

Official
As of 1/22/09

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
CAWLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL
Saturday, December 6, 2008

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pieroni called the meeting to order at 8:35 am

ATTENDANCE

Chairman J. Pieroni, Vice Chair J. Danforth, N. Comai, K. Hughes, M. Miville, J. Marasco, D. Pearl, S. Doyon, School Board Rep. D. Argo, Town Council Rep. B. Gahara

BUSINESS

Superintendent Overview

P. Littlefield: I would like to thank the Budget Committee for the process this year. It was helpful to meet with the committee two occasions prior to today to address the budget drivers and the cost saving methods. These are included in the Superintendents message previously presented. Philosophically, the budget is a statement on how resources will be allocated and a vision of where the school district is heading. We are looking at a spending plan for the next 2-5 years. It begins with a vision and it starts in the classroom where the teacher identifies what they will need to maintain a quality education. This is submitted to the principal where judgments are made and then moves forward to the Superintendent. The Superintendent and the Business Administrator meet with those responsible for an area. When we started the budget cycle, we targeted a budget that would not exceed the default budget, while moving the district forward. We then came in \$58,000 under default as a result of good work on the part of everyone on the team.

Questions:

Postponement of Curriculum cycle

Reading is the most expensive initiative. If we delay that purchase, what will be the result and will it affect NECAP scores.

The answer is yes, it will affect NECAP scores. We have established a relationship of collaboration, and this morning after we have gone through the budget, we would like to review our options to address the curriculum.

School District Fund Balance over 5 years

SAU office to supply the default budget will be provided.

SRO: We put something out to all Business Administrator in NH and received 49 responses. Out of the 49 responses, 37 communities have full time SRO's; twelve do not. One is paid by a grant, one is partially paid by the School District and the balance are in the Police Department budgets. The trend is clear that SRO's are a police function and are common in NH.

Class size – Each Principal will address this within their budget.

Reimbursement regarding staff members and internal controls.

All expenses must start with a requisition to insure there is money in the account and then the Superintendent must approve the Purchase Order and then a purchase can be made. The receipt is then submitted and matched to the Purchase Order.

Marge Polak, Special Education:

Special Ed is governed by regulations at the State and Federal levels. Many budget items are therefore non-discretionary and subject to those laws and contractual agreements.

In developing our budget, we were able to make cuts in discretionary items like supplies and books. In non-discretionary, we were able to level fund most items.

There is an increase in equipment for \$976.00 for individual students for their programs. These range from hearing aids to walkers. A second area is testing. That is up \$4000. Special Ed transportation is up \$13,000. This is both in district and out of district students.

Tuition is \$75,000 under budget from last year. We are unsure of one of our tuition rates and there might be an increase in the next few weeks. We are working through that. We also have four (4) new students since this budget was put together. We will monitor this line and review after Christmas.

Reimbursements – are available through Medicaid and Catastrophic Aid. That is for students more than three times the average tuition. Medicaid is for rehabilitation, which is reimbursed at 60%. We use to get transportation cost back for medically related services. That has been taken away. We anticipate \$128,000 for Medicaid and \$440,000 in CAD this year.

N. Comai reviewed the Special Education budget and was comfortable with the budget presented.

K. Hughes asked for the percentage of special education students in the district.

M. Polak stated that 11.5% to 12 % are special education students, which is below the state average of 13.7%. We have been looking at *Response Intervention*, which is a national movement to reduce excess referrals. Currently, our numbers are not increasing.

M. Miville asked about class size.

M. Polak stated that they are not self-contained. We have case managers and integrated students in the Regular Ed classrooms. In some cases, there might be a Special Education teacher for 30 students but this is in addition to the regular Ed teacher. We do have one-on-one aid for students with autistic or behavior issues.

Technology, Bailey Riggs.

\$60,000 Warrant Article – Fund balance money

Technology Support Index – Distributed a Chart on Technology Efficiency

**The district supports two platforms with one predominant platform for general use, and a second platform for specific programs and/or instructional application.

This is the general platform in the library and specific platform in the classroom. That is a goal that they would like to see met in the district.

Reviewed the equipment status in the schools.

D. Pearl: Are the computers put out to bid?

B. Riggs: No, you don't have the retail applications to bid Apples. No one has inventory. You need to go directly through Apple and we do get an educational discount.

D. Pearl: PC can be put out to bid?

B. Riggs: Yes and they are significantly cheaper.

B. Riggs: Windows vs. Apple

Cost analysis: Windows are cheaper but 90-95% of the school system is Macintosh. That is why we continue to buy Mac's even though they cost a little more. We are Mac. The infrastructure is Mac. We can buy a PC for \$400, but to make the change is expensive. The teachers are using this equipment.

80% of computers are substandard.

D. Pearl: I believe that it would be less expensive to buy PC at a cost of 2-1.
If 80% of our computers were out of date, this would be the time to make the shift to PC.
Last year I arrange for two Hooksett residents to do a cost analysis of the computers and it was denied.

B. Riggs: We have moved on open office. We had other issues to address. The Technology Committee is making progress in evaluating this.

D. Pearl: Has a cost analysis been done to determine staying with Apple?

P. Littlefield: No, but the conclusion is intuitive.

Media Center – Justine Shepard

The budget increase, overall is \$13,000, which is a software system for the 3 media centers. This is an automation system. The public library has an on line search program. We now have a closed database at each school. Teachers can't search from the classroom to classroom or outside the building.

This doesn't have the capability of running statistics. The State offered districts the opportunity to meet with 12 vendors and review the products.

It would cost \$18,000 for all three (3) schools. Parents and teachers can search from home. It interfaces with our software so a student can type in a subject in the tool bar and find video information here and online. That purchase, by cutting other things, resulted in an increase of \$13,000.

This is not the highest end program, like the Polaris system, which the Town has. The cost is similar to the other top three (3) chosen. Candia is purchasing our second choice at around the same budget amount. We will continue to consult with Candia on their selection before we make our final decision.

If we select the system chosen by Candia, we could integrate with Candia. Auburn is not looking to upgrade at this time.

Cawley – S. HARRISES

This year, we went to the teachers and asked them to look at true needs. We went through the process of meeting with teachers. We have no net change in staffing.

Classroom size is 23.8/homeroom. Next year, with current population, the class size will be 22.9/homeroom, which is in line with School Board policy. Overall, there are shift in individual lines, which are housekeeping only changes.

Lines:

- Read 180 "Tech support" – moved from Media Center to School
- Regular Education Textbooks – last year there was a large purchase of social studies text.
- Large presentation screen to be used for the gymnasium – 12 x 12 screen which will showcase the technology in Hooksett and use it as a good meeting center.
We purchased the medium end unit (no automated functions)
- Emergency Management Component – Walkie Talkies needed for safety and security. This would give one to the nurse exclusively and one for the Phys. Ed. teacher who, in good weather, will be outside of the building and would need that for emergencies.
- Co curricular – field hockey coach added

D. Pearl agreed on the need for the presentation screen and supports the purchase of walkie talkies.

M. Miville asked about the need for periodicals?

S. HARRISES: We are looking to bring back classroom periodicals, specifically, Time for Kids, Jr. Scholastic and Time for Health which all support the curriculum.

M. MIVILLE: Leasing vs. Purchasing – Postage 1300 dollars.

K. LESSARD will look into online postage.

M. MIVILLE asked why Exchange City for over \$5000 was cut.

S. HARRISES: The community has funded Exchange City and fundraisers. The district hasn't paid for this in the past.

M. MIVILLE asked why \$6000 worth of calculators is in the budget.

S. HARRISES stated that specific calculators are required for part of the NECAP testing.

M. MIVILLE: Exchange city is still funded for transportation?

K. LESSARD: That is the only component that has been funding through the district.

Memorial – C. Soucy
Grades 3-5

This budget supports and maintains a quality education through level funding while postponing expenses to cut cost.

Population – 22-23/class this year. Few students are expected next year with a 21-22/class size; therefore there are no additional staff requests.

- Personnel request – Partial funding from the district for Summer Academy. In the past, Cawley and Underhill have this? Last year, using Title I funds; we implemented this for transition students which had a positive result in the fall. Largest cost is curriculum and instruction, supplies, text and furniture.
- Funding requests to cover core consumables.
- Reduction in curriculum textbooks.
- Supplies purchased through a bid process and usually do not need to pay shipping costs. We also post grade level supply list on the website and ask parents for support. We do have supply cost as well.
- One field trip is funded per year which is curriculum related. PTA also supports enrichment initiatives for out of school enrichments.
- Looking to save in shipping cost for an assessment test because there is now a competitor for this material.
- Shipping for Health office supplies are needed for specialized items.
- Office Copier is being leased. When we lease we get a service agreement for toner etc. We must reflect that in the line of the product.

K. HUGHES asked about the 25 electric pencil sharpeners for teachers.

C. SOUCY: students at the lower grade levels need them.

Underhill – B. Estes

Population – It is difficult to predict enrollment at the K-2 level.

- Live Birth statistics gives a picture of the future for Kindergarten. We are predicting 150 Kindergarten students next year. Kindergarten is a consumable classroom. Cost of paper increased 25%. We currently have seven (7) teachers and we would like to go to eight (8).
- We predict 162 First Grade students. With the economy, we are increasing enrollment every month. We will have eight (8) First Grade classrooms rather than nine (9) and nine (9) Second Grade classrooms rather than eight (8).

- Ready For Success – Designed for Pre School Students with a camp atmosphere and exposes students to music, dance, and literacy. To continue that for another year, we are looking at 2 teachers, 3 hours a day and 4 hours per week. This will be part of the program at a cost \$2907.00. (Supplies and for 12 hours a week for 3 weeks)

John Marasco asked about field trips?

B. Estes: Field trips did not change. This year, the bus companies came in at a lower cost for transportation. Also, the teachers are more comfortable bringing enrichment programs into the school rather than transporting students off site. This reduces safety issues as well.

J. Danforth asked if similar donations could be solicited, as was the case with musical instruments.

B. Estes: We are working in that direction and share items from school to school.

J. Danforth asked about the stipend for the Volunteer Coordinator.

B. Estes stated that was established prior to his coming to the district.

J. Danforth suggested utilizing email for parent – teacher communication in order to reduce the cost and use of paper.

B. Estes: We have not increased the use in paper. We are now supplementing our language arts through copying material.

B. Estes: There is estimated 25% increase from Kindergarten to 1st grade.

N. Comai: Electricity increase in Underhill is not proportional to the other schools.

K. Lessard: We did the most work in Underhill for the Smart Start Program, which resulted in a decrease in usage. The budget number is based on the rate increases provided by PSNH multiplied by the usage. The efficiencies will not be realized for five (5) years. Although usage has changed, we are paying for the new equipment through a five (5) year payback process.

Curriculum Cycle:

Last year we reviewed Social Studies and this year we are review Language Arts. At Underhill, we do testing called DIBLES and the NECAP testing that provides information. We have a reading addition at Underhill and Memorial that is from 2000. Cawley's material is 5-6 years old. These materials are outdated. There is a lot of research, which says you need a program that incorporates phonix and auditory awareness. Because of this research and assessment data we formed a committee to look at that. We picked two series that are being piloted. In the past, when we did curriculum purchase, because it is so expensive, we didn't do K-8 at the same time. G. Kushner got a quote for K-8 (Sept 08) \$314,000 dollars. Since then, we have talked with consultants which have implemented reading programs on a smaller scale with benefits of cost and implementation and negatives which put curriculum cycles off. We are looking at a K-2 only purchase if there was money available. Quote for K-2 is \$99,556. in December of 2008.

P. Littlefield: Originally, in my presentation to the budget, I suggested postponing the purchase and the need. Based on questions raised by the Budget Committee regarding impact of the delay, I was looking at discussing options. I wouldn't want to lose the pricing which is available due to the slow economy. We will have a technology article under fund balance. We would look to put \$99,000 for fund balance out of savings from this year's budget. Another strategy is, since we came in under default, we could add to the budget \$58,000, which brings us up to default. Then

we hope our health insurance comes in lower than maximum. The third option is to put a warrant article for a straight appropriation. The final option would be to purchase with a fund balance.

K. Hughes: Is there a risk in funding for future years.

P. Littlefield: This is such a large initiative, we like purchasing in phases.

D. Pearl: I feel that we are always starting over and throwing out the old curriculum. We are not returning to phonics. Have we looked at a curriculum that can grow and change with the research?

M. Polak: It isn't new; it is more formalized. This is less of a transition than in math.

D. Pearl: Is there an Internet component to supplement.

M. Polak: There isn't an online component to both the programs we are looking for. We are looking at students that read at different levels.

K. Hughes suggested putting K-2 in the budget and purchase the second phase from the fund balance.

P. Littlefield: The concern is you would take delivery in the subsequent fiscal year and paying out of current funds.

Negotiations with Para Professions will result in a warrant article.

D. Pearl: Concerned with understanding on Math Coordinator. There was debate on how that would be judged based on State Standards. We need to address it before we reach the point before the job is on the line in the next budget.

J. Pieroni: There is no obligation to cut a job. We can't obligate the school. How will we evaluate is a different question.

P. Littlefield: There was a question on the part of the Budget Committee regarding three (3) positions, the Math Coordinator and the media specialist at two (2) schools. We looked at how we would measure effectiveness. I committed to collecting data and you committed to two (2) years. If we are going to look at student performance, we needed two (2) years to get true results. My assumption is next year, Justine will present a data base analysis of the two specialists and Gail will do the same for the Math Coordinator.

D. Pearl: I didn't think the media specialists were in that analysis because they were mandated by the State.

P. Littlefield: The School approval process requires the media specialist but I also said we would come back and report on their impact to learning.

J. Danforth motioned to accept the School District Budget as presented. Seconded by M. Miville. Vote unanimously in favor.

Next Budget meeting is Thursday, December 18th at 7:00 pm at the Hooksett Town Hall

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan