

**Unofficial
As of 9/26/08**

**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
Hooksett Town Hall - Council Chambers
35 Main Street
Thursday, September 25, 2008**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

ATTENDANCE

J. Danforth, N. VanScoy, J. Pieroni, John Marasco, N. Comai, D. Argo, and S. Doyon

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 24, 2008

BUSINESS

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

John Marasco nominated John Pieroni for Chair. Seconded by J. Danforth.

Vote unanimously in favor

J. Marasco nominated John Danforth for Vice Chair. Seconded by N. Comai.

Vote unanimously in favor

Sue Doyon nominated Nancy Comai for Secretary. Seconded by Nancy VanScoy.

Vote unanimously in favor

Dr. Littlefield, Superintendent of Schools, introduced himself to the Board as the educational leader for the Hooksett School District. He stated that his is a fiscal conservative and this is his third year in Hooksett. The first year, was a learning experience with regard to budgets and learning the priorities. Last year was his budget and at the end of the process from teacher to administrators and through the School Board and Budget committee, the voters sent a message that they liked what we had done and were supportive of that process. During the intermittent months, they have tried to enhance the relationship.

Whatever is presented to this community must be transparent and understandable. He doesn't believe in wish lists. There will be challenges this year including a legislative change that will be problematic, which is a change in the contribution rate for teacher retirement. He was not prepared to give a presentation tonight on that but that

presentation should be placed on the docket for a future discussion. We should look at what has happened with contribution rates and what has happened.

Dr. Littlefield: We would like a couple of meetings with the Budget Committee that are school district based. It could be on the way we do busy, not necessarily the budget persa. I am aware of the national emergency we see facing us. That is reflected on what affects this town. I have a number of initiatives that are not only meant to address this years appropriation, because I have no compulsion to spend every dollar we appropriated but will influence our request for future years. I want to keep you in the loop for where the district is and what are the needs and what can be postponed until we can bounce back economically. Currently, all expenditures are required to have my approval. We have made an effort to purchase wisely. We initiated an eleven-community consortium including Manchester and Nashua to give us some buying power. We have heard a great deal about partnering with the Town but our needs are more akin to other school districts and by forming partnerships with other district as well as Auburn and Candia have been of benefit.

We need to coordinate our needs with the needs of other departments in the Town. We need to be cognoscente that the money all comes from the same voter base.

The teachers' contract that the voters approved, put off until 2009-2010 the maximum impact in that year.

A budget calendar is still being developed for the School Board however they have proposed an all day session on Saturday, December 6th.

We are looking for major issues that can be discussed in advance as well as any cost savings issues.

The kitchen project is complete at Underhill, on time and under budget. Ray Gagnon is now looking at a 5-year plan. History has been that we wait to do repair and then costs spike. I would like a 5-year facilities needs plan. We will need to address roofs soon. It will be more than can be handled in our maintenance budget. Also, whatever we are doing for facility needs and expansions will be of interest. We completed a long range planning committee study for the need for new schools. There is a growing concern from parents regarding the need for a high school.

There is a High School Feasibility Study Committee formed to look at the data. John Pieroni is the Budget Committee rep. to that committee.

We are currently working with MS&G for a school site, which can be put aside for future needs.

CIP Representative

The Planning Board has requested a Budget Committee member to sit on the CIP Committee. This committee typically meets on Monday evenings at 6:00 PM, prior to the Planning Board meetings for approximately 5 weeks.

Nancy Comai volunteered to serve on that committee.

David Pearl was present at the meeting and voiced an interest in serving on the Budget Committee. Mr. Pearl operates a business out of his home and has been involved with the school and volunteers for computer classes at the school. He would like to now get involved in a different aspect of the Town.

Mr. Pearl stated that he has great respect for those that serve and believe it is thankless but important process for the Town. He also runs the Hooksett Issues Group, which is an online group to keep community connected. He was also involved in an effort to get public television in Hooksett.

John Danforth nominates David Pearl for a one-year term. Seconded by John Marasco.

Vote unanimously in favor

John Pieroni questioned the process for purchasing the Safety Center sign as well as the Firing Range which was recently rebuilt. The committee would like to schedule a meeting with the Police Commission on November 6th.

N. VanScoy: The Town Council wanted to express their concern with the difficulty with this years budget based on the current economy, and particularly fuel and utility costs. The Council voted to provide a 2.5% increase as guidance to the departments, which, includes utilities and fuel. They also mentioned they we don't want to see "wish lists" but rather needs. The other concern is presenting a budget in a way that it will get voted through by the Town. I plan to encourage the Town Council to interact with the public more in an effort to pass the budget. That is the only way to restore the confidence of the people. We need to look outside the box to see how we can get the public involved. How can we get the public to be educated and get involved?

ADJOURN

J. Pieroni adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan