

Newfound Area School District

Budget Committee Meeting

Draft Minutes

December 5, 2013

6:30 pm

Newfound Regional High School, Room 106

Budget Committee Members: Harold "Skip" Reilly, Alexandria William Joseph, Bristol
Sharon Nelson, Groton Jeff Bird, Bridgewater
Simon Barnett, Danbury Fran Wendelboe, New Hampton
Absent: Paul Rheinhardt, School Board Representative
Stan Newton, Hebron
District Staff: Stacy Buckley, Superintendent
Michael Limanni, Business Administrator
Members of the Public: Bill O'Brien, Alexandria
Barbara O'Brien, Alexandria

Meeting called to order at 6:34 PM by Fran Wendelboe followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Review of minutes. No changes made.

Motion made by Simon Barnett to accept the minutes as submitted. Seconded by Fran Wendelboe.

Motion approved 6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 2 absent.

Fran Wendelboe submitted a spreadsheet of statistical analysis to Stacy Buckley and Michael Limanni. The budget statistics are derived from school district budgets dating back to FY88 through FY12.

Select Budget Hearing Date

Discussion was held about the upcoming dates for the budget committee to meet. The budget will need to be completed and reviewed by the school board no later than January 21, 2014. The budget hearing date was set for January 10, 2014 at 6:30PM in the NRHS Auditorium with a snow date of January 17th, 2014.

The following dates were set for upcoming meetings:

Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Tuesday, January 7, 2014

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If any further discussion is needed after the December 10th meeting date, another meeting will be set.

2014/15 Budget Review

Stacy Buckley recommended reducing one guidance position NRHS at a savings of \$78,017 to bring the budget down to \$20,232,847.

Sharon Nelson moved to accept Superintendent Buckley's recommendation. Seconded by Jeff Bird.

Discussion followed regarding the motion. Information was provided regarding current staffing in guidance:

School	School Population	Guidance positions
Bristol Elementary School	233	1.0
Danbury Elementary School	55	0.4
New Hampton Community School	121	1.0
Bridgewater-Hebron Village School	165	1.0
Newfound Memorial Middle School	261	1.4
Newfound Regional High School	374	3.0

Jeff Bird asked what the effect of eliminating the position at NRHS would be. Stacy Buckley stated that they would eliminate some of the counseling that goes on at school. She stated that she is confident that they could manage with one less counselor at NRHS. Stacy Buckley noted that the full-time guidance counselor at NHCS is kind of an "assistant principal" in that she is in charge when the part-time principal is out of the buildings.

Fran Wendelboe reviewed the state minimum for guidance counselors: 1 counselor per 500 elementary students and 1 counselor per 350 high school students. Stacy Buckley clarified that there should be a distinction between minimum standard and adequate staffing. She stated that our guidance staff provide the school with assessment coordination, deal with social issues, as well as provide career and college counseling at NRHS.

Harold "Skip" Reilly asked who was responsible for all of the services guidance counselors provide now in years past. Stacy Buckley pointed out that the state mental health system is poor and over time more onus has been put on school districts to make up the difference. William Joseph asked why the average cost per student is still so high. He challenged the statement that the population decline in our area will level off and is concerned that the budget has not been cut enough to reflect the loss of students.

Michel Limanni provided information on district ADM. He stated that this year's ADM is about on par with last year's. The budget allotted for a 3% population decline.

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Jeff Bird asked if the position that is being eliminated would be through attrition or if someone would be losing their job. Stacy Buckley stated that the elimination would be a redundancy.

Fran Wendelboe called for a vote on the motion. 5 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 2 absent. Motion passes.

The discussion turned to nurse staffing. Harold "Skip" Reilly asked for clarification on the nurse at DES being in charge when the principal is out. Stacy Buckley stated that the nurse at DES is a certified administrator. She also noted that at DES the principal is serving breakfast due to staffing issues. She is concerned about asking people to take on too many roles within the school. Fran Wendelboe asked what the current staffing is at DES. There are 4 full-time teachers, part-time guidance, full-time nurse, part-time principal and part-time food service worker.

Fran Wendelboe referred to her analysis spreadsheet and noted that the last time there were 1200 pupils in the district was 1988 and that the district had 159 staff members and the budget as \$4.8M. She noted, of course, times have changed but wanted to point out the difference from today.

Discussion turned to the default budget. Michael Limanni stated that it will be presented to the school board next week (December 9, 2013). The process for arriving at a default budget includes staffing levels remaining status quo, adding in health insurance increases, backing out special projects, and adding back in the fuel tank (because of the one-time capital expense). Simon Barnett asked how the fuel tank fits into the default budget. Michael Limanni clarified that this one-time expense has already been voted on and appropriated. Also, this project has a net-zero impact due to the revenue from the facilities fund.

Simon Barnett also asked about Fund 22. Michael Limanni stated that those funds are separate from the budget. Fund 22 is exclusively grant-funded and not subsidized by the tax payer. This includes programs like Title I, Title 2A or IDEA would be cut if the grant disappeared, so the expenses with those grant-funded programs do not affect the tax levy. Michael Limanni noted that other funds will be discussed at the upcoming school board meeting (December 9, 2013).

Sharon Nelson posed a question about outsourcing food service in the district. Michael Limanni provided information from his experience with a district that outsources its food services. He noted that NASD currently does not spend a lot of money on food services, so cost savings may be difficult to come by. His goal would be to increase participation in the program and improve the product. He thinks that with the right program, there is the potential to generate revenue from food services. It will take time, about a year, to evaluate the program but it can definitely be improved.

Harold "Skip" Reilly asked for clarification on the School Resource Officer (SRO) position. He wished to make certain that the position will be a separate warrant article and not a line item in the budget. Stacy Buckley confirmed that the position is dependent upon a warrant article passing.

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Stacy Buckley asked if there were any other specific concerns with the proposed budget. Harold "Skip" Reilly suggested reducing the budget to \$20,000,000.

Fran Wendelboe asked if the district had explored the option of per diem nurses. Michael Limanni responded that given our rural area, it would be difficult to price out an option such as that. Stacy Buckley noted that Plymouth school district contracts with Mid-State Health for their nursing services and she will be following up with Plymouth for more information.

Jeff Bird asked if there were specific line items for the SAU. Pages 41-48 in the approved budget are for the office of the superintendent. Stacy Buckley clarified that these line items include costs for the administrative team and support staff at the SAU office, including the new curriculum coordinator position. Jeff Bird pointed out that because there is no district wide location code; these items are presented in a confusing way. William Joseph requested a copy of the budget sorted by function rather than by location for ease of reading. Michael Limanni offered to have the budget documents sorted differently posted online.

Simon Barnett asked for clarification on the warrant article for a transfer to capital reserve. Michael Limanni clarified that our goal is to match our revenues with expenses. Any equity (referred to as fund balance in government accounting) goes back to the tax payer. This year NASD retained 2.5% (about \$434,000) in a fund balance. Stacy Buckley clarified that the warrant article this year states that up to \$60,000 (if available) will be transferred to the capital reserve at the end of the fiscal year. Simon Barnett wanted to check his understanding that the \$60,000 is not being raised by taxation, only the \$51,000 appropriated for an SRO will come from taxation. Stacy Buckley confirmed that statement. Fran Wendelboe asked if the school board has the prerogative to put the \$60,000 in their emergency fund rather than transferring to capital reserve. Michael Limanni and Stacy Buckley stated that the school board has the ability decide how much **up to** \$60,000 into capital reserve.

Fran Wendelboe ask about function 2317 (audit services) on page 41 of the budget. The annual audit is budgeted at \$20,000 and the actual was \$16,725 and her thought was that perhaps it could be reduced based on actual expenditure. Michael Limanni reviewed a 7 year history of the account ranging from about \$14,000 in 2008 to \$26,402 in 2012. He stated that the challenge is that all funds are subject to an audit and it is difficult to predict the exact number at the beginning of the fiscal year. Fran Wendelboe asked the same question of function 2318 (legal services) which has been consistently budgeted at \$29,999. Stacy Buckley stated that these accounts may be adjusted as more information comes to the new administrative team, but it will take another budget cycle to determine how much can be adjusted. The actual figure has trended down over the last 7 years.

Sharon Nelson asked how the curriculum coordinator will help advanced students as well as special education. Stacy Buckley stated that her intent for a curriculum director will be reviewing all levels of education and raising the bar for the advanced students as well as special needs. Simon Barnett asked

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about the difference between department heads and a curriculum coordinator. It was explained that the curriculum coordinator will help communicate between schools and coordinate programming district wide.

Harold "Skip" Reilly asked to recognize the members of the public in attendance.

PUBLIC INPUT

Barbara O'Brien of Alexandria asked about the increase in the school portion of her recent tax bill. She wished for clarification on the explanation that was given in the minutes from the November 21st meeting. Fran Wendelboe explained how the tax cap affects tax obligation. Michael Limanni added that the state reduced adequacy aid to the district, and the difference was raised through taxation. Simon Barnett also stated that the student population (ADM) for Alexandria may have increased, which would have increased the town's tax obligation to the district.

Michael Limanni explained that the amount of the budget raised by taxation is different that the total budget. He offered to have his tax cap calculation sheet published on the SAU website.

Bill O'Brien of Alexandria stated that he is not in support of an SRO position. He does not feel that the other towns in the school district should be subsidizing a Bristol police officer. Stacy Buckley stated that this is the reason the SRO position is a warrant article.

William Joseph asked for a breakdown of teachers by building for the next meeting. He also asked for nurses, guidance and other positions to be included.

Harold "Skip" Reilly stated that he would like to set a goal of a 1% reduction to the budget. Fran Wendelboe asked what portion of the budget is currently allocated to staff wages and benefits. Michael Limanni answered about 65%-70%. Stacy Buckley assured that they will continue to review and analyze positions as staffing changes throughout the year.

Simon Barnett made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Harold "Skip" Reilly. Motion approved 6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 2 absent.

Meeting adjourned at PM. Next meeting scheduled for 6:30 PM, Tuesday, December 10, 2013 at NRHS, room 106.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Bliss
Budget Committee Clerk