

Official

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING **David R. Cawley Middle School – Media Center** **35 Main Street** **Saturday, December 4, 2010** **WORKSHOP**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Miville called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

ATTENDANCE

Chair, M. Miville, Vice Chair, N. Comai, J. Hyde, JR Ouellette, and D. Argo, School Board Rep., and V. Lembo, Town Council Rep. D. Pearl T. Keach, K. Hughes, and T. Lizotte

Staff Present:

SAU Staff: Dr. Littlefield, M. Polak, K. Lessard

School Board: Becky Berk, D. Argo, P. Cournoyer, T. Dumont

BUSINESS

Budget Overview – Charles P. Littlefield, Ed.D.

Dr. Littlefield: The Board met with me in October where I stated, based upon what the State owes for adequacy, we want to present a budget that strives for excellence. We do not have wish list. We receive an email from the Department of Revenue, which says we are getting an extra 2 million dollars. The cover letter from the Commissioner states the estimates, which say don't expect an increase or a decrease. Hooksett, according to the formula that the legislature developed at the direction of the Supreme Court is entitled to an increase of 2 million dollars in aid, which it will not get.

This is the law and the new legislature doesn't like the law and are reversing that. That 2.5 million in additional aid will not find its way to Hooksett.

At the School Board meeting on Tuesday, it was discussed and the decision was that things changed so dramatically that we must change our budget request. We reviewed the budget and cut \$654,657.00. The net result is that the budget request would have been \$26,173 less than this year's operating budget. We felt good about a spending plan that was less than level funded, but we have the DPW issue to deal with. We did seek quotes on the services that we were informed the Town would no longer provide at cost of \$192,000. Carol Granfield and I had discussions yesterday, and she indicated that she would be receptive to continuing to provide those services (sanding and salt, field maintenance, lining the fields, plowing) and she did an analysis of the town's cost at \$83,732. We will meet with the Board on Tuesday and present this to them. The potential there is for us to be billed and pay the town \$83,732, which would cost more if we go out to bid. The taxpayer will be better served by that agreement. The net between the town and an outside contract is \$100,000. This will be a Board agreement if they chose to enter into this agreement with the town. With that, we will come very close to level funding.

The \$654,657 that was cut includes the following:

- Two additional teachers at Cawley (page 1, 4th account) \$129,530
- \$20,000 for classroom outfitting to 21st Century classroom
- Cut H.S. tuition with the actual number \$307,980
- Professional development stipends cut \$8404
- Library aid to keep open after school \$17811
- 95 I Pads in 3 schools \$64,602
- Retirement of two principals \$5836 in adjusted salary

- Included addition money for principals books \$2000
- Upgrade to SAU parking lot \$24,645
- Curtain replacement Underhill \$15,000
- \$58,000 technology equipment for lab at memorial and wireless cut

The new bottom line is \$26,049,503

The Board broke out into work groups to address individual questions by school.

Fred C. Underhill School – William Estes

M. Miville: We had a question on the generator, which was proposed for \$75,000 and was deleted. There was a \$95,000 generator.

K. Lessard: There was the generator, ductless air conditioner for the sped room, and air conditioning in the IT server room (closet) which is still in for \$8000.

Memorial School – Carol Soucy

JR Ouellette: Is there an increase in Transportation?

K. Lessard: This is the first year of the new contract so next year is a slight increase. 3% increase not reflected because the budget this year did not have the contract in place. The actual cost for this year is less than budgeted. Next year, there will be a 3% increase.

P. Littlefield: Large National Bus Companies are known to under cut local vendor, get the bid, and put the local vendor out of business and then your renewal is astronomical. We did a lot of research before getting the contract. We are confident in this provider.

V. Lembo: Is it possible to get a grant for the generator that was cut?

K. Lessard: You can only get one grant for the town and if the town has put in for that grant you cannot apply.

Language Arts Director

Dr. Littlefield: The Math Director has been successful in raising the scores. Currently, Hooksett has not been successful in Language Arts. We are going through the adoption of the Imaginative Program, which we paid for with Stimulus money. We've also done a lot of professional development using stimulus money, which is gone.

We were able to find a way to use stimulus money to pay for local expenses that would have otherwise fallen on the taxpayer. This is to support our teachers, and have someone dedicated to monitoring reading progress and make certain that the scientifically based program is being implemented. When we looked at adjusting the budget, I did request that the Board leave that position in because I felt it is that important to our kids' success in reading.

M. Polak: The job duties are similar to the math director's duties. This position is able to assist teachers in implementing literacy programs K-8 and modeling instructions for teacher. Helping teachers look at their student data and adjusting instruction. I think this is a little different than the math. I see this as a preventative position. The acquisition of language is fundamental to all you do. How you express information is about developing those language skills. Our biggest area for referrals in the district is about reading. This will insure that students stay on grade level and are successful and reduce our needs for support services. This position will look at 21st century expectations for student skills, do data collection and what we do to insure student performance.

V. Lembo: The directive by the Council was no new position unless it is funded within the budget.

P. Littlefield: I report to the School Board and the State Board of Education. The State doesn't care what the Council wants to do. You could say that position is funded within the current

appropriation. Our request is a \$27,000 decrease until we dealt with cost shifting. If we didn't have the plowing and sanding, we would be \$27,000 less including the language director. I will commit to come back in two years and report and if not successful, I will cut it.

D. Pearl: I did not see any quantifiable numbers to say that this was successful. When you set the deal, the goal was not quantified. Can we expect to pay less professional development with this person training the teachers? Will this defer any costs?

P. Littlefield: The answer is yes, but not just the Imaginative program. We have no other professional development locally funded for this acquisition. If we didn't have this position, we would have to do it some other way. And the other way is off site and that is a negative impact on students.

D. Pearl: Implementing 21st Century Technology - we hired two media specialist two years ago. I would think they would be involved in that.

P. Littlefield: 21st Century strategies aren't only technology but also skills.

M. Polak: We are looking at what do our Kindergarteners need to know to be successful adults. That is different from what our eighth graders need to know. We have to be deliberate and careful that the skills our students are learning will help them.

T. Lizotte: I'm not big on immersing kids in technology but rather emphasize reading and writing and math. This position is tempered with scores. Will you decrease pulling kids out of the class?

P. Littlefield: The initial emphasis was on Memorial with the Math Director and supplementing everyday math. A great deal of time went into that task. But for data analysis and teaching teachers and the value of data in making decisions, that was focused on Memorial. Cawley, we did see a drop in the math test scores. There is no doubt it was a conscious decision that the resource concentrate on K-5. If we can train teachers as early as possible, we fix the later problems forever. This year, based on the result, (which is a lag time), the new position would be part of the training. I'm not asking for a remedial reading teacher. The philosophy is to build sustainability of teachers to meet the needs of all kids. I gave you the hard data on the math position. Our Spec. Ed out of district is down. I would defy you to go to other districts that show a decrease in Sped Ed cost. Part of the reason is we are building sustainability for each youngster. Part of the Good to Great initiative is a foundation that we need to develop an individualized learning plan for each student. We must walk the talk of differentiation. We will not ask for more money next year than this year. One initiative of Good to Great is "allocation of resources". One of the things we are looking at is if we want to meet the need of all students with individualized plans, we need to re allocate resources.

T. Lizotte: Data collection - you indicated the person went into classes. My question regarding power school is, are grades uploaded weekly? I assume it is by student and progression.

P. Littlefield: Teachers using Power Teacher become a substitute for their grade book. I wouldn't want someone to have access to all that data. There are tight regulations. The person would have access to the data in the aggregate and we have another program we go through the State : Performance Pathways.

M. Polak: This position uses more assessment data related to the content of reading or math. We have Performance Pathway or Performance Plus and work with teachers to maintain or change instruction. We have more data for language arts than math.

T. Keach: Is the school in negotiation with teachers?

P. Littlefield: Yes, that will be in a separate warrant article.

One thing we are investigating in all 3 communities is health insurance and the possibility of a vendor change. So far, the news is better than good news.
Assuming we reach an agreement with the two bargaining groups, Dana will report on the cost of those agreements. It will then go before the voters.

V. Lembo: Is the union agreeing with any concessions? Our Fire Department came in with a number of concessions to reduce the impact.

P. Littlefield: Our teachers took a wage freeze last year.

T. Lizotte: Could the Reading Position be a Warrant Article?

P. Littlefield: No, because the operating budget must be transparent and I have faith in the voters. Secondly, I have a problem with the way some communities deal with warrant articles. Rather than being open and honest with the public and giving the cost to run the district, they have 5-10 warrants and then you have a low budget and put textbooks for example in a warrant. I think that is deceptive. The other thing is the School Board is elected to set policy and make decisions about teachers and learning. If you put a warrant article out and it fails, then you get a grant, I'm not sure you can fund that with a grant because the voters have said no. If the budget is not funded by the voters, the Board would then be in a position to prioritize and could make adjustments in the budget to fund that position. My sense from the deliberation on the budget is that it is an important position to the School Board.

Presentation of School District Budget Copiers

A discussion ensued regarding the cost of leasing copiers vs. purchasing.

D. Pearl suggested that the copier should fall under the Technology Department.

K. Lessard stated that the Town and the School do use the same company for their copiers.

Postage

A question was raised regarding the postage machine and it was determined that it was not practical for the school's application to change the process.

Shipping Costs for books

The issue of shipping cost for textbooks was questioned

P. Littlefield: We find shipping high especially from textbook publishers because they now have a monopoly. There are only a few companies producing textbooks. We would prefer to pay no shipping and pay the unit price for the books. Even though their shipping is high, when you do an adoption like in language arts, you negotiate on the series. When you purchase, you sit down with a salesman and negotiate. They will offer practice books for example in lieu of shipping.

ADJOURN

***T. Keach motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 am. Seconded by V. Lembo.
Vote unanimously in favor***

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan
Budget Secretary