

Official

BUDGET COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

Hooksett Memorial School

2 Memorial Drive

Saturday, December 5, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

J. Pieroni called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

ATTENDANCE

J. Pieroni, J. Danforth, N. Comai, M. Miville, D. Pearl, K. Hughes, JR Ouellette, S. Doyon, D. Argo, and W. Gahara.

WORKSHOP

P. Littlefield spoke of the drivers including a new teachers contract. The contract is close to a settlement.

Curriculum implementation Phase II for grades 3-5 was to cost \$136,000. It has been cut from the budget request. The plan is to purchase this curriculum using the Stimulus money. If the State does not agree with the district by the end of this year, the district will cut whatever necessary cost this year to purchase with remaining funds.

Insurance cost.

Teachers Association has 121 eligible for health insurance of which 106 participate.

Of the 99 classified employees, 45 participate

Administration – 7 old administrations - 7 participate

8 new administration - 7 participate

Up to two years ago, the administrative staff, by contract, are eligible for health insurance at 100%. Two years ago, it was changed that all new administrators hired would no longer be eligible for 100% health and would receive the same benefits as the teachers.

Shopping for health insurance?

Last year, we hired a consultant, the same consultant used by the town. He compared our rates with LGC with similar plans to Harvard and Cigna. When complete, the rates the school had with LGC were the best when compared with exception of Cigna.

Change contribution rates?

Yes, they can be changed but we should do it unilaterally. The vast majority of the insured are represented employees and subject to collective bargaining and protected by the collective bargaining agreement. Any change in contribution rate is a negotiated change. Good news, the insured group is SAU 15 employees, which is to our benefit. The larger the group, the better the cost. Next year, we will negotiate a new contract in Candia. We did settle a contract for 3 years in Auburn but it calls for a wage reopener in year two (2), which includes health insurance benefits. So next year we will be able to

look at Candia and Auburn. I can't speak to Hooksett's contract but it would make sense to have that option next year in Hooksett as well.

We could look at changes in prescription coverage and co pays. Be assured that we are as concerned about health insurance costs as the Budget Committee. It has a large impact but in relation to other districts, our rates are not going up as much.

Information

Contribution Rate Schedule was distributed for teachers and support personnel.

2009 and 2010 rates sheet distributed

Health Savings Account option was reviewed which offers a high deductible at a lower cost with an employee savings account.

Teacher salary schedule and % of cost including step:

½ % \$144,686

1% \$173,555

1.5% \$202,425

0% \$115,618

This does not include benefits

Special Ed. Tuition

K. Lessard – we received rates from Manchester for Spec. Ed., which were 6% over '09 rates. We have 6 more students next year. There are seven (7) students in the self-contained program at a cost of \$37,370/student. We are budgeting for a total of 77 Special Education High School students next year.

Special Education Director: We have student graduating from the lower cost program and moving in students to a higher costing program.

Special Education Cost increases – Medicaid service provider increase but the district was reimbursed. There is an Increase in equipment by contract. There are Increases and decreases in tuition due to student movement.

Transportation contract increase is 2.5%.

Total Spec. Ed students (not counting pre school) – 247 including out of district for grades K - 12

M. Polak stated that the range has consistently been around 250 – 270 students, which is below state average. State average is 17% and we in Hooksett are about 12%.

The total increase in Special Education is \$474,650 (of which some Medicaid and Cat Aid is reimbursement)

Media Director

Justine Shepard: The bottom line is \$200 below last year. There was shifting of money. Largest increase was for distance learning.

K. Hughes: Why was grades k-2 and 3-5 cut in half and grades 6-8 were not?

J. Shepard: The Distance Learning Program is housed at the middle school and the teachers are more familiar with utilizing it. The teachers in the other schools teachers are less familiar.

K. Hughes: The SAU didn't cut any replacements for projectors, TV's and DVD for a total cost of \$10,000. How old is the equipment being replacement.

J. Shepard: We budget for repair and replacement. Those are typical rates and as the year progresses and equipment breaks, we will replace them. Those items are placeholders if something breaks and needs replacement.

The Media Software was purchased last year and has been implemented and is up and running

Technology

Bailey Riggs – There is a lot of reorganizing of money. Over the past three years, we made a difference and we have more technology and so we now need more storage and horsepower. We need a new server at Underhill. We've dealt with purchasing printing supplies at all three schools. I have taken that over and the supply accounts have been reduced by \$1500 and we have moved them over this account.

Contract services have increased \$9000. for help in areas where more expertise was needed.

Parent access portals?

S. Harisses: Power School is now running. We have notices and grades, which can be seen immediately. We have homework now webpage. At Cawley, our grades are posted day-to-day.

M. Miville: Technology training was cut from \$5000 to \$3000.

B. Riggs: We have been able to utilize some books and haven't utilized the staff training so it was cut.

Power School University?

B. Riggs: Power School University is where we send one employee per year somewhere in the US. Next year it is in S. Carolina. It is a weeklong conference where the Power School guru learns about the updated uses. One of the Assistant Principals would probably attend. You can only get access electronically if you attend. If you don't attend you cannot get access.

B. Riggs: A technology Secretary position was cut.

Cawley – S. Harrises

The budget comes in close to level funded from last year.

There is some shift in grade levels. We had no need for new textbooks this year.

We have the Elks program and are adding online courses. Think Well provides some online learning. It is \$200 per student. We now have one (1) student utilizing this. As we see a higher level of students coming to Cawley we will see more students using this. We are expecting 5-6 students next year utilizing these programs.

Regular Ed supplies is down a little. Shift in printing from regular Ed to technology.

M. Miville: Translator and interpreter services; is a new line and a new state requirement?

M. Polak: In order to evaluate English language learners we sometimes need to utilize an interpreter or if we may need to communicate with non-English family members at home.

S. Harisses: Combining 2 part time positions to one full time benefited position is a dramatic increase in the budget so that has not been done. That has been cut.

Leasing of copiers went from \$5800 to \$11,000?

K. Lessard: That may be due to a shift in accounts.

M. Miville: Last year 300 calculators were purchased and now there are more being purchased.

S. Harisses: 300 were bought last year. We identified a need for 50 more calculators. I can see cutting those 50 out because going through our NECAP testing, which are done at once, we had enough. I can see giving that up.

P. Littlefield: They are there because they are required on the NECAP questions.

M. Miville: Parent Teacher Support – the ALPS teacher needs videos and books to support families of children in the ALPS program.
These students have different needs and they felt it beneficial to have recourse.

M. Miville: HAWK TALK program was cut out of the budget last year and this year for \$484. I understand that although cut it is still functioning.

S. Harisses: The \$150 dollar camcorder is needed for HAWK TALK and the yearbook.

Memorial

C. Soucy: There is an effort to keep in mind our budget district goals and keep to our instructional goals.

1. Added in the assessment line – DIBLES assessment that goes hand in hand with a new reading program and monitor reading progress. Underhill implements this and it is extended to Memorial.

This budget reflects an effort to come in with proposals that include the essential pieces to support the current program.

Summer Academy will be funding through grants, which is why the funds were cut, but the program will be maintained.

JR Ouellette asked about the leasing philosophy?

C. Soucy: We lease to own so next year we will own 3 of the 4 copy machines.

K. Lessard: When there are copies to be replaced, we are leaning towards lease to own. To buy all the machines the same year would result in a budget spike. The lease to own has been 4 years in the past and we are moving to a 5-year option. Service contract is with the same vendor.

JR Ouellette: Have you looked at other vendors?

K. Lessard: We do informally discuss this within our Business Administrator's group throughout the State but have not formally looked into other contracts.

The maintenance copy number includes materials (ink and toner) and service.

Underhill

J. Danforth went through the Underhill books and received responses to the all of his question through email. Those responses can be forwarded to any committee member upon request.

J. Pieroni: Reading workbooks were cut. The wage pools are 0 for all non-contracted employees. .
SAU budget is an increase.

K. Lessard: That is because of the % increase went up due to the assessment and the retirement and insurance was increased.
0% wage pool in the SAU office.
Staff Increases are 0 throughout the entire district.
Reading is a new initiative but through other funding source.

Math test results –

P. Littlefield: In the aggregate when looking at all students, I'm not displeased, when looking at the subgroups I am not satisfied. As a school district, we are holding our own compared to other districts. When you look at challenged kids, we need to do some work. I am looking at doing a district wide initiative in Language Arts similar to what was done in Math but not in this economy.

J. Pieroni: This budget is up 2.5%. We need to define what those increases are?

Special Education – which was mandated is an easy explanation and retirement which is also a mandate and Health Insurance.

P. Littlefield: \$1,443,000 in uncontrolled cost increases yet the increase was \$600,000. They are actually below default.

J. Pieroni: There are uncontrolled and unfunded mandates.

B. Gahara: The health insurance is a major hit for the Council. We are going to have to sell this budget. This is up 2.5%, which is due to health insurance, Special Ed and transportation. We are also caught in a contractual agreement with fire, which was negotiated last year. For health and wellness, we are looking for those programs to help families get healthier.

Most areas outside of government pay 80% vs. 20% compared to government, which is 90% vs. 10%. We need to make people more accountable for health.

ADJOURN

Chairman Pieroni adjourned the meeting at 12:15 pm.

Next scheduled meeting is Thursday, December 17th at 6:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan