

SANBORN REGIONAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
APPROVED PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
THURSDAY, January 12, 2017

The Sanborn Regional Budget Committee held a Public Hearing on Thursday, January 12, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. The following were recorded as present:

SRSD BUDGET COMMITTEE

Annie Collyer, Chairperson
Charlton Swasey, Vice-Chairman
Cheryl Gannon
Sandi Rogers-Osterloh
Jack Kozec
Tammy Gluck, School Committee Representative
James Doggett
Ami Faria

The meeting began with a salute to the flag. Ms. Collyer informed the public that the Budget Committee will start with the presentation of the budget. They will then go through each of the money bearing warrant articles, including some petitioned warrant articles. The School Board Chairperson will then present the contracts.

The Deliberative Session will be held on February 8, 2017.

Ms. Collyer presented the proposed SRSD budget for fiscal year July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018. The total proposed general fund budget is \$32,422,267 which is \$843,398 less than the Superintendent's proposed budget of \$33,265,865.

Ms. Collyer reviewed the fixed cost increase in funding. The default budget is \$34,723,540 with the proposed budget being \$33,695,968. The calculation for the default budget was provided. The unreserved fund balance from the past 10 years was provided. Ms. Collyer described the budget development process and the history of budget votes from FY07-08 to the present. She described some of the challenges they face this year with the teacher contracts, support staff contracts, aging infrastructure, town needs and declining enrollments.

Ms. Collyer presented a chart showing comparable district cost per student. She explained the tax impact on households based on a \$250,000 home in Kingston and in Newton. She said the cost will decrease with the proposed budget but will increase with the default budget. Ms. Collyer stated this includes only the local school portion and any other warrants and town costs will be in addition to this. A chart was shown on the history of declining student enrollment from 2011 and projected out to 2022. Charts showing athletics and co-curricular activities and standardized test results were reviewed.

Ms. Collyer provided a chart showing standardized test results for mathematics and explained their proposed reduction of the Math Coordinator position. She explained the proposed reduction of the High School Director of Guidance position and the District-Wide Public

Relations position. The Budget Committee is recommending Administrators take a vacation from pay increases for one year which totals \$45,000. The District pays 90% in healthcare for the employees and the Budget Committee recommends Administrators pay an increase of 5% and for non-union employees pay an increase of 1%. BudCom also proposes that the School Board participate in the austerity plan in support of the staff contracts by giving up their stipends.

Ms. Collyer described the savings and innovations in the District and cited a list of the important improvements that have occurred in SRSD.

The proposed operating budget is \$32,422,467, special funds are \$1,273,501 for a total of \$33,695,968.

Ms. Collyer opened up the meeting to public comments.

The Business Administrator for the District, Carol Coppolla, addressed the Committee. She referred to the information they presented regarding the actual expenses for FY 16. She said the actual expenses are about \$1 million higher than what they stated. She further stated the money the Committee said that was expended for the truck and the roof were not spent, those were encumbered and don't appear as expenses because they haven't been incurred. She said she would have to look at the slide presentation in order to address other numbers that were presented.

Jon LeBlanc of Kingston questioned the inflation figures. Ms. Collyer explained they used the number the Administration gave them for FY18 fixed cost.

Jon LeBlanc referred to the Math Coordinator and asked them if they considered what the math results would have been if they didn't have the Math Coordinator.

Ellen Hume-Howard from Kingston referred to the Math Coordinator slide presentation and disputed using one data point in one chart to evaluate staff performance.

Barry Gluck from Newton said the numbers are very telling. He stated they have a highly qualified Business Administrator and was shocked she has not seen this presentation. He cited examples on the Cost per Student by District slide and how they cherry-picked their data. He doesn't have faith in the numbers presented.

Corey Masson of Newton asked for clarification on enrollments and how they came up with this. Ms. Collyer said they are from the Superintendent's budget book.

Corey Masson said using other school districts to compare our budget can be misleading. Timberlane is 53% larger than SRSD and Exeter is 43.2% smaller. He is concerned about cutting the Director of Guidance position.

Kathy Rosalind from Newton doesn't see special education cuts in the presentation but knows there are some. She is scared they chose to cut a 4th grade teaching position simply because of numbers. She urged the Committee to come into the school. She said the success they are having now won't continue with making these cuts.

Mike Turmelle, Assistant Principal, talked about the potential liability the Committee may be opening them up to when they talk about cutting a position in public forum based on performance. He was horrified they are proposing cutting the Math Coordinator based on performance. He referred to eliminating the Guidance Director position and said he is not sure if they are aware that there isn't an administrator in the high school qualified to do what the Director does. He understands the Administrative salaries, however, he said they compromised on a raise last year when they took a different health insurance plan which is not very strong.

Michael Giordano of Newton is a senior at the High School. He referred to reducing the French and Home Economics teachers to half time. He asked if there is some sort of limit on class sizes and if they have to cap off at a certain point.

Ami Faria read into public record a statement from Nancy Finney of Kingston who is in support of the FACS teaching position and wants to keep it full time.

Sandi Rogers-Osterloh read into public record a statement from Mary Madison from Kingston who is in support of keeping the FACS teaching position to full time and would be a mistake making it a half time position.

Peter Broderick of Kingston explained the responsibility of the Budget Committee and what is not their responsibility because he believes there is some confusion here. He explained these proposed cuts are just recommendations from the Budget Committee. They put together a pool of money to run the District and the School Board makes the decision on how that money is spent. This isn't the place to get into cutting this and cutting that.

Alan Folsberg of Kingston said the Budget Committee does not have the legal right to make recommendations to eliminate positions. He stated that Ms. Collyer has already prejudiced the people. He asserted his opinion that there is a moral conflict in reference to her statements published in the papers regarding the Taxpayer Association of Newton and Kingston. He said in the past, the Budget Committee never put a figure out that wasn't first reviewed by the Business Administrator.

Jay Ash of Kingston referred to the tax impact information that was presented. He asked what the tax impact is on each town on an annualized basis. Ms. Collyer provided some figures.

Roger Clark of Kingston asked about putting the Math Coordinator on a warrant article. He said one of the most disappointing things was how nobody came to the previous meetings and now they come to this hearing and don't understand what is going on.

Kevin Holt of Newton said they did a great job in reducing the budget. He referred to the CIP improvements that have been made into warrant articles. He said they can't keep kicking that can down the road any longer and believes those items should be in the operating budget and not in a warrant article.

Ms. Collyer stated the decision to have separate warrants was made by the School Board and Superintendent's recommendation and the Budget Committee went along with it.

Jon LeBlanc of Kingston referred to the January 5th Budget Committee meeting when they discussed the Director of Guidance position. He was shocked when they proposed cutting that position. He asked them to add the money back into the budget for that position because there is obviously a need for it.

Barry Gluck of Newton responded to Mr. Broderick's comments regarding the role of the Budget Committee and School Board and stated he was correct. He added the reason why the Budget Committee needs to recommend specific cuts is to justify the number they are proposing. They are also required to sign a MS-27 form in which they must indicate the specific cuts to the number they are proposing.

Corey Masson of Newton applauds the work the Budget Committee did but asked what type of culture are they looking to have with this budget and the cuts they have proposed. They have a fiduciary responsibility to provide a safe environment and asked how this is helping. He asked where is the accountability on the presentation, the numbers, and the reasoning.

Cheryl Gannon of Kingston was surprised that no handouts were provided for the public. She said videos are available on line, there are minutes available and social media should not be their primary choice of information. It is the responsibility for the Budget Committee to come up with a budget but they have no authority to tell the School Board how to spend those funds.

REVIEW OF SCHOOL BOARD WARRANT ARTICLES

1) Warrant Article: Swasey Gymnasium and Chase Field - \$167,460

Kevin Holt of Kingston commented how it only takes one person to file a complaint regarding safety issues and these could be closed. He suggested they might want to include a statement on the warrant article stating the repercussions if it doesn't pass.

2) Warrant Article: Life Safety Improvements at Bakie, Memorial and Middle School - \$161,300

Ms. Coppola stated that the improvements are for doors and hardware and signage at the Middle School. Ms. Collyer said it is her recollection that the School Board proposed this warrant for the windows and blinds, not for the doors and hardware. Corey Masson read the list of safety items and the line by line list is on the website of what this warrant article covers.

Pam Brown of Newton stated the \$161,300 was only for the windows.

Barry Gluck said there is also a petitioned warrant article which is almost a duplicate of this warrant article and questioned how the “No Means No” law affects this.

PETITIONED WARRANT ARTICLES

1) Warrant Article by Petition: Varsity Ice Hockey Team - \$9,800

Jon LeBlanc discussed this petitioned warrant article as a member of the Booster Board and explained they are in their third year of Varsity hockey. He spoke about the money the Boosters have raised to fund this.

Tammy Gluck of Newton questioned what is covered by this warrant article and asked how the money has been decided on.

Jon LeBlanc explained and said this would be an on-going annual cost.

Ms. Collyer referred to the participation in athletics and spoke in favor of supporting athletics because of the positive impact it can have on the students.

2) Warrant Article by Petition: Capital Improvements to Swasey Gym and Chase Fields - \$573,200

Ms. Collyer spoke as one of the petitioners for this warrant article. She explained the School Board approved the CIP for the next five years and then did not put forward a warrant article to fund this program. She believes this should be put before the voters.

Ms. Gannon said if this passes and the warrant article for ADA doesn't, those buildings could not be used.

It was stated that all 39 signatures for this warrant article were signatures from voters in Newton, which Ms. Collyer pointed out was easy to obtain by going to the Transfer Station, whereas in Kingston there is not as easy access to voters. She pointed out that this is not a town versus town petition.

Barry Gluck asked for the Administration to address how this affects the other warrant article that is not a petitioned warrant article.

Dr. Blake explained why the decision was made to pull out the first year's capital improvement projects and the School Board decided what should go forward on a warrant article. These petitioned warrant articles incorporates all the rest of the projects on the CIP for the first year. In effect, if the ADA passes, at the end at the end of the year if there were any surplus funds allocated by the voters, they could do some different projects, but these petitioned warrant

articles have handcuffed the District so they can't do any of those improvements if the warrant articles fail.

Ms. Collyer said she just wanted to give the voters a direct choice.

Peter Broderick said it is his opinion they have to get the ADA passed and the teacher's contract to pass.

Jon LeBlanc feels these warrant articles are clouding the importance of the warrants by the School Board. This will cause failure of the teachers' contract to pass and the biggest concern is having these on there and the "No Means No" law.

Ms. Collyer said this is about democracy and the people being allowed to vote.

Jim Baker of Newton said the CIP should be clearly explained to the voters. The School Board has not been willing to face reality and they can't keep pushing the CIP down the road. We are facing a crisis.

Ami Faria of Kingston mentioned the discussions held by the School Board regarding the life safety issues and the warrant articles.

- 3) Warrant Article by Petition: Capital Improvement to Memorial School, Bakie, Middle School - \$369,730

Ms. Collyer explained this takes the balance needed that are included in the CIP for the first year.

- 4) Warrant Article by Petition: ADA Improvements at Swasey Gym and Chase Field House - \$167,460

Ms. Collyer explained this is just about identical to the one the School Board put forward but thought there was a chance for the School Board to withdraw theirs to see if they had money in the budget to get these done.

Nancy Ross of Kingston clarified that based upon the assumption the School Board would withdraw theirs, would the petitioners withdraw theirs. Ms. Collyer stated petitioners can't withdraw theirs and presumably the School Board would withdraw their warrant articles.

Michael Giordano stated regardless of the number of students, the students should receive the same education.

- 5) Warrant Article by Petition: Middle School Window and Blind Replacement - \$161,300

Ms. Collyer stated this is to make sure this stays and remains a warrant article which should go before the voters.

Corey Masson is very concerned about the confusion caused by having warrant articles that are so similarly written.

Ami Faria of Kingston said the last two petitioned warrant articles are the same as the School Board's and finds them confusing. She guarantees the voters will find them confusing and she is extremely worried on the impact that will have on one passing and one not passing. She said the assumption that the School Board would withdraw theirs is insulting.

Barry Gluck and Peter Broderick both stated these petitioned warrants cannot be withdrawn, however, a voter can make a motion during the Deliberative Session to zero out the petitioned warrant articles and asked for every possible voter who can attend to make sure that is done.

Jay Ash of Kingston questioned the 'amount not to exceed' wording in the warrant articles and how that is impacted with the "No Means No" law. He asked if they go over the amount approved, how do they remedy that. Ms. Collyer stated that the amounts needed were carefully researched by the Administration and she is sure they are accurate. If they are not, she does not know how that would be resolved.

Pam Brown of Newton supports this warrant article.

By motion from Mr. Swasey, the Budget Committee unanimously voted to take a 10 minute break at 10:05 pm. The Public Hearing resumed at 10:15 pm.

STAFF CONTRACTS

Corey Masson, School Board Chairperson and Evan Czyowski, President of the Sanborn Regional School District Teacher's Union presented the Professional Staff contract with a slide presentation.

This is a two-year professional staff contract. Four contracts have failed in the past 10 years. The negotiation process was described. Salary and compensation changes were reviewed. The Health Insurance for both years was explained. They reviewed the professional staff contract increase and the estimated cost to the taxpayers based on a \$250,000 home in year one and year two.

A chart was displayed showing comparisons with teacher contracts for FY15-16 to other comparable districts.

They reviewed the benefits to the District and Professional Staff. It was stated that 40 staff members left the District last year.

TWO-YEAR SUPPORT STAFF AGREEMENT

Corey Masson presented this and reviewed the salary and compensation changes, the support staff contract increases and the estimated cost tax impact to Kingston and Newton taxpayers on a \$250,000 home.

PUBLIC COMMENT

James Doggett clarified with Carol Coppolla the top step in the teacher's contract and referenced the 3% wage increase. He suggested language should be included to make sure voters understand what that means.

Barry Gluck of Newton is in support of both contracts and commended the negotiating team.

Corey Masson said we need to start thinking about retaining quality teachers. Deborah Bamforth, Principal of Bakie School and resident of Newton described some of her hiring challenges and we are facing a teacher shortage. It is hard to find paraprofessionals who will work for that salary.

Michael Giordano spoke in favor of the contracts and spoke of the importance of retaining teachers.

Jay Ash of Kingston confirmed with Dr. Blake we have around 310 School District employees. Jay Ash calculates they lost 13% of staff last year based on the 40 employees who left and what will it be next year. They pay approximately \$12,000 less than some surrounding districts. The most tenured teachers they have are only five years and that is a problem.

Ami Faria of Kingston commented that young and inexperienced doesn't mean they are not worth retaining. Her kids benefit from some of the new teachers. She supports this contract in order to retain all teachers.

Sandi Rogers-Osterloh referred to an attrition paper she received which includes the years but not all employees left because of money.

Evan Czyowski stated that the lack of a contract certainly played a part in it.

Mr. Swasey asked to see the average salary comparisons slide. He referred to the accusation made earlier that the Budget Committee 'cherry-picked' data for their cost per pupil analysis and sees this data from the School Board as doing the same thing. He asked how this is different. Corey Masson provided an explanation.

Tammy Gluck spoke in favor of the contracts and on the importance of them passing.

Mike Turmelle explained that new teachers are hired in at their step in the contract and how experienced educators are making less money than new teachers coming in because they aren't making advancements due to no contract.

Barry Gluck responded to Mr. Swasey's questioning regarding the 'cherry picking' comment. He explained the difference between the cost per pupil comparisons versus salary comparisons. It is a different formula that is used. We need to recognize who we are competing with for good teachers.

Annie Collyer of Newton is in support of the contracts passing. She would like to have a starting salary comparison.

Jim Baker of Newton supports paying teachers well. He questioned the health insurance deductible and had a lengthy discussion on the health insurance plan.

Evan Czyowski described the three different health plans with different deductibles and directed Mr. Baker to the website for more information.

Cheryl Gannon of Kingston stated the two contracts are usually staggered but now we have two being presented to the voters in the same year and asked why.

Evan Czyowski explained it is a two-year contract but the idea of showing a three-year range was to show the cost of not having it this year. They would have preferred to have the contracts staggered but needed to have them both on the ballot this year. He asked Ms. Coppolla to explain.

Ms. Coppolla referred to a Cadillac Tax that will take effect in 2019 and described its impact.

Ms. Collyer closed the Public Hearing.

The Budget Committee agreed to table the approval of minutes from January 5, 2017.

Ms. Gannon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Faria. VOTE: 8-0 motion passes

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 pm.

Minutes submitted by,
Linda Mahoney