

## **Unofficial**

# **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 35 Main Street Thursday, December 9, 2010**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm

### **ATTENDANCE**

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

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

November 18, 2010

***K. Hughes motioned to approve the minutes of November 18. Seconded by T. Lizotte  
Vote unanimously in favor***

### **PUBLIC INPUT**

None

### **BUSINESS**

Hooksett School District – Budget Deliberation

Underhill School –

D. Pearl reported that he spoke with Principal Estes. The largest concern was that they are paying \$5000/yr for a subscription to Imagine It. The Company doesn't track the use. It is a good online program and uses the words in the curriculum to reinforce use but it is not tracked. Marge Polak and Bill Estes stated they would try to implement a tracking system next year. Two teachers I spoke to used it and two had not had a chance to use it. At Underhill there is a Portable Portal which is a page of relevant website for free. There are alternative sites to utilize. They promised to track it but I was looking to cut that since it isn't currently tracked.

D. Argo stated that you can purchase the mechanism to track the use. There is a cost associated with that. I agree that we should know how many students utilize this.

D. Pearl: Consumables were an issue. Phil Littlefield stated that young students need consumables.

***D. Pearl motioned to remove \$4999.98 (Imagine It On line program) from the Underhill School Budget. Seconded by N. Comai.***

D. Argo stated the premise is that students can use this in the classroom and then log on at home and learn as well. I think we need to give it a chance. I am not sure the cost for the tracker.

J. Hyde: Before we cut something, we need to find out how much it is really get used. If it isn't being used, why would they want it?

K. Hughes stated that Memorial is using this and the teachers can monitor what the students are doing at home.

D. Argo stated that excluding the plowing and field maintenance, the budget is \$27,000 below this year's spending plan.

D. Pearl: When we were sold this program, we did not understand there would be \$10,000 in additional cost in website maintenance. There are free websites available for free online as well. I'm just looking for someplace to save on the curriculum and I don't want to cut the consumables.

N. Comai asked if we could get a better assessment of the use of the program.

D. Pearl: My experience at Underhill, in the 5 years I've been there, is only a handful of students come to the computer lab. I don't think we can say it is used regularly as part of the lesson. It is an additive and not part of the curriculum.

N. Comai: Why can't the salesman bill us based on usage?

D. Pearl: It is a subscription for the entire whole with unlimited access.

JR Ouellette: This program is \$8400 at Memorial and \$2000 at Cawley. Why the difference in cost?

***Vote 6:5 motion carries***

D. Pearl: \$1800 on the life cycle of frogs seems like a lot of money for tadpoles and aquariums. It is one grade and 5 classes and it seems like a lot.

***D. Pearl motion to remove \$1811 from 1100-5610-1-3-29 for "The Life Cycle of Frogs" Science Supplies for grade 1. Seconded by J. Hyde.***

J. Hyde: Is there historical data? I can't believe this is the first year they have done this?

***Voice Vote  
Motion fails***

D. Pearl: \$1900 for replacement of damaged tables and worn chairs.  
B. Estes stated that he tries to buy a few each year to replace older chairs and tables.

***D. Pearl motion to reduce \$1955 from 1100-5737-1-3-00 to replaced worn table and chairs. Seconded by J. Hyde.***

D. Pearl: B. Estes stated it was to stay ahead of the game.

***J. Hyde motioned to amend the motion to reduce \$1000. Seconded by T. Lizotte. Vote carries.***

***New motion amended to \$1000.  
Voice Vote  
Motion carries.***

M. Miville: My concern is there may be too much money allocated to seminars and conferences. I know that Councilor Boutin recommended and the Town Council voted to reduce all training and seminars 20%.

D. Pearl: We are specifically referring to college courses for the principal which is in the current principal's contract. Since he is retiring, we can consider not including it in the next contract.

***V. Lembo motioned to reduce 2410-5240-1-3-07 to \$7850 (20% reduction). Seconded by J. Hyde.***

V. Lembo asked how much was used last year?

N. Comai: They didn't use any.

V. Lembo stated that the courses at the three schools are for \$9809 each.

***Voice Vote***  
***Motion carries***

***JR Ouellette motioned to reduce Memorial 2410-5240-1-3-07 to \$7850 and Cawley to \$7850. Seconded by T. Lizotte.***

***Voice Vote***  
***Motion carried***

**Memorial**

K. Hughes questioned why they were buying pencil sharpeners again this year with cost from \$58 to \$24.

K. Hughes stated that all other questions regarding Memorial School were addressed and answered in the break out session on Saturday.

**Cawley**

T. Lizotte: I feel they need to be more diligent when purchasing.

The copiers, I spoke to Xerox and received their list price. Their list price is \$50,000 but if you look deeper, you can get it for \$25,000. The only way to get a better deal is if you had a true purchasing agent. At my company, they get a bonus based on what their savings are. A green campaign to save paper could be used.

I did an analysis and the cost fits the use.

T. Keach: I took direction from Todd and took a few items and experienced similar results. Items requested were inflated in cost.

1. a metal ball rack
2. 2 medicine balls

I think somewhere, someone has brought a lot of erroneous information and I'm concerned that this is evident throughout the school budget. If you take a small sample of the budget, and find it inflated you can apply that to the whole budget.

D. Argo: I believe that when they are buying specialized equipment, they may include non-specialized equipment. I can't argue that. I made a note.

T. Lizotte: The technology group justified the computer purchases based on age to bridge the gap and I felt the technology director was accurate.

**Special Ed**

V. Lembo questioned the amount of Medicaid and Catastrophic Aid reimbursement. Currently, 80% of Special Ed cost is not being supplemented by Medicaid. Marge and Devon will follow up. \$4,629,736 is budgeted for Special Ed. In 2009-10, the expenditures were \$5,763,000 and the total revenue from Medicaid, Federal, and Catastrophic aid was only \$800,000. That appears low.

D. Argo will research the issue and report back to the committee.

V. Lembo stated that the H.S. enrollment for 2011-2012 is reported as 73 students going to Manchester. If you take the enrollment for Grade 8-Grade 11, there are 64 students that we are scheduled for H.S. next year.

D. Argo will follow up.

D. Pearl asked to discuss the new position of Curriculum Director which will become a permanent addition to the staff. It is the same deal as the Math Director. The promise was that things will get better which they will but there is no yard stick to measure. This is not a one time expense but a recurring expense.

About three years ago the State came down and said you need media specialist at three schools so we hired those individuals. I'm concerned that the school district is an ever increasing thing. My understanding of the curriculum we buy now is they have scripts; online components, turn key components. If you go turnkey, you don't need as much support and expertise. We are buying a turn key program and we are also adding another level of administration. I would be happier to not buy the new curriculum and this new person could develop a better curriculum.

D. Argo: This person is going to coordinate curriculum. The Superintendent gave a presentation on this position and explained how the math coordinator improved student scores. The math coordinator gave a presentation on the improvements that she has made. Language is the core of all learning and the scores are down so we want to focus on that.

V. Lembo: My concerns are the concerns past budget committee had with Dr. Littlefield. Dr. Littlefield stated that he would eliminate the position if it wasn't working out. The scores for the Memorial went up drastically to meet "no child left behind" because of her and they got the funding which resulted in paying her salary. Now she has been moved to Cawley. The Council's position is you can hire someone if you can absorb the cost in the budget. He has done that so I can support that.

J. Hyde: Does anyone know the number of teachers, department heads, principals and coordinators that exist. I'm taking a business model which says the average person can manage 15 people. My question is this seems like more the job of a department head. We can set policy by limiting the money. Do you need that when you have a number of department heads that should be doing that?

D. Pearl: My concern is that we are adding employees and the staff is growing.

T. Lizotte: I think we should wait one more year and see how the math coordinator fares.

D. Argo: There are many who believe the town should not have shifted the cost of the plowing to the school and there are many items we could shift back and we could also limit use of the fields. I do not agree and I believe those are town fields but there are those individuals that do not agree.

T. Lizotte: I think since we have one more meeting we may want to extend an invitation to Dr. Littlefield to present the Coordinator's position one more time. I would like clarification on the justification. I want some hard facts on how this was determined.

M. Miville: I suggest instead of a coordinator, perhaps similar goals could be achieved through seminars and sharing idea through specific workshops. There seems to be several growing budget functions that address the personal growth of the staff in addition to the students. How many administrative staff and its supportive bureaucracy do the taxpayers need to fund for the education of our children?

***D. Pearl motioned to send a letter to the Fire Department thanking them for their concessions in bringing the budget under 1% of approximately \$56,000. They are not in negotiations, and did not need to concede. They amended the contract and that went above and beyond. Seconded by JR Ouellette.  
Vote unanimously in favor.***

**ADJOURMENT**

***JR Ouellette motioned to adjourn at 10:00 pm. Seconded by V. Lembo.  
Vote unanimously in favor***

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan