



BUDGET COMMITTEE

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MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING

Wednesday, December 06, 2017 – 6:30 p.m. – Town Hall Conference Room

Members Present: Chair Bob Krasko, Tibby Cail, James Connelly, Mark Connelly, Don Miller, Patty Porter, Kristen Syphers, Randy Bunnell – School Board Rep, Chip Hussey – Selectmen's Rep

Members Absent: Sharon Hussey, Steve McKenzie

Also Present: Sal Petralia - Superintendent; Amy Ransom – Assistant Business Administrator; Tamara Hallee – Principal, Greenland School; Teegan von Burn – Assistant Principal, Greenland School; Greenland School Board Members; Marcia McLaughlin – Library Trustee

Chair Krasko opened the Budget Committee meeting at 6:30 p.m. A roll call was taken by the Chair; he announced a quorum was present and the meeting was being recorded.

Approval of the minutes from the meeting on Thursday, November 30, 2017 was continued to the next meeting.

SCHOOL BUDGET REVIEW

Revisions to the School Budget were distributed to Committee members. Amy Ransom reviewed the proposed and default budgets with the Committee.

The proposed operating budget is \$10,943,732, which is an increase of \$897,090 over the current operating budget or an increase of 8.93%. The default budget is \$10,651,007, an increase of \$604,365 or 6.02% over the current operating budget. There is a difference of \$292,725 between the proposed budget and default budget (2.91%).

Additional staff has been requested for Grades 5 and 7. The music teacher has been increased by .2. The School Board wanted to follow adopted guidelines for class size; the increase in music will help with scheduling by allowing teachers to have their prep time. The Grade 7 teacher was part of the proposal to change an enrichment teacher to Unified Arts to help with recommendations from the Middle School Structure Committee. In addition, two reading aides were included. Raises for non-union staff are 2.75% and includes administrators, para-professionals, custodians, secretaries, food services, etc.

The proposed budget includes any changes needed in the default budget. The default maintains current services and other obligations by law. Included are teacher raises for the third year of the collective bargaining agreement and the third Kindergarten teacher hired this year; there is an increase to the Portsmouth tuition line of approximately \$370,000. The current tuition rate is \$17,080 per student; projected for 2018-2019 is \$17,350 per student. The Special Education budget increased by approximately \$176,000 and includes salaries and other services required by their IEP for additional out of district placement. It also includes the additional para-professional needed this year.

There was no increase in NH Retirement. Health insurance rates have a guaranteed maximum increase of 1.6% and dental of 2.3%. There is a reduction in the district's portion of the SAU office; it will be voted on December 20, 2017. There is also a reduction to the Debt Service principal and interest due on the bond of approximately \$26,494.

Current enrollment at Greenland is 414 students, grades K-8. There are 64 students, or 15%, with IEP's in the Greenland School District; this is below the State average of 16%. Enrollment at Portsmouth High School is 168 students.

The Tuition Expendable Trust Fund has a current balance of \$366,414.17. The anticipated withdrawal is \$179,702. Last year the School Board and Budget Committee agreed to reduce the Tuition line; the line is over budget. The School Board also anticipates withdrawing from the Special Education Expendable Trust Fund; the current balance is \$50,047.75. Due to an unanticipated Special Education need this year, the fund will be significantly reduced.

The balance in the School Building, Grounds and Properties Trust Fund will be approximately \$36,000 after the rent payment is made. The current balance is \$11,681.25; \$60,960 was withdrawn for repairs and upgrades to the SAU office.

Estimated revenues include the prior year fund balance, the 2.5% retainage held by the school district, federal funds, etc. There is a decrease anticipated next year due to the possibility of a lower fund balance as a result of unanticipated Special Education costs, the need to hire a Kindergarten teacher and two para-professionals. There may also be a small increase to the Adequacy Grant from the State based on the current October enrollment. The local impact, including the increase to the budget and decrease in revenue, is approximately \$1.1 million. The total tax impact on the proposed budget would be \$1.51 (\$604/\$400,000 home); the default budget impact would be \$1.15 (\$460/\$400,000 home).

There was a discussion about the need for an additional Grade 7 teacher. The Structure Committee has recommended changing the current Enrichment position to a Unified Arts position to help set up the middle school structure. The .2 music position will help with scheduling, allowing teachers to create their own schedule as well as help to reduce class size. This is Phase 1, and will be a multi-year approach. Class size on the middle school level varies from 26 students to 22 students.

A Grade 5 teacher was included in a warrant article; the School Board made the decision to put it back into the budget. The Grade 7 teacher is included in the operating budget. Warrant articles will include tuition, Special Education and building maintenance. The current music teacher (.8) will become full-time. Some teachers have no planning periods on certain days which compromises the CBA.

D. Miller asked about financing of the Kindergarten program through the State. A. Ransom responded that \$1,100 per student is anticipated. The details are still being worked on. A. Ransom added that communities that don't receive Adequacy will receive Kindergarten funds. D. Miller asked if those funds would go into the unreserved balance or offset some of the expenses this year. A. Ransom explained the process for handling revenues.

T. Hallee stated it was important that the middle school structure be looked at; there are 26 students in some classes. Enrollment has increased 4% over last year; they anticipate 419 students in January. Chair Krasko noted that the school can accommodate 450 students.

The federal government cut title funds to public schools, and funded charter schools and voucher programs. Without reading and math tutors, the students on the cusp who aren't Special Education

students won't receive the additional support. There will be significant issues in the middle school years. R. Bunnell added that there is legislature at the State level on the "right to choose" and towns could lose more Adequacy aid. Without an additional Grade 5 teacher, the class size could be 1:23, and they wouldn't have as much attention. S. Petralia stated each of the School Board's within the SAU has made a concerted effort to maintain the appropriate class size. The Greenland School Board and administration is making a concerted effort for appropriate class sizes. J. Connelly asked how many teachers will be needed for the middle school concept. R. Bunnell responded that there will be a meeting with parents to discuss the middle school plans and structure.

R. Bunnell stated that everyone worked very hard on the proposed budget for many months. Line item by line item there are a lot of reductions to help make the school better when it comes to staffing. S. Petralia thanked the School Board for supporting the administration's budget. They feel very strongly this is needed as a school system to maintain quality education in the Greenland community.

Chair Krasko stated that reviews will not be done line by line. Members were asked to review the budgets and have any questions ready for discussion. A. Ransom asked that questions regarding the School Budget be emailed to her (aransom@sau50.org) or R. Bunnell (rabunnell@comcast.net) in advance of the meeting.

D. Miller questioned why the Grade 5 teacher was removed from a warrant article and added to the budget. R. Bunnell responded that they've never had to ask for a position to address class size. Warrant articles in the past have been due to program changes; this was to deal with class size issues.

The Town Budget will be reviewed with recommendations on Thursday, December 14, 2017. The School Budget will be reviewed with recommendations on Tuesday, December 19, 2017. Both meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Conference Room.

MOTION: D. Miller moved to adjourn at 7:33 p.m. Second – C. Hussey; all in favor. MOTION CARRIED

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, December 14, 2017 – 6:30 p.m., Town Budget Review, Town Hall Conference Room

Respectfully Submitted: Charlotte Hussey, Secretary to the Boards

Approved: Wednesday, December 14, 2017