

Sanborn Regional School District Budget Committee
Thursday, December 11, 2014
Approved Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: 7:50 PM

Public Comment: none

Bud Com Members: Barry Gluck, Chair
Beth Ann Scanlon (absent, excused)
Roger Clark
Jim Doggett
Allen Felisberto, Vice Chair
Cheryl Gannon
Patty Stephan, Secretary
Nancy Ross, School Board Rep.

Administration: Carol Coppola, Business Administrator
Brian Blake, Superintendent (absent)

Public Comment: none

Committee Comment: Ms. Stephan thanked Ms. Gannon for taking notes at the last meeting.

Prior Meeting Minutes: Reviewed and approved.

- Motion: to accept the December 04, 2014 Budget Committee meeting minutes (Mr. Doggett)
 - Second: Ms. Ross
 - Vote: 7-0 (motion carries)

School Board Report (Ms. Ross):

Work session was held Monday evening, not a School Board meeting, regarding the School Board's plans for the budget. Not all members were there. Consensus was that the members present have faith in the Superintendent and his staff and believe that the budget presented by the administration was appropriate. No cuts were recommended.

Old Business:

- Status of search for Bud Com Recording Secretary (Mr. Gluck): per Dr. Blake, a recording secretary has been hired and she will begin with the next BudCom meeting.
- Community outreach initiative updates:
 - Mr. Gluck informed the committee that due to a number of circumstances, the press releases for last week did not go out. But the fine work completed by Ms. Gannon will be the basis for the next set of press releases.
 - Mr. Gluck informed the committee that the survey is out and is posted to the front page of the district web site. Ms. Gannon looked and noted that the link was extremely small. Ms. Coppola said she would address the issue immediately. (Post: the issue has been fixed)

New Business:

Review of Budget Committee questions submitted to the Administration

- Ms. Gannon: discussed Business Administrator position contractor vs. salary years.
 - Ms. Coppola: FY15 is not set salary. It's an hourly rate based on an estimated number of hours.
 - Ms. Gannon: What happens if the number of estimated hours is exceeded? Is there a cap?
 - Ms. Coppola: Yes, the verbiage states "shall not exceed X hours without authorization from the Superintendent." Not sure of the precise number. Contract runs from 7/1-6/30.
 - Ms. Coppola: This issue is presented every year (moving from contract to FT hired position)
 - Mr. Doggett: The decision is made by April 1 each year

- Mr. Gluck remarked that the DOE link from Ms. Coppola has a vast amount of information and recommends that all BudCom members take a look.
- Mr. Felisberto: Page 25 of the DOE report details the per-pupil cost for education. How is it derived?
 - Ms. Coppola: It's a standard calculation for NH. State backs out a number of different costs and then divides the budget by the number of students in the district. Therefore, merely taking the budget and dividing it by the number of students (without backing out the other costs) would render a very artificially high number.
- Ms. Gannon: Do we know if anyone is retiring this year?
 - Ms. Coppola: No. If they are not part of the early retirement program, they receive retirement through the NH Retirement System, not from the district. They can elect to remain on COBRA or Medcomp, but they pay for that themselves. They pay in as active employees. Checks come directly from the retirement system.

New Questions

- Mr. Doggett: Do we know the number or percentage of students who are getting free or reduced lunch?
 - Ms. Coppola: 19% (on page 18 of the booklet). The breakfast and lunch programs are federal and the district is reimbursed for the cost.
 - Mr. Doggett: Might the district opt to feed them dinner?
 - Ms. Coppola: We could. Dinner is also part of the federal program.
- Ms. Gannon: For how many years has the district administration received a 3.5% increase?
 - Ms. Coppola: Please see page 59 for all the details.
- Ms. Gannon: What percentage to district employees contribute to health care?
 - Ms. Coppola: It's a three-tiered plan. There is a base-level driven plan, then two additional higher-cost levels above that. The district pays 90% of the lowest tier of whichever plan level the employee chooses. Employee pays the remainder.
- Ms. Gannon: Regarding the new budget request for a preschool teacher and moving the two paraprofessionals from PT to FT, what is the salary impact?
 - Ms. Coppola: Current PT teacher salary: \$22,093; FT: \$44,160; FT benefits: \$23,079
 - Details for paraprofessionals are in the booklet.

Budget Discussion

Mr. Gluck: Generally speaking, let's speak in terms of all budgets combined for this budget discussion. To simplify, propose a number that includes all funds (operating budget and special revenue fund). Requested each BudCom member present their budget recommendation and rationale.

Mr. Doggett: up to **\$34,029,984**. Newton has 4th highest poverty level in the county.

Mr. Gluck: **\$35,129,083**. Proposed \$35, 129,083 in cuts:

- Did not want to cut items that have a direct impact on teaching.
- Cut half of the \$60K flooring replacement cost at SRMS (\$30K)
- Cut half of the \$70K replacement window cost at SRMS (\$35K)
- Cut \$8000 in weight training equipment at SRHS
- Cut \$100K in technology spending district wide, leaving \$50K
- Cut one of two COWs requested for SRMS (25K)

Ms. Ross: **\$35,335,083** (proposed budget): recommended no additional cuts

Ms. Stephan: **\$34,780,573** (halfway between the default budget and the proposed budget)

- Contrary to last year, when the administration approached us with a proposed budget and we had to request that new requests be prioritized, Dr. Blake and the administration presented a budget from

which virtually all new requests had already been removed, leaving just bare essential requests, in their opinion.

- After reading through the budget book prepared by Ms. Coppola and the administration, is not presenting specific line items recommended for cutting. Does not see anything that she feels is an outrageous request. Took a different approach.
- Understands that there are costs out of our control that represent a large part of this budget request. But there is also infrastructure maintenance that must be performed before they become much more costly repairs. There is the huge increase in the cost of electricity, among other things.
- Prefers to come to agreement on a number preliminarily across Bud Com and then recommend line item cuts once we agree on a figure.

Mr. Clark: **\$34,226,064** (default budget)

Mr. Felisberto: **\$34,826,000**. Bottom line: trusts in the people who created the budget. Based this number on an assumption that some money will be going back to the voters. Feels that if we continue to delay Cap Ex and nickel-dime technology, we are doing a disservice to the district and the students.

Ms. Gannon: **\$34,916,000**. Expressed a great deal of frustration with the budget review process. Three of the board members did not present specific line-item backup. Believes a 6.7% increase is too much for voters to handle, though.

- Increase PT teacher to full time
- Eliminate the Math Curriculum Coordinator
- Do not replace current edition of Everyday Math textbooks with new edition to align better with Common Core (\$46K)
- It is important that we educate voters regarding the decrease in state funding and its impact on the budget.
- Remember that we have the Support Staff warrant article, as well, which will have an impact

General Discussion

- Mr. Felisberto briefly discussed the challenges of being in an SB2 district.
- Mr. Clark: When we hire someone, remember that we take on salary plus benefits. Once we hire them, it's difficult to let them go. So even though tuition may be higher (see page 59) for placing three year olds outside the district for preschool, it may be cheaper in the long run not to have to pay benefits or have a long-term commitment.
- Mr. Felisberto: Brought up renegotiation of the district's bond.
 - Ms. Coppola explained that renegotiation is done centrally. We do not dictate when. NH Municipal Bond Bank does. Has been done three times. The money savings has been substantial. They bind schools together to renegotiate. Have saved \$600K over the life of the bond already.
- Ms. Gannon: Dr. Blake has pointed out that we are retaining employees, providing stability, but they move up in steps and command a higher salary.
 - Mr. Gluck pointed out that training costs are not incurred, however, when we retain teachers, initial training costs do not recur. There was a brief discussion on this point.

Public Comment: None.

Committee Comment:

- Mr. Felisberto: How many districts in NH have their own busses? Mr. Doggett responded that SRSD saved half the cost the first year we got rid of busses.
 - Mr. Felisberto: Perhaps buy busses or large vans to save money? Mr. Doggett responded that they retained three short busses and part time drivers back then.
 - Mr. Felisberto: NECCO leased vans and hired their own drivers and saved 50%.

- Mr. Clark: 13.5% of the population in our district is now 65+. By 2020, that percentage is expected to rise to 20%. Folks on a fixed income are already struggling. Fears towns and the state will not be able to keep up with the spend.

For the next press release (for which Ms. Stephan needs the previous meetings drafts from Mr. Gluck or Ms. Gannon) should feature information about the BudCom survey and the date of the next meeting.

Remember that there will also be a warrant article for the Support Staff contract.

Any additional questions for the administration are due by Sunday night.

Schedule of Future Meetings:

- Thursday, December 18 (School Board Room, 7:30 PM)
- Thursday, January 8 (School Board Room, 7:30 PM)
- January 14 Public Hearing (Sanborn Regional High School Auditorium, 7:00 PM)

Motion: To Adjourn (Mr. Doggett)

- Second: Mr. Felisberto
- Vote: 7-0 (motion carried)
- Meeting Adjourned at 9:12 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Stephan, Budget Committee Secretary