

**TOWN OF FARMINGTON
BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday – January 10, 2013
356 Main Street - Farmington, NH**

Members Present: Sam Cataldo, Steve Henry, Ann Titus, Gail Ellis, Brian St.Onge, Gerry McCarthy and Neil Johnson

Members Absent: Cindy Snowdon

Selectman's Rep: Arthur Capello

School Board Rep: Kathy King

Public Present: School Superintendent Steve Welford, School Finance Administrator Janette Lamay, Assistant School Superintendent Stephanie Lafreniere, Beverly Bloechl, Joe Pitre, Penny Morin, Police Chief Kevin Willey, Jim Horgan, Carol O'Connell and Butch Lewis

At 6:01pm, Chairman Brian St.Onge opened the public hearing and noted that after tonight the school budget will be voted on during the Deliberative Session on Saturday, February 9, 2013 at 9am in the High School Gymnasium. All Farmington residents are strongly urged to attend.

1. Overview of 2013-2014 School Budget:

Assistant School Superintendent Stephanie Lafreniere explained that this year they built the budgets from a zero base and added what they felt was necessary instead of going by the previous year's budget. They looked at the instruction that was provided at the schools and what was missing, made personnel changes and changes in teacher trainings.

They are looking to reduce the staffing by changing to one principal at Henry Wilson, removing a translator position and ½ ESL position, seven paraprofessionals and the Title 1 Director. However they would like to add two assistant principals (one at VVCS and one at HWMS 4-6). Also two curriculum coaches would be added though they are not in the budget because they will be paid through the Title 1 grant. The purpose of the coaches is to imbed professional development in the schools. They are also looking to hire a math teacher at HWMS 7-8 to teach 7th grade pre-algebra and 8th grade algebra. Then at the high school they would like to add a Technology teacher, 1 chemistry teacher, a guidance counselor, and ISS teacher and 0.4 Television Production teacher. Ms. Lafreniere then explained they would like to bring back the School Resource Officer position at \$45,000 which would be 80% of the officer's salary and benefits. The lack of a SRO has been noticed this year and they would like to bring one back. Lastly, the district would like to get away from contracting out speech services by hiring 1.5 speech

pathologists. By hiring a staff member the district will save \$70,000 a year in contracted services.

Superintendent Steve Welford explained that School Care Insurance will have a 1.7% increase which will include the teachers, paraprofessionals and custodians. LGC will have a 2.7% increase which will include the administration, secretaries, bus drivers and IT personnel. Lastly dental insurance will have a 1.2% increase which will include everyone. Retirement will also have an increase. The rate for teachers and administration will increase by 2.86% and the non-certified personnel will increase by 1.9%. These increases will have the following budgetary impact; for non-certified staff and increase of \$24,473.50 and for certified staff and increase of \$149,871.96. Lastly there is an increase of \$50,000 in the unemployment accounts.

Mr. Welford explained that this year the district will be investing in textbooks that are desperately needed at the schools. At VVCS they have an increase of \$9,940 which include \$4,500 for textbooks and a nurse line for \$9,000. These lines are somewhat offset by a decrease in the supply line by \$1,500 and a decrease in the professional development line by \$2,500.

Mr. Welford then explained there is a \$19,723 increase to the HWMS 4-6 budget. This includes \$3,900 for Social Studies and math supplies, \$8,216 for consumables and \$13,407 for textbooks. These figures are offset by a reduction in new/replacement of equip, library books and staff development.

Next Mr. Welford explained there is a \$3,004 increase to the HWMS 7-8 budget. This increase includes \$1,253 for art supplies, \$1,617 for library books and \$10,150 for textbooks. The increase is offset by a decrease of \$1,062 for science supplies, \$1,200 for new equipment, \$1,570 for library software and \$3,000 for staff development.

Subsequently, Mr. Welford stated there is a \$47,152 increase to the high school budget request. This increase includes \$1,650 for textbooks, \$1,616 for new equipment, \$37,857 for textbooks, \$1,086 for replacement equipment, \$12,928 for voc-ed tuition, \$2,160 for referees and \$7,090 for the virtual high school subscription. These increases are offset by a reduction of \$1,000 in supplies, \$1,000 in Voc. Ed mileage, \$7,000 for equipment replacement and \$4,000 for staff development. He also stated it would be wonderful to have a CIP plan for textbooks. Also they will be spending \$17,500 out of the Title 6 or SIG grant to purchase Pre-Algebra and Algebra books.

Mr. Welford presented the IT budget with an increase of \$52,629. The increase is due mostly to a consolidation of IT purchases through this one department. General increases were; \$6,507 for Telecast equipment, \$1500 for the printer contract, \$8,952 for the technology equipment hosting, \$5,200 for supplies/printing, \$15,055 for software licensing and \$47,720 for equipment which is mostly for the FHS computer lab. There also were some offsetting reductions; \$1000 from the workshop line, \$9,088 from SIS maintenance, \$19,117 from E-Rate Expense line (this should never have been a budget line) and \$0.57 for supplies.

Mr. Welford explained that the Maintenance budget request is down \$6,290 this year. There were a few increases; \$7,966 for HWMS repairs, \$1250 for routine maintenance, \$33,624 for FHS camera/surveillance system, \$3000 for repairs installed equipment, \$9,500 for repairs/paving and \$6,394 for utilities/electric. These line increases were offset by ; furniture repairs for \$1,203, heating oil \$6,326.20, VVCS new equipment \$5,000, 4-6 new equipment \$3,000, FHS new equipment \$1,402 and Equipment Replacement 4-6 for \$1,418.

Mr. Welford explained that the Special Education budget section has an increase this year of \$89,187. The increase is due to increases in the following lines; Contracted Services FHS for \$5,000, Tuitions for \$68,575, Travel FHS (travel to court and out of district placements) for \$1,500, books for \$1,799, Services Psychology for \$112,815, Testing Materials for \$1,058, Speech Equipment for \$1,046 and Contracted Services PT for \$2,040. However they were able to offset some of the increases by reducing the following lines; Contracted Services HWMS 7-8 by \$3,500, Services Testing/Counsel by \$13,000, Supplies-General by \$1,000, Supplies-Testing by \$2,460, Computer Hardware by \$1,158, Contracted Services FLA by \$20,630, Telephone FLA by \$1,380, Psychology Books by \$1,004, Staff Workshops by \$1,500, Contracted Services-Speech by \$48,000, Supplies-Speech by \$1,000, Dues-Speech by \$1,100 and Professional Development by \$2,500.

Mr. Welford explained that the transportation budget is up \$28,993. This is increase is due to a few lines being increased; New Equipment by \$6,750, Transport-SPED by \$16,000 and Repairs by \$5,700.

Mr. Welford explained that the District Wide expenses are up this year by \$46,485. This increase is due to the following increases; Regional After School Class \$2,500, District School Resource Officer \$45,000 and Transfer to Food Service \$10,000. These increases were offset by the following decreases; Contracted Services-Curriculum \$6,870, Training/Workshops \$1,000, Attorney \$5,000, Legal –SPED \$4,000, Contracted Services-Medicaid \$1,000, Software-Medicaid \$5,760, Workshops \$1,000 and Postage \$1,000. The SAU budget has been finalized and the SAU apportionment for Farmington shows a decrease of about \$7,000, with a total of \$828,740.

Mr. Welford explained the Food Service Budget is actually down this year by \$67,406. There was an increase in the salary line of \$1,364. However, there were several decreases; salary staff by \$3,220, Insurance buybacks by \$4,250, utilities by \$7,450, supplies by \$14,335, Commodities by \$25,800 and software by \$2,000. The School Board did just vote on Monday night to increase the cost per meal so the schools can move forward to hopefully receive the federal funding.

Arthur asked what the tax impact will be and Mr. Welford replied roughly \$0.29 because there is a total increase of \$137,344.66. Gerry asked if that figure includes the warrant articles and Mr. Welford replied no.

Ms. Lafreniere then explained that the nation is working towards moving to a Common Core of Standards and a Competency Based Program. New England is also moving away from the NECAP test and mostly likely going to the Smarter Balance computer based test in 2014-2015 though there are some logistical issues that are still being worked out.

2. Review of Warrant Articles:

Mr. Welford reviewed the warrant articles as they will read at the Deliberative Session. A copy of the warrant articles is available at the SAU for review. Arthur asked if anyone checked the intent of the Buildings and Grounds Capital Reserve Fund to see if the purchase of a building is allowed and School Board Chairman replied yes. Gail asked if the SAU has the paperwork for when the fund was initially established. Neil stated in the Trustees report it states the purpose of the fund is improvements. Beverly Bloechl stated the building was not approved to be purchased last year because it was being sold as is and there were issues with the building. Mr. Welford stated that it is still being sold as is though air quality tests have been completed and nothing was found. It was then noted that the funds may have to be raised and appropriated and Kathy noted that she would not be interested in raising and appropriating the funds at this time when the teachers' and paras' contracts and such are still outstanding. Ann asked if there was an inspection done on the building and Mr. Welford replied that there were visible inspections completed last year along with the air quality tests and those reports are good for a year. Brian asked how much of the rent for the SAU building does Farmington pay and Mr. Welford explained the town would be responsible for 86% of the \$26,000. Also, the School Board just decided last week to ask to purchase the building again and the seller lowered the price by \$20,000 from last year. Gerry asked if the School Board considered moving back in to the Municipal Building and Joe Pitre stated he would consider it if the space was renovated. Gerry noted the facility has been updated and renovations are continuing and also, it costs the SAU more to be at the current space then it did at the Municipal Building.

Steve Henry noted that the School Board just received an additional bill for \$150,000 for out of district placements and asked how those costs will be covered since the School Board has not access to the Special Education Unanticipated Cost Trust Fund. Mr. Welford explained that those costs were covered by moving funds around in the special education budget between the high school and Valley View. Though changes are unanticipated if there are not any further special education changes then the budget will be okay. Gail asked what the process is to holding a Special Meeting to expend funds from the fund. Mr. Welford explained the district would need to go to court and explain why a special meeting is needed and then the process of public hearings and deliberative sessions would need to be held. Joe Pitre added that a special meeting will cost the school approximately \$4-\$6,000.

It was noted that Article 8,9 and 10 all need to be amended to read they will come from surplus and not be "raised and appropriated". Neil explained there is \$104,748 in the School Technology Fund and \$709,982 in the FHS Construction, Renovation and Repair Fund. Article 11 is new this year due to new legislature passing at the State level. It allows, if passed, for the school to retain up to 2.5% of a unanticipated end of year

balance. Arthur asked if the School Board would have to apply to DRA like the Town in order to spend the funds and Mr. Welford replied that he is not 100% sure but he believes the School Board would be able to expend the funds and would just need to report how the funds were spent.

Brian asked for clarification on Article 3 as to why the figures are different as to what is on the bottom line of the budget. Janette Lamay, School Finance Administrator, explained that the SAU apportionment \$828,740 needs to be backed out because it is a warrant article and add in federal revenues of \$1,050,000 and \$620,201 for the food service program and also \$ 42,432.62 for bus lease in warrant article 6. Arthur asked for a copy of the updated food service budget. Neil calculated the figures and stated there is still an error and article 3 should be to raise and appropriate \$17,020,612 and Ms. Lamay stated Neil is correct and they will need to make that correction. Arthur then pointed out that the default budget listed in Article 3 needs to have the bus lease pulled out of it because the final lease payment will be paid this year. Gail asked what the tax impact will be with the new figure if the budget passes and Neil stated \$0.22 which does not include the town buying down the taxes by \$0.75.

3. Discussion with Police Chief Kevin Willey:

Kevin explained he is here to speak on behalf of the restoration of the School Resource Officer program. Originally the program was begun in 1998 with a grant and was eliminated in 2011. The importance of the position is to be a mentor first, then a counselor and lastly a law enforcement officer. The officer would be assigned to the school during the entire school year and become part of the school environment. If the position is restored then a meeting will be held between the town and the school to establish a clear Memorandum of Understanding to establish the selection process, duties, payment and any other aspects of the position. Brian asked how many occasions the police department have had to visit the schools since the SRO position was removed. Kevin explained that the number of arrests went from 7 to 22 , number of reported violent acts went up 22% and the number of calls increased 200% between the two years where there was an SRO and the next year when there was not. Steve asked if the officer would require a vehicle and Kevin explained that he obtained a small electric car that he anticipates utilizing for that purpose.

4. Any Other Questions:

A. Arthur asked why the FLA positions are still listed in the default budget when it will not exist and Mr. Welford explained that those lines have been reallocated this year even though the line details read the same.

B. Carol O'Connell asked if there will be another chance for the public to review the budget before the Deliberative Session. Brian stated yes, this public hearing is being continued to next Tuesday, here at the high school at 6pm. Steve stated that they have plans to post the budget on the website for the public to review and they are also thinking of holding an information night at one of the schools.

C. Arthur requested all the changes ready for the Budget Committee members by

Accepted 1-23-13

Monday afternoon.

D. Arthur Capello motioned to continue this public hearing to Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 6pm at the Farmington High School, 2nd Ann Titus. Motion carried with all in favor.

Ann Titus motioned to adjourn, 2nd Kathy King. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandy Sanger
Recording Secretary