

**Minutes**  
**Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting**  
**December 12, 2013**

**Members Present:** Chet Batchelder, Donna Danis, Anthony Dumas, Korey Ferland, Michael Koester, Jason Marcotte, Jackie Snow, Jeff Wheeler, Mark Carpenter – BOS Representative, Lauren Chaurette for Peter Perron – School Board Representative

**Excused Absences:** James O'Brien, Peter Perron

**Other in Attendance:** Secretary Dawn Wirkkala,

Chair Batchelder called the meeting to order and introductions were completed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chair Batchelder postponed the approval of minutes.

**SCHOOL 2<sup>nd</sup> DRAFT 2014/2014 BUDGE REVIEW:** Chair Batchelder thanked the SAU and School Board for providing the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft budget materials prior to the meeting and asked them to identify and highlight any changes between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts of the budget.

Dr. Gadomski stated he would provide a quick line by line review and then a review of the draft warrant articles.

Ms. Whitmore stated the teacher salary line was reduced an approximate \$60,000.00 with the removal of the requested specialist; although another position is included later in the budget.

Ms. Whitmore stated the Coe Brown tuition rate was recently received, with a total of \$1,667,694.00, a 4.9% increase, which is over the original budget proposal of 3%. This equals an approximate \$14,133.00 per student and does not include the differential payment; which will be set when the Dover tuition is received next year. The 2014/2015 tuition estimate for Dover is proposed at an estimate of 5%.

Ms. Whitmore stated the school board is discussing the method of purchasing text books, by having them be a line item within the operating budget or only by a separate warrant articles. Dr.

Gadomski stated the text book warrant article is set at \$72,000.00. Ms. Levenson stated the school board is trying to establish a balance but is concerned about having the default budget pass by vote instead of the proposed budget. The School Board does not want to lose getting new textbooks, as after a review it was established that some are ten years old; new textbooks are needed. Discussion took place about including text books both within the general operating budget establishing a plan to annual replace textbooks getting into a regular ongoing replacement program and for this year also having a warrant article for textbooks as a back up, just in case the proposed budget is voted down.

Ms. Whitmore stated the pre-school tuition has increased. The Special Education tuition for Coe Brown is \$45,171.00, which is below the original estimate from the 1<sup>st</sup> draft.

Mr. Reuning stated the formula to determine the cost for pre-school has changed, from the prior 33% of each town, to a three year student count average providing a more equitable system to pay for utilized services; Nottingham has more students this year. There is an approximate \$7,000.00 to \$8,000.00 per student pre-school cost. However, it isn't actually reflective of all the services the pre-school is required to provide, which includes pre-school plus required child find activities, in school and at home assessment for evaluation and testing of children. Ms. Levenson stated some pre-school education is mandated and the total amount includes all the special testing for children and advanced efforts to work with younger children that may be educationally deficient. The actual

**Minutes**  
**Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting**  
**December 12, 2013**

education mandate for students with a disability is until a diploma is received, specifically between ages 3 and up to age 21.

Ms. Carvalho reviewed the co-curricular dues and fees were previously included in the Athletic dues and fees account line, and isn't a change in proposed amount, just a shift to the correct account lines.

Dr. Gadomski stated a lot of the changes in this budget proposal were to clarify and separate out actual expenses to the actual account line, as they were previously lumped together.

Mr. Carpenter asked about the decrease in guidance salary. Ms. Whitmore stated it is a staff retirement which increased the cost for 2013/2014 and a lower rate of salary for the new hire in 2014/2015.

Ms. Danis asked about the hiring of a regular substitute nurse and the requested additional days of nursing assistance; would it be the same person for both options. Ms. Carvalho stated a per diem position nurse is used on a regular substitute nurse basis, but a per diem nurse will also be hired to provide additional help with student screenings and testing for an approximate 18 days throughout the school year. It could be the same nurse, but only if that person is available for all the requested days.

Dr. Gadomski stated a new position has been included for hiring a curriculum director. Mr. Carpenter asked about previous discussion for having the curriculum direct work for all three schools through the SAU instead of having a new school employee. Ms. Levenson stated a vote was held at the joint school board for a joint curriculum director and it was defeated. Ms. Chaurette stated the position will work exclusively with Nottingham, providing what should be better services; splitting duties between curriculum development, testing, working with the high schools to make sure students are prepared, as well as monitoring the high school students.

Discussion took place about the number of duties the new director will have and the return of investment. Ms. Levenson stated the School Board feels this is a very strong push to develop and create a proper bridge to prepare and transition the students to high school and is important for moving Nottingham School forward with a robust and complete curriculum to work with the Common Core Program. Dr. Gadomski stated writing curriculum is time consuming and making the request of teachers reduces the amount of extra time they are available to help students, prepare daily lessons, and have fewer meetings to determine and establishing curriculum. Teachers will be involved, but they will become more focused on working in the classroom and not researching education materials. There will now be someone available to continue review of student's educational progress even after they enter high school. Ms. Snow asked if this position will work specifically with the students, similar to a teaching specialist. Mr. Gadomski stated the position will work with the teachers in setting up lessons that align with the curriculum. Ms. Levenson stated the position will provided more continuity of education in each grade, so all students are at a similar level at the end of the year; having learned the same lessons.

Mr. Wheeler asked about proposal to tuition the middle school students to another school. Ms. Levenson stated discussion is preliminary, a middle school has been approached about the topic, but beyond the possibility of providing additional classroom space, it will provide the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students with access to a more traditional middle school experience in addition to a bigger variety of classes, preparing them more thoroughly for their upcoming high school experience.

**Minutes**  
**Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting**  
**December 12, 2013**

Ms. Danis asked if one person will realistically be able to provide all the services expected or will another person need to be hired to do all the duties the school wants this position to fulfill. Dr. Gadomski stated it is realistic that one person will be able to fulfill the duties, but they will not be able to solve all the problems in one year; it will be an ongoing and continuing position. It will be a collaborative effort for the Curriculum Director to work with all administrative staff to coordinate the professional staff and education efforts. Ms. Levenson stated it is not the expectation of this School Board to include additional curriculum assistance personnel.

Discussion took place about the pros and cons for hiring this position and the fear that additional staff will be asked for in the future, adding personnel expenses and staff when it might necessarily be needed. Is the salary being proposed enough to hire someone with enough experience to provide all that the school needs from the Curriculum Director? Dr. Gadomski stated there is a balance to have enough and hire a good enough person but have a responsible budget; the amount may not be enough for someone with 10 years of experience but may provide someone newer, with 3 to 5 years of experience with a fresher experience and educational point of view.

Ms. Whitmore explained for account section 2225, Computer Assisted Instruction, some of the new equipment items being requested were subtracted from general budget lines and moved to a warrant article, by an approximate \$60,000.00. Ms. Carvalho stated the general budget includes the 17 new projectors; some classrooms will have smartboards and some will have the new projector systems. The proposed new laptops and cart are included in the warrant article.

Mr. Koester asked if the projector equipment could be leased, preventing the school from locking into equipment that might not work with future needs. Ms. Carvalho stated the technology has been researched. Ms. Levenson stated leasing is being considered in some instances, like the laptops, but there are a lot of steps the School Board will consider before hand.

Discussion took place about the cost for the new laptops and equipment to support the requested 75 laptops or whether they should be an alternative technology. Ms. Levenson stated the product will need to work with the Smarter Balance Common Core testing as well as other classroom needs. The School Board is looking for a product that will be durable enough for the younger students and finding software that will assist the students as they continue their education; software being more of a consideration than the hardware. Ms. Danis asked for the supporting documentation of the hardware and software being considered to be presented to the Budget Committee.

Ms. Whitmore stated School Board Services now includes the funds for the audit to be compliant with the federal GASB 45 compliance, which require an outsourced auditor at a \$3600 increase.

Dr. Gadomski stated the actual SAU expense has been included. Ms. Danis asked about the increase in the SAU budget. Dr. Gadomski stated the budget includes an additional centralized shared bookkeeper, for each school, but the bookkeeper position will no longer be part of the school budget. The increase also includes a 3% increase in salaries, a 20 hour per week part time web master, and supporting receptionist coverage, the Superintendent is slightly more than 3%, Special Education Director also have a job description change and a higher increase in salary.

Ms. Whitmore stated the advertising account has been corrected and Office of the Principal dental insurance also was increased.

Chair Batchelder stated the Principal (educational) Courses budget should be decreased if classes will not be taken. Ms. Carvalho stated the Assistant Principal is planning to take courses.

**Minutes**  
**Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting**  
**December 12, 2013**

Ms. Whitmore stated Repairs and Maintenance Building account line has been reduced; the amount was excluded and put into a warrant article.

Ms. Danis asked about the increase in elementary school transportation. Ms. Whitmore explained it is annually increase as part of the contract; this being the last year of the contract. Ms. Danis asked if a new contract is under negotiation and Ms. Levenson stated it would be. Ms. Levenson asked to have a copy of the current contract provided for review and Ms. Carvalho stated the contract has been made available with the new Google Docs folder.

Ms. Danis asked about the budget differences between regular transportation versus field trip transportation. Ms. Carvalho stated it is an estimated rate and is a separate part of the contract.

Mr. Wheeler asked if anything has been included in the default budget for the building maintenance and repair to prevent continued damage. Ms. Levenson stated only contractual obligations can be included and that is a danger with the default budget being approved over the proposed budget.

Mr. Carpenter asked if the electricity budget includes additional electric needs with the addition of 7 new air conditioners; it should be increased. There was agreement to review the account.

Ms. Whitmore stated special education transportation was reduced \$17,000.00 from the first review of the budget. Mr. Reuning stated the reduction is based on an additional review of transportation needs. The SAU re-bid transportation because of concerns with the current vendor; transportation for regular and special education are separate contracts. The special education drivers should be more experienced in addressing the needs of special education students.

Ms. Whitmore stated the Food Services accounts were changed. Chair Batchelder asked about the funding for food services. Ms. Levenson stated Ms. Whitmore suggested funding the entire amount of funds needed for supporting the food services accounts, preventing a possible transfer of funds from the general account at the end of the year. Budget Committee members had questions about the amount of funding and whether or not the amount is the actual amount needed to fund the program; is the amount proposed enough to cover the actual expenses. Dr. Gadomski stated part of the equation to determine the tax rate is including the estimated amount of revenues. If revenues aren't enough to cover the expenses, the school is required to support the all expenses without operating in a negative. Budget Committee members asked if the food service amounts should be higher to cover the possibility of receiving less than expected revenues.

Dr. Gadomski stated the actual 2<sup>nd</sup> draft total budget proposal is \$10,973,787.07, a 2.5% increase instead of 2.23%.

Chair Batchelder asked about Contracted services for Attorney and Negotiator increase. Ms. Levenson stated there is the expectation of having a significant number of contract renewals during the 2014/2015 budget year.

Dr. Gadomski reviewed the default budget and the changed salary and tuition amounts, for an actual final default budget \$10,793,611.77; a .81% increase.

Dr. Gadomski reviewed the additional handouts provided, including monthly revenues, warrant articles that will continue to be refined, insurance rates, salaries, special education rates, enrollment counts, the SAU budget and information about the proposed Curriculum Coordinator position.

**Minutes**  
**Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting**  
**December 12, 2013**

Mr. Carpenter asked if the \$15,000.00 amount being added to the Building Repair Capital Reserve Fund would be enough; should the amount be increased to cover the expected needed repairs and not have to fall back on a warrant article to replace the equipment, which might not pass. Mr. Carpenter asked the language establishing the Capital Reserve Fund reviewed for possible changes to allow the school to raise funds that are actually needed, preventing concern about where the funds will come from when something breaks.

Ms. Danis asked which budget year the unassigned fund balance funds will be withdrawn from; based on the same type of warrant article being asked the prior year causing a lot of confusion and possibly misleading taxpayers because the budget being reviewed isn't the year the funds came from. It was stated warrant article #3 will withdrawn fund from the 2013/2014 budget and not the 2014/2015 budget and the 2013/2014 tax year language would be added and reviewed for legality.

Ms. Danis asked about warrant article for the text book, and if the amount should also be included in the general budget, as well as a warrant article incase the default budget is approved; similar to the process used the prior year for math books. Chair Batchelder stated withdrawing the textbooks from the general budget reduces the overall budget increase, the warrant article should be argued on its own merit. The Budget Committee supported the idea purchasing books and including the option for purchase of books with the regular budget and a second option if the default budget passes, as well as consideration of including some type of fund specifically for text books on an annual basis.

Dr. Gadomski stated article 8 is for the laptops. Ms. Danis requested significant support for the reasons and types of technology; including trying to provide more specificity to describe what is being needed and requested for both software and hardware. Some Budget Committee members stated they would not support the expense of a \$700 laptop and requested more details in the language of the warrant article.

Mr. Carpenter asked about salaries and what categories are provided with in benefits. Ms. Whitmore stated health, dental, FICA, NH Retirement as well as any potential retirement buyouts. Mr. Carpenter asked about the Guidance double entry and Ms. Whitmore stated the current full time counselor is retiring and the salary information includes the possibility of the current part time person moving to the full time position and a new hire for the empty part time position, using the same person's name.

Mr. Marcotte asked about a secondary retirement options. Ms. Whitmore stated teachers can choose to enroll into a secondary program but the school does not contribute.

Chair Batchelder thanked the SAU and school board members for attending and providing information; the next meeting will be January 9 with the final school budget with tax impact.

Chair Batchelder stated the USA Springs property has recently been put up for sale and recommended the Town and School consider a possible purchase for Town or School needs.

**TOWN 2014 BUDGET:** Mr. Carpenter stated a workshop was held on December 9 and work continues. The next presentation will be January 23, 2014 for the final Town Budget with tax impact review.

**Minutes**  
**Nottingham Budget Committee Meeting**  
**December 12, 2013**

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Mr. Ferland asked about the space needs reports for the school. Ms. Chaurette stated the board hasn't met and will discuss it next week. Mr. Carpenter asked to receive a copy of the report.

**ROUNDTABLE:** Mr. Carpenter reported Santa will be visiting Nottingham neighborhoods on the fire truck with the Fire Department and the annual Recreation Holiday Parade, held last Saturday, was very fun and worth attending. There will be a public hearing to review the proposed fees and recommendations for the Recycle Center Committee and everyone is welcome to attend. The Board of Selectmen has invited Emily Buchanan, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade student who started a fundraiser for the school playground replacement and repair to present her goal and efforts to raise \$60,000.00. Mr. Carpenter encouraged attendance at the December 30<sup>th</sup> meeting to show support for her efforts.

Ms. Chaurette stated the next board meeting is next week, starting at 6:30 pm. The Technology Group will meet on Thursday for further discussion and information about the proposed equipment.

Mr. Koester stated he was encouraged to see the grouping of benefits and expenses being included together to provide the complete picture of expenses.

Ms. Snow stated the material has been presented in a much better fashion, making it easier to understand the changes, from prior years.

Mr. Dumas reviewed the school board consideration between technology equipment and to err on the side of durability preventing more frequent replacement. Ms. Danis and Mr. Carpenter stated their support for teaching and expecting student and parent responsibility with the use of equipment. Ms. Danis stated Coe-Brown students receive a Netbook as a freshman, which they will use for all four years of their education and all repairs and/or replacement is the responsibility of the parent.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Having no further business,

9:15 PM **Motion:** by Mr. Marcotte, second by Ms. Danis.

**Vote:** 10 – 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Wirkkala