

**Official
As of 1/24/08**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
January 10, 2008
Memorial School**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm

ATTENDANCE

Vice Chair Tom Keach, Vincent Lembo, James Gorton, Town Council Rep., Dana Argo, School Board Rep, Sue Doyon, John Pieroni, Gerald Kearney, Mike Sorel and John Danforth

Excused: Charlie Humphries and Sandra Oliver

School district budget

\$130,000 insurance in the default budget?

P. Littlefield: Clarification of the \$130,000.

Last year, we presented a teacher's contract to the voters, which contained provisions where the employees assumed a greater contribution to the insurance. If the teacher contract passed, we estimated a \$130,000 savings in contributions from School District. In the 2008 budget, \$2,127,203 was budgeted for insurance. This is determined by taking the contractual obligation, and the rates, and move it forward. That number is based on the people we know, and what the School's District's contribution would be. With the support of the Budget Committee and the voters, the contract passed, and therefore the actual contribution was a difference (savings) of \$130,000. That \$130,000, we placed in an account, which we call "health insurance set aside". We set up a special line item for those funds. That remains untouched and will be returned to the voters at the end of the year.

When we were developing the 2008-2009 budget, if you do a zero based budget, we look at all the employees and what the anticipated rate will be. We went a little less than the maximum. We did a calculation, person by person, and the result is \$2,218,674. It's important to understand that we didn't take the 2008 budget and moved it forward. We started with a clean slate and built it from the bottom up.

When you look at our request of \$2,218,674, it was calculated employee by employee. That represents a request that is \$91,471 more than this year's budget, but accurately reflects what is expected in increased cost. If our actual was two (2) million this year, and there is a 10% increase, that \$221,000 increase makes sense. We didn't double count the \$130,000 because we didn't consider it. The result of making a \$130,000 cut in our proposed budget would mean that our health insurance obligation would be under funded by \$130,000. Our actual expense is increasing by \$221,000 but we only need \$91,000 to cover that expense.

P. Littlefield thanked the committee for their support for the three (3) media specialist for the district. He also requested reconsideration for the math position.

P. Littlefield: More and more is being asked of the teachers and the district with regard to data collection. Hooksett went from “a district in need of improvement” to being removed from the list. The bar has been raised and we will need to provide additional support for teacher to meet the benchmarks. Without the resources to do that, we will not do it well and I will be here next year with the same request.

G. Kearney: Our board voted against it because some members felt it wasn’t needed and others felt we should wait for the outcome of the SAU withdrawal committee.

I was happy to see that Hooksett was no longer a “district in need”. I think the position was somewhat of a bureaucratic position. It is not a direct impact on students. There was no guarantee of performance. There was no commitment to quantify the scores. My background is education and I taught math at the high school level and at Rivier College. I have some understanding of what mathematics is all about. There are few things that are discretionary in a school budget and I think this is one of them. I can understand the need at the middle school level to prepare students for high school, but not at the lower grades. Also, I would like to know if you have someone specific in mind for this position?

J. McHugh, School Board Chair: I don’t have anyone in mind. This was an initiative that came out of a School Board retreat. As a “district in need of improvement” there was a continuing concern with regard to student achievement in math. Our purpose is to improve the math service being delivered to the students from K-8. This person will report to the assistant superintendent because there are three (3) principals. It was a goal that came up repeatedly. The bar is not only being raised, we want to ensure success. The board went on a site visit to districts including Exeter and saw an individual working with teachers and looked at the test scores and if the student wasn’t doing well, they would sit down and change the strategy. I don’t know quantitatively what the percentage of change was, but there was improvement.

P. Littlefield: I do not have anyone in mind for this position. I’m here tonight as your Superintendent. There should be no confusion that the job description reports to the Assistant Superintendent and when she has her Hooksett hat on 60% of the time, she’s working for Hooksett. This position will not be housed at 90 Farmer Road. It is a field-based position that’s intended to give support to the schools. Memorial was a school that failed to meet the requirements in math and if they fail again, they could result in being a School in Need of Improvement next year. We have a performance issue right now. I have to look at what are the resources I need to improve this condition.

G. Kearney: I would like to know that if you hire this person, and the improvements are not achieved, then they are gone.

P. Littlefield: I will take that deal but for two years.

G. Kearney: I would like to see a goal or a measurable improvement commitment.

J. Pieroni: Would it be reasonable that the goal should be to remain out of need for improvement.

M. Sorel: Is this really a \$97,000 position?

P. Littlefield: The true cost of teachers gets very high because you are including benefits. The salary portion of that number is competitive. This is going to be a leader of teachers. \$66,000 with a masters. We have teachers making that base salary.

J. Hyde: You set a goal and goals must be measurable and specific and have a time frame. It seems to me that if a teacher sees an issue with a test, it is up to a teacher to change their teaching style. However, it sounds like a teaching coach and we have a similar position that we have a technician coach that helps us improve. If we sent teachers to the proper training, they could handle it on their own.

P. Littlefield: Fortunately, when we talk about the equivalent private sector, I understand the principles of management. It's nice in a private sector position that to keep people up to standard, you send them to training. You can't do that in school because you can't take the teacher out of the classroom.

M. Sorel: The \$97,000 cost item that we are discussing, is that included in the budget that was 2%.

T. Keach: What is the Superintendent salary?

The Superintendent salary is \$119,000.

J. Pieroni: One of my objections was due to the proposed SAU withdrawal; we would have a new superintendent and assistant with the same goals. If we remain in the SAU, could this position be SAU wide? Will there be other position coming down the line in English and science in the future.

P. Littlefield: When I look at our needs, the math coordinator will have a full plate in Hooksett and I would be concerned with diluting the work by making it SAU district wide.

I have no intention of coming in next year with other similar positions, however, I won't discount coming in the future with the same argument. I don't see that need now.

J. Hyde: Exclusive of warrant articles, what is the increase to the budget?

J. Pieroni: It is about 5.2% of the Budget Committee's proposed budget.

J. Hyde: What is the percent increase if all warrant articles pass?

P. Littlefield: There is only one from taxes, which is \$50,000.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

J. McHugh: With regard to the kitchen, the Business Administrator is still waiting for the final bids and Mr. Gagnon is working on the scope.

J. Pieroni: Copies of the proposed budget was presented and made available to the public. Copies of the warrant article and the default budget were also available. The Kitchen, technology fund, and purchase of truck have been presented to the public.

David Pearl, 79 Main Street: As a parent who has followed the evolution of education, I was skeptical of advisors and educators and wanted to keep the budget as low as possible, but because of the vast data that must be analyzed, and the requirements imposed by the Federal Government, we are forced to make these changes. I do support the math coordinator position.

V. Lembo: If this is such an important position, why is there not more public support?

M. Ouellette: We have received a great deal of input via email and many plan on attending the deliberative session to voice their concern.

D. Pearl: We have an email group that comments on school issues and there has been a lot of discussion regarding the preparedness of our student entering high school, particularly with regard to math. For a parent not that familiar with math, I would welcome a second opinion.

Close Public at 8:29

M. Sorel motioned to meet on January 17th at 6:30 at Town Hall to make a recommendation on the budget. Seconded by G. Kearney.

J. Pieroni: I think we should make decision tonight.

ROLL CALL

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| J. Pieroni | No |
| V. Lembo | No |
| D. Argo | No |
| J. Danforth | No |
| S. Doyon | No |
| M. Sorel | Yes |
| J. Hyde | Yes |
| T. Keach | Yes |
| G. Kearney | Yes |

5:4 Motion failed

V. Lembo motioned to recommend the School Budget of 25,441,966. Seconded by J. Pieroni.

M. Sorel: Will the school board provide the information at the deliberative session on how this budget number was arrived.

J. McHugh agreed.

Roll Call

T. Keach No
G. Kearney Yes
V. Lembo Yes
J. Pieroni Yes
M. Sorel Yes
D. Argo Yes
J. Danforth Yes
J. Hyde Yes
8:1 motion carries

Warrant Articles

M. Sorel motioned to recommend Article #3 for the Underhill Kitchen. Seconded by G. Kearney

V. Lembo: I have a concern supporting this warrant article after it was already funded and not completed.

J. McHugh: There was never discussion of doing all the issues at Underhill but just the entranceway of the kitchen. All issues were all discussed issues.

M. Sorel: Tom Keach and I went and looked at both this kitchen and the Cawley kitchen and it is clear to me that this need is genuine. I agree that we must have language, "Do Not Exceed", but we must be clear on the scope of the work.

T. Keach: I don't think this project can be done for \$300,000. I don't know how you go into a project without knowing what you want to do.

G. Kearney: There should be language that it becomes the contractor's obligations to complete within the bid.

J. Hyde: My suggestion is to take some of this money and hire someone to manage it. We should have done that with the Village School rather than leave it to the Administrator to manage.

ROLL CALL

J. Pieroni Yes
M. Sorel Yes

D. Argo Yes
J. Danforth Yes
T. Keach Yes
G. Kearney Yes
V. Lembo Yes
J. Hyde Yes
S. Doyon Yes

9:0 motion carries

Technology fund \$60,000

J. Pieroni motioned to recommend the technology fund. Seconded by M. Sorel

ROLL CALL

J. Pieroni Yes
M. Sorel Yes
D. Argo Yes
J. Danforth Yes
T. Keach Yes
G. Kearney Yes
V. Lembo Yes
J. Hyde Yes
S. Doyon Yes

9:0 motion carries

Box Van

M. Sorel motioned to recommend the box van for \$19,500. Seconded by J. Danforth

ROLL CALL

J. Pieroni Yes
M. Sorel Yes
D. Argo Yes
J. Danforth Yes
T. Keach Yes
G. Kearney Yes
V. Lembo Yes
J. Hyde Yes
S. Doyon Yes

9:0 motion carries

ADJOURNMENT

The chair declared the meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan

