The school has operated long enough with one principal handling all the issues.

S. McKenzie responded that he didn't think the school was big enough to warrant an Assistant Principal. He felt it could be handled as it has been as a stipend position. He continued that budgets for the Town and School have significantly increased. There are people in Town living on fixed incomes that have seen significant increases in the tax rate over the last several years.

A. Baryames noted that Greenland is one of the only towns in the seacoast area without an Assistant Principal for grades K-8. She struggles with members saying what the school needs or doesn't need, and looks to the School Board to make a recommendation. She continued that she didn't think it was their job to say an Assistant Principal was not needed. The needs and complexities of the school were discussed at length at an earlier meeting. This is a true need for the school, and will be continue to be requested. She concluded by stating this is where the money should be spent.

S. McKenzie commented that it was a balancing act. Whether it's needed or not, the monies need to be reviewed and he may reconsider a general decrease. The Assistant Principal position was pinpointed because it was easy to direct attention to that. Chair McDonough reviewed the motion on the table and noted it was not specific to that position.

M. Raque stated the Assistant Principal is a tough issue for him. It's a major position, and there should be a real need. He wasn't opposed to the position, but the need was not "sold" at a previous meeting. He added that if the consensus was to leave the position in, there were other areas where a 1% decrease could be made. P. Walsh also discussed the need for the Assistant Principal position. A. Baryames felt an Assistant Principal could help navigate and avoid additional legal costs.

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S. Petralia stated one of the main responsibilities of the building principal was supervision and evaluation of staff. Last year there were 19 teachers, which is a substantial number. The Assistant Principal would assist the Principal in supervising staff. The position would not alleviate any legal issues, but would help the Principal in his day-to-day issues. The stipend position is held by a teacher and that person cannot supervise staff (a teacher cannot formerly supervise a peer). The Principal is also responsible for the support staff. Among all the administrators in the SAU, the Principal in Greenland has the largest case load. S. Huestis, School Board member, spoke in favor of the Assistant Principal position.

There being no further discussion, the motion was put to vote.

MOTION: S. McKenzie moved to reduce the overall School budget by \$129,000. Second – B. Krasko; one in favor, ~~seven~~ six opposed, one abstain. **MOTION DENIED**

M. Raque stated that the overall budget increase would be approximately 5.2%. Being fiscally responsible, he suggested a 1% decrease. He felt the school would be in the best position to state where the needs were. J. Katkin reminded the Budget Committee they had to tell him where the reductions were being made. Department of Revenue Administration requires a form be signed by the Budget Committee indicating what is and is not approved. J. Penacho reminded members that it was a bottom line budget, and could be decreased from any line. It would then be up to the School Board how the funding would be allocated because it was a bottom line budget.

The proposed budget, with the teacher's contract, is \$9,682,291. M. Raque proposed a budget of \$9,585,468 or a reduction of \$96,823 which is a 1% decrease. The budget was reviewed line-by-line. J. Penacho pointed out that the difference between the proposed budget and the default budget was \$226,000. His recommendation was to make no cuts to the budget and let the voters decide at the polls.

Chair McDonough stated that after the public hearing, the Budget Committee would have to decide whether to recommend or not recommend the budget. She continued that they needed to be transparent about what is in the budget. She also asked that members arrive early to the public hearing in order to review warrant articles.

2. Approval of Minutes: Wednesday, December 16, 2015

MOTION: B. Krasko moved to approve the minutes of Wednesday, December 16, 2015 as amended. Second – S. McKenzie; all in favor. **MOTION CARRIED**

3. Other Business

In the handout prepared by J. Katkin for the public hearing, the Budget Committee recommendation will be the same as the School Board recommendation. Chair McDonough requested that the increases as well as what the numbers represent be addressed clearly in any handouts. P. Walsh added that there may be a warrant article for a Special Education Trust Fund; it was still being discussed at the School Board level.

4. Adjournment

MOTION: B. Krasko moved to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. Second – J. Penacho; all in favor. **MOTION CARRIED**

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NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, January 13, 2016 – 7:00 p.m., Greenland School, Public Hearing – Town & School Budgets

Respectfully Submitted – Charlotte Hussey, Secretary to the Boards

Approved: 