

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING-December 11, 2014

Approved

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Hooksett Town Hall

35 Main Street

Thursday, December 11, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

M. Miville called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Chair M. Miville, N. Haas, F. Bizzarro, P. Gosselin, D. Winterton, K. VanHorn

Excused T. Jennings, S. Peterson

Late: J. Pieroni, (6:05) C. Morneau (6:01)

School Staff:

Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 4, 2014

N. Haas motioned to table the minutes. Seconded by K. VanHorn

Vote unanimously in favor

PUBLIC INPUT

NEW BUSINESS

Hooksett School District Budget Presentation

Overview

Dr. Littlefield: In October I presented the Committee with a comprehensive overview. I don't believe anything has changed since. After we met, I had some interesting conversations with each cost center. I commend the people I work with for coming in with requests that were well reasoned and well-articulated which made it more difficult for me to cut, which I did. The School Board has worked hard to present a fiscally responsible budget weighing their responsibility to children and older taxpayers. We spent a great deal of time together looking at the budget. We would like to present each cost center and we are aware of questions that have been raised by the Budget Committee.

Underhill – D. Bairstow

Originally budgeted for an additional ½ time teacher and an assistant were to continue to maintain a 20 to 1 ratio. However the need remains but the money is no longer there.

That was the biggest addition to the budget.

Questions: Shipping

When we order material some vendors include the shipping costs and some do not. We have done an analysis and the average cost is 15% and that is what we use.

Reading practice books are consumable. Historically we have order just enough to get by. We cannot reuse a book and occasionally we run out of books and we make up the difference the following year. Skills practice books are \$15 and \$17 each.

Classroom furniture – we budgeted about \$3000 to replace old worn out desks.

Nurses are part of the retirement pool and they are part of the retirement system.

District Wide Staff Improvement – M. Polak

This is training that we organize to support district and building goals and improve student learning. This year we budgeted \$10,000. This year we have allocated money for the math program (2nd year of the adoption). \$2920 for Underhill, same for Memorial, \$1460 for Cawley for math and Special Ed teacher. We have \$1350 across the district for training for Special Ed laws. \$1350 for Cawley teachers to do 2 sessions of content writing. Next year we budget \$12,000. We will provide stem education. We have \$2475 for all teachers K-8 and to support our recurring goals, \$2920 Underhill, same memorial, same Cawley. We have \$2400 district wide for unveiling a new writing program in 5th grade and will have in all grade levels the following year.

D. Bairstow – Workshop and Conferences are contract requirements.

Courses – Principal and Assistant are contractually eligible.

Office Supplies – There is money for Emergency Management supplies based on an audit to comply with new demands. We are the face of the school district being the first school families see.

Secretary – additional hours to prepare for the students to enter school and entering data.

New walky talkie's to replace older units.

N. Haas, Budget Committee: All my questions were answered.

Can you explain with office supplies and Emergency Management, what does that include?

D. Bairstow: We plan to create binders and we need material for all staff members. We need vest for incident command officers, extension cords, and other things which we have learnt we need.

N. Haas: Was the additional secretary time at Underhill?

K. Lessard: It was 100 hours at Underhill.

D. Bairstow: We create bus tags which we give to every student in the school. Writing all the information on those. We also have volunteers helping out and the secretary is the lead person. Entering the student into the Student Information system is the largest part of the work.

P. Gosselin: The Budget for substitutes is low and they are always high.

K. Lessard: It is difficult to budget. We never know how much time teachers will take off.

M. Miville: How many students in summer reading program?

D. Bairstow: 1 – students entering K is about 30. Summer reading this past year was about 60 students.

M. Miville: Is the old furniture being removed or is this additional furniture.

D. Bairstow: We hold on to about one classroom worth of furniture.

M. Miville: 2 magnetic white boards?

D. Bairstow: We have one teacher that still has a chalkboard in the classroom.

Memorial – S. Harrises

As we prepared the budget we reached out to the staff and tried to remain as fiscally responsible as possible. Throughout the budget, lines shifted up and down within the different departments.

Question

We have Xylophone in the budget. We have one that needs to be replaced. It is used by all students at all grade levels.

ALPS testing fees regarding the Otis Test. It is used in creating specialize programs for students and provides additional data points.

Workshops and Conferences – various conferences which are held nationally or locally. What's important about them is it is need to maintain licenses and remain current. It is individualized to build skills to meet student needs. Those staff members are then sharing their experience with other staff members.

Staff Improvement was explained by Ms. Polak.

Principals and Assistant Principal Courses are in the contracts.

Office Supplies – The line is in line with what was requested in previous budgets. As we review our current inventory we see that we are looking at a need. We also had an assessment with the Emergency Management Group and some of supplies are a result of that.

J. Pieroni: There is 8% increase in Natural Gas at Memorial and Cawley but there was no increase at Underhill.

Ray Gagnon: Not sure, it was probably based on the usage.

K. Lessard will research and respond at a later meeting.

N. Haas: Repair Account 2600-5432-104-32 (page 22 of 36) is up \$7000.

S. Harrises: That is for painting the front of the school.

R. Gagnon: The front of memorial had repairs and a due to the fading of the stucco, it doesn't match and we want to steam clean it and paint it to make it match. It has been 10 years. We are out searching it and it will be done over the summer. We did go out for bids for the estimates.

K. Lessard: We don't usually go out for bid for a budget because the work is still one year out. Typically we get estimates and get bids when we are ready to do the work.

M. Miville: the Memorial book is full of shipping costs. There a lot of items shipped from the Midwest and they could be purchased locally. There is a shipping cost of \$703 for books.

Dr. Littlefield: We are aware and when we purchase the item. In some cases it is cheaper to purchase in the Midwest and pay the shipping costs than to pay more locally to save shipping costs. And if we are going to pick up, who will do that task. Shipping costs are an issue with all communities.

P. Gosselin: there was a total of \$3600 in just the Special Education budget.

M. Miville: There is a line here for W. B. Mason. The Town already has a contract with them.

Cawley – M. Benson

We put in for an additional teacher to complete our teaming but that has been cut. Workshops and Conferences are personalized for the individuals and they are part of the contract. All information is shared with other teachers at staff and content meetings. Courses – I am enrolled in two (2) courses for next year and that is contractual.

J. Pieroni: For years we heard that an ALPS program was important and now it isn't. I don't want money being cut and needed another year. I would like to know if the program was cut for financial reasons, or was the program no longer deemed needed.

A. Boilard: the Board had a goal in reductions. The Board didn't cut the entire line and we will look at what the program will look like next year. It might be a different process than today.

J. Pieroni: The other program is the alternative suspension program. We heard it was financial worth it to spend the money now. Is there no longer a need?

A. Boilard: It was explained by the Superintendent that we do not have a lot of participation in the program.

K. VanHorn: the attendance officer was also cut. That is a program that could save the town money if it was determined that students in high school were not residents.

A. Boilard: I would say that was a program that did not come to the School Board with enough data and information. We need more information on that prior adding that position. There was no job description or wages.

Special Education –C. Gialousis

Our programs are from 3 years to 21 years.

The discussion the committee targeted the needs of some of our youngsters.

SLA is Speech and Language assistant – we have early intervention which implements services in Pre-school and elementary.

PSA – Professional Services is district wide

Para Professionals – cost comparison – In the past, we provided the Para's to Manchester and now Pinkerton provides at our costs.

C. Gilaousis - If you do a cost comparison, it could be more for the Para but less for the program.

P. Gosselin: I found a discrepancy of 4 Special Education students which are now underfunded and will be addressed with the School Board.

D. Winterton: What does part time mean?

Dr. Littlefield: Less than 30 hours is part time for the affordable care act.

We believe we are in compliance. Our attorneys believe we are in compliance.

C. Gialousis: the increase of the HS coordinator is a three day a week position in addition to what we have. The HS coordinate is legal required to be at all meetings for their students, they train para's, they travel and without this we will be unable to be in compliance with everything we need to do to provide supervision to our 405 students.

Study carole is a privacy table and allows for specific visuals to be hung there is now one to be shared with all students. We are asking for 6 more which is 1-2 per classroom.

FM Systems – We have had a growing population with hearing problems.

Chrome Books- In IEP there is a section for use, this is a new request and a cost effective approach.

I-Pads- Provide for modifications for students.

Apple TV – cut.

K. VanHorn: Professional Education Services

C. Gialousis –That is the Pinkerton Para

K. VanHorn: Sped Contracted Services

C. Gialousis: I don't think it was fully funded in the past.

Dr. Littlefield: We would never take money from Spec. Education away however if we had allocated funds and a student left the district, we would feel obligated to return the funds to the taxpayer.

Medicaid Reimbursement?

C. Gialousis: We pay 8.5 percent. The reimbursement comes in revenue.

ELL Services?

There are 3- 60 in the program?

Special Education increased by \$200,000

Media Services – Justine Thain

We have 3 library media centers and provide a place as well as personnel and staff. We had a fairly level budget over the last few years. But thanks to the frugality of our ed. Leader we are \$13,000 below last year's budget. We have books, periodical, audio books, electronic devices, AV equipment that we circulate to students and teachers. We have a Para profession and Media Services for each school.

We have not asked to expand our program. We did cut SAU review process and cut \$48000.

Question

Similarity of items –

They are similar at each building.

Question of need for Para Professional and Media Specialist at each school.

The Para professional staff are media associates with the primary responsibility to distribute the items. 4 years to now we circulate 148,000 items in the 3 schools which is 3700 per month. We also process those items and inventory them. Just that part of the job is huge. We also have certified specialists as teachers for instruction on research, judge quality of information and those people are designated to teach online habits and good visual literacy as well as support the literacy programs.

A. Boilard: there was Board discussion to whether based on student population, there was a need to continue with 7 media staff.

Technology – Ken Henderson

The budget is developed directly from the Technology Plan which lays out a year by year plan to keep technology current.

Questions

Macbooks and chrome books

We have 10 I pads per grade and the 90 were to add another 9 per grade. That would encourage teachers to bring 20 into each class.

Maintenance

Utilities for Gas – we have level funded in the past years and last year were underfunded by \$500. We are looking to replace and have a cushion for the utilities. The 8% was to increase from the level fund from the past years.

Question – regarding pest control and did we go out for bids.

We didn't go out for bid because we have been paying the same. We did go out for bid on HVAC and the generator. I will bid out pest control this year.

Dr. Littlefield: It is my goal that this year, we will seek competitive pricing from all the vendors to the extent we can as an SAU to get the purchasing power as an SAU.

Replacement of windows

Cawley is 12 years old and Memorial is 10. They are both experiences leaking of gases in the windows. We've been changing windows every year.

The Parking Lot – we have estimates but no formal bids. This is to repair the upper parking lot in the back of the fields and is now in a warrant article.

We own one tractor at each building. They are used all four seasons and the maintenance is costly.

Sound deadening of Bathroom walls for the Spec. Ed area.

General Questions – Karen Lessard

Actual tuition calculation by schools Manchester, Pinkerton, and MOU's (Distributed)

Fund Balance – We have no idea what we will have at the end of the year

Reduction in Food Service Fund – It was low last year because we had a change in the Health Insurance election. We continue to have guidelines change in food. There is also a new Food Service Director.

School Board Secretary Salary – Due to the length of the meetings, and they changed to increase for any time over 2.5 hours.

How much returned to the General Fund - \$234,506 was returned to reduce taxes.

Salaries are down by \$9362 - .1% decrease

Retirement is us \$95,000 – 8.6%

Health Insurance 6.4% increase

Net impact of Pinkerton on High School tuition – What are all the things that cause an increase including transportation, para's, tuition, coordination, and the reallocation of existing human resources?

With the increase of cost of HS, how would this impact the other Hooksett schools?

There is a perception that this HS choice is impacting town affairs.

Dr. Littlefield: As a community, we don't own a High School but we need a long term plan. It is not about what is Pinkerton costing us and what if our kids did this instead of that, it is the whole ball of wax. At the end of the day, I care about the spending, our per pupil spending is far below the State averages. But at the end of the day, I'm more concerned with how our Hooksett kids are going to compete in the world they are going to live in and how they are going to rise to the top. That is what influences my decision for high schools. It takes courage to be a leader.

Food Service Prices?

K. Lessard We increased our prices in 2013. We have not talked about this. We will look at that in the spring. If you increase your cost, it does impact participation and can result in negative.

Transportation: One bus was eliminated, clarify
We will only need 19 next year. We are not reducing a route; 19 is all we need.

Pat Gosselin: How many passes were purchased for high school? It is costing us over \$400,000.

K. Lessard: We have sold 125 bus passes for Manchester and 108 for Pinkerton at \$50 each.
We use those buses for elementary as well so you cannot simply look at students and the number of high school buses.

P. Gosselin: We should look at how much high school transportation is costing the district. I hope the school board will look at the efficiency of the buses and the per student costs.

J. Pieroni: We have shifted money from the lower grades to the high school costs. Are the costs being shifted from the elementary schools because we have more control over that to pay for the high school? I have concern how responsibly we are with the High School costs. We have transportation, penalties, getting out of contracts and continuing to send students to that district. Are we making good decisions? Is this the best way of doing it? We are talking about shipping costs but the elephant in the room is the high school issue.

J. Pieroni: What is the cost of the salary increase which was passed by the voters in the contracts?

In next year's budget - \$60,000 teacher's 1% plus step; Support 2.5% \$46,600

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OTHER BUSINESS

PUBLIC INPUT

ADJOURNMENT

J. Pieroni motioned to adjourn at 8:36 pm. Seconded by C. Morneau.

Vote unanimously in favor

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Moynihan