

North Hampton Budget Committee Meeting  
 Monday, December 7, 2009  
 Mary Herbert Conference Room

### **Official minutes (revised)**

**1. Call to order:** Chairman Jim Maggiore called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

*Budget committee members in attendance:* Robert Copp (North Hampton School Board), Michael Golden, Robert Hamilton (Little Boar's Head), Jim Maggiore, Paul Martino, Larry Miller, David Peck, Jon Rineman (Select Board), Jennifer Simmons

*Also in attendance:* SAU 21 finance administrator Nancy Tuttle, School Board members David Sarazen, Kari Schmitz, Stacy Whittier, Curriculum Coordinator Jan Scipione, Selectman Michael Coutu, NHCATV videographer John Savastano, Amy Kane (minutes)

Mr. Maggiore said he would allow input from audience members during review of the proposed school budget. He thanked Mr. Golden and Ms. Simmons for acting as liaisons to the School Board. He noted that the Budget Committee is charged by the New Hampshire legislature to be an arbiter for taxpayers and keep the tax burden to manageable proportions.

This is the first of four meetings that will address the proposed school budget. The Budget Committee review will continue on Dec. 17. A public hearing on the proposed school budget will be held Jan. 14. The school deliberative session will be Feb. 2.

### **2. Minutes, October 5<sup>th</sup> meeting**

Mr. Rineman noted that some members had just received a copy of the Oct. 5 minutes that evening.

***Motion by Jon Rineman to review the minutes at the next meeting. Second by Robert Hamilton. Passed 9-0.***

### **3. Review of North Hampton School FY10-11 Proposed Budget**

Mr. Maggiore noted that the proposed budget bottom line does not include warrant articles; the committee discussed line items and articles to include or "back out" to make an "apples to apples" comparison between the current and proposed budgets. Mr. Coutu and Mr. Golden noted that the current budget does not include the \$100,000 added back in at last year's deliberative session. Ms. Schmitz noted that the \$50,000 for the building maintenance fund came from the unreserved fund balance and was not raised and appropriated. According to Ms. Schmitz, the School Board will vote on proposed articles on Dec. 10. SEA and SESPAs negotiations are not yet complete. The deadline for citizen-petitioned articles is Jan. 13, said Ms. Tuttle.

The committee commenced review of the proposed budget by account and line item.

In the **Regular Education account**, there were questions about staffing levels and class size. Several grades are well below School Board policy. According to Ms. Scipione, classes were consolidated at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade level only, preserving a lower student-teacher ratio for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and allowing 7<sup>th</sup> grade to maintain the required specialized subject area teaching certifications for middle school. The School Board decided to keep the third section of kindergarten because it had not been budgeted two years in a row but had been needed, said Ms. Whittier. Ms. Schmitz said the Board was being proactive in planning and budgeting for the 3<sup>rd</sup> section, if necessary. Teacher contracts are offered April 15. There will be fewer interns next year due to a change in

UNH policy.

The difference between the Administration and the Board proposed funding for line 124, the salary for the Curriculum Coordinator, was discussed. Ms. Schmitz said there was a need for a full-time Curriculum Coordinator, and having an Assistant Principal would allow for a succession plan. Also, there are currently 485 students and the state requires an Assistant Principal above 500. The population trend is not clear and the Board may conduct further research. Ms. Scipione said a 5-person administrative team can achieve more. The school has been working with a four-person team for several months, since the former Assistant Principal left, and Ms. Scipione has been serving as both Assistant Principal and Curriculum Coordinator. The proposal from the administration was not to combine the roles, but have only a Curriculum Coordinator.

Mr. Miller said funding this position would make a difference to taxpayers. Mr. Coutu said the state has reduced the funds North Hampton receives from the school education tax. Mr. Hamilton said the amount is reduced but the tax has lowered and is "a wash" for the typical taxpayer. Mr. Coutu said the town will likely be a donor town again in FY10-11. Ms. Tuttle answered questions about the allocation of North Hampton state education funds between Winnacunnet and NHS; she will provide a detailed spreadsheet for the next meeting.

Mr. Peck asked for a comparison of this year's budget to the FY10 proposed budget. Assuming the SESP and SEA negotiations result in a 3% payroll increase, he suggested the proposed school budget was roughly a 4.7% increase. Ms. Schmitz asked if the Committee's plan was to get to a 0% increase. She noted the positive effect establishing a health care trust would have on budget planning. Mr. Maggiore said the Committee had not discussed or decided on recommendation, and he would prefer to look at the budget line by line to identify areas of potential savings. There was further discussion of the health care trust, and the Curriculum Coordinator and Assistant Principal positions. Mr. Golden made a motion proposing removing the Assistant Principal position but, with additional information from Mr. Hamilton that the current combined position was funded in the Assistant Principal line item, and Ms. Tuttle regarding the accounts to be impacted, he revised the motion to the following:

***Motion by Michael Golden adjusting line 4110009-124 (Salary – Curriculum Facilitator) from the School Board-proposed \$86,054 to the Administration-proposed 0, coupled with an adjustment to line 4241031-101 (Salary – Administration) from the School Board-proposed \$177,346 to the Administration-proposed \$188,400. Second by Robert Hamilton.***

*Discussion.* Mr. Golden noted that the school population was still below state guidelines of 500 for an Assistant Principal and he believed there would be time given to resolve that, if needed. Mr. Miller said he was in favor of the Administration's recommendation as it could save money. Mr. Hamilton said he felt strongly that nothing should degrade the quality of education at the school, but that no one was suggesting that would occur with the elimination of this position. Mr. Copp said this motion would still allow options regarding the Assistant Principal and Curriculum Coordinator positions that would benefit students.

***Vote. The motion passed 8-0-1, with Robert Copp abstaining.***

In reviewing the **Special Education account**, there was discussion regarding collective bargaining increases, numbers of staff, and the reading specialist position. Ms. Schmitz noted that a small increase in stipends for the administrative secretarial staff and the Special Education director due to an increased workload had been part of the Administration's proposed cut of the Curriculum Coordinator position.

***Motion by Paul Martino increasing line 4241031-110 (Salary – Clerical) from \$78,697 to \$89,630, and line 4120012-102 (Salary – Director) from \$76,506 to \$77,445, as proposed by the Administration. Second by Larry Miller.***

*Discussion.* Mr. Sarazen noted this motion was the current model today. Mr. Hamilton noted there would be a savings of \$60,000 without degrading the system.

***Vote. The motion passed 9-0.***

Reviewing the **Student Activities account**, Mr. Maggiore asked why only 7<sup>th</sup> grade received a reduction. Ms. Whittier said 6<sup>th</sup> grade environmental camp was beneficial because of its ties to the curriculum, and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Washington trip is well-established and highly valued.

Reviewing the **Technology account**, the Committee learned that 38 5-to-6-year-old Mac computers were scheduled to be replaced. Mr. Miller said he thought capital equipment costs should be in a warrant article rather than the operating budget. An increase in the alert system line was for a reverse 911.

Cuts by the School Board in the **Board of Education account** were due to shifting the cost of criminal background checks to employees. In the **Buildings account**, the Committee discussed plowing costs, the costs of fuel oil, the broker who will bid on fuel oil on behalf of the SAU, and the possibility of the town joining with the SAU to purchase fuel oil. Ms. Tuttle will update the Committee about likely fuel costs at the next meeting, and provide a breakdown of plowing costs.

In the **Transportation account**, the Committee discussed annual increases. The bus contract is a 5-year contract, and there is only one company providing service locally. Increase in field trip costs was also due to the bus contract.

The Committee discussed the **Employee Benefit account**, DRA requirements for wording the health care trust account article, the amount to be specified in the article, and how to balance it with the building maintenance fund. The Board will discuss and vote on this before the next budget review session.

The **Food Services account** is down because fewer students are buying lunch. The Board will be reviewing the program costs and menu, and the possibility of serving breakfast.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 17 at 7 p.m., in the Mary Herbert Conference Room.

### **3. Adjournment**

***Motion to adjourn by David Peck. Second by Robert Hamilton. Passed 9-0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Kane