

North Hampton Budget Committee
MINUTES
November 12, 2003

Chairman Robbie Robinson called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Present: Paul Fitzgibbons, Sharon Halle, Homer Johnson, Robbie Robinson, Peter Simmons, Susan Smith, Lloyd Sullivan and Cynthia Swank
Absent: Larry Miller

1) Continued presentation of proposed school district budget

School board rep Sharon Halle, Asst. Superintendent Lisa McMahon and SAU 21 Business Manager Fred Englebach presented the second half of the proposed North Hampton School budget for 2003-2004.

The budget committee would like a list of people working in the school currently and last year, and an inventory or chart showing location and use of computer technology within the school.

There was discussion of RSA 32:10 and transferring appropriations from one line item to another. The chairman will seek further information from the state Department of Revenue Administration.

There was discussion of the rationale behind some of the budget cuts. In some instances the principal agreed to cuts in certain accounts, or the rationale for the the previous year's amount was unknown, or certain purchases have been deferred to next year, according to Lisa McMahon.

There was discussion of school board member pay, with the anticipated increase from 3 to 5 members. Fred Englebach also suggested committee members understand the specific services provided by the SAU as Hampton's potential withdrawal would have a financial impact on the other districts.

Committee members also learned: advertising costs are up so the account will increase; the state charges \$34 for school staff background checks; an assistant principal has been hired; for food service, secretarial and custodial workers, the board will set up a "step" salary schedule comparable to the rest of the SAU rather than a merit pay system; the school purchases heating oil from Global Oil at a bulk rate and the tank is filled 3 or 4 times per year; the furniture purchase 5-year plan has been extended another year to be a 6-year plan, with half purchased next year and half the following year; Jim Jones has the contract for snow removal; insect control is for lawn grubs; buses are shared by the SAU 21 districts and the schedules interwoven, but each district has its own contract; students rarely walk more than 1/3 of a mile to a bus stop; field trip money will be cut and teachers will decide how to spend their allotment; the school's 15-year bond for renovation and addition passed in 1996 and the rate is 5.625%; employee benefits are estimated to increase 28% and there are currently three medical plans to choose from.

Food service, which has a separate account, took in \$153,000 last year and expended \$160,000. There was question whether the \$1.65 cost per meal should be increased, but the board said other savings would be considered first.

Two warrant articles were discussed, one for computer equipment and the other for replacing worn carpet with tile in the office and new carpet in the music room and library.

There was discussion with an audience member who had sent an email to committee members regarding proposed cuts in special education staff. (There was a 7.8% increase in the overall proposed SPED budget.) Citing her own experience, Jeana Dill pointed out that short term cuts could mean a long term budget increase if the school could not support an inclusive model of special education delivery and out of district placements occurred. Lisa McMahon said she and the school board had looked at student's Individual Education Plans, hours and caseloads and felt the staff cuts were supportable and appropriate delivery of services could be sustained, though scheduling may need to change. The committee also learned that the Reading Recovery position, which the school board has cut, had been funded through a Title 1 grant for which the school no longer qualifies.

In the school district audit, the committee had concerns about the repurchase agreement. Effective use of purchase orders was also mentioned.

From the audience, school board member Kim Kisner asked if the budget committee would be giving feedback on the school budget before the public hearing. The chairman said it was to be decided.

2) Consideration of minutes Nov. 6

Motion to accept the Nov. 6 minutes as written by Homer Johnson, seconded by Susan Smith; vote passed 6-0 with Peter Simmons and Lloyd Sullivan abstaining.

Motion to adjourn by Lloyd Sullivan, seconded by Homer Johnson.
Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Kane
Recorder

(Minutes approved 11/18/03 with the attachment of a summary of the proposed school budget.)