

Newfound Area School District

Budget Committee Meeting

Budget Hearing for 2015-2016 NASD Budget

Draft Minutes

Friday, January 9, 2015

Newfound Regional High School Auditorium

Budget Committee Members: Simon Barnett, Danbury Harold "Skip" Reilly, Alexandria
Christen Dolloff, Bristol Stan Newton, Hebron
John Jenness, New Hampton Sharon Nelson Groton
Jeff Bird, Bridgewater

School Board Members: Ruby Hill, Danbury Vincent Paul Migliore, Bridgewater
Jeff Levesque, Groton Don Franklin, Hebron
Christine Davol, New Hampton Ben Laroche, Bristol
Sue Cheney, Alexandria

District Staff: Stacy Buckley, Superintendent
Michael Limanni, Business Administrator

Meeting called to order at 6:30PM by Simon Barnett, followed by the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Barnett introduced the members of both the School Board and Budget Committee.

Mr. Barnett explained the process for the evening and his hope that they will be able to discuss each warrant article one at a time without revisiting.

Article 1, the choosing of all necessary School District Officials was discussed. Open positions for Budget Committee and School board will be for Danbury, Groton and Hebron with 3 year terms will be filled in the Second Session, March 10, 2015 (Election Day).

Article 2: Teacher Contract Agreement

To see if the Newfound Area School District will vote to approve the cost items included in a two (2) year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Newfound Area School Board and the Newfound Area Teachers Association, which calls for the following increase in salaries and benefits:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
2015-2016	\$305,620
2016-2017	\$319,543

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Five Thousand, Six Hundred Twenty Dollars (\$305,620) for the 2016 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.

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Simon Barnet provided a summary of the contract agreement and stated that its focus is on competing with other surrounding districts in order to attract the best teachers, retain those good teachers, and encourage accountability. The agreement is for the 2016 and 2017 fiscal years. Mr. Barnet further discussed the changes made to the teacher salary matrix, changes in authorized leave policies, increased contributions to health insurance premiums and changes in Professional Development days.

Archie Auger, Bristol, asked where the changes in teacher compensation will put Newfound in relation to cohort districts. Simon deferred the answer to Ms. Buckley. She stated that we are currently in the lower 1/3 of teacher salaries. She also spoke to the changes in the matrix that will “even out” steps for teachers. She reiterated that the changes are an incentive to retain teachers. Mr. Auger asked for clarification that if the teacher contract passes, will Newfound be more in-line with surrounding districts. Ms. Buckley agreed.

Article 3: Expendable Trust Fund: Building Maintenance:

To see if the Newfound Area School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) to be added to the Expendable Trust Fund: Building Maintenance, and to authorize the use/transfer in that amount from the undesignated fund balance available July 1, 2015 for this purpose.

Mr. Barnet read the article, and stated that this is an article on the ballot each year. There were no comments from the public.

Article 4: Operating Budget:

To see if the Newfound Area School District will raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations made by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the “First Session,” for the purposes set forth therein, totaling Twenty-One Million, Nine Hundred Forty-Eight Thousand, Two Hundred and Four Dollars (\$21,948,204)? Should this article be defeated, the Default Budget shall be Twenty-Two Million, One Hundred Thirty-Nine Thousand, Nine Hundred Thirty-Six Dollars (\$22,139,936) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Newfound Area School District or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13,X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

Mr. Barnett detailed the changes that were made to the original proposed budget by the school board and explained that when the adjusted budget was submitted to the budget committee, administration informed the committee of an increase in anticipated adequacy aid revenue. Mr. Barnett then detailed the items that the budget committee chose to add back into the budget.

Mr. Barnett then detailed the staffing adjustments as recommended by administration. He informed the audience that the justification for staffing changes is detailed in the budget hearing handout that was provided this evening.

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Slim Stafford, Groton, asked about the reduction of an elementary position at BHVS when the school board is recommending moving 6th grade back to the elementary level. Stacy noted that the 6th grade teachers would likely move from Newfound Memorial Middle School and that the reduction at Bridgewater-Hebron Village School was shifted due to enrollment numbers.

Kathleen Connor, Hebron, spoke to her concern about the reduction in the guidance counselor positions. She is concerned about the decision to continue with reduced guidance staff at Bridgewater-Hebron Village School and Danbury Elementary School. She also asked about the High School guidance position. Stacy Buckley clarified that the High School guidance position was reduced last year, but is now officially out of the budget. The elementary level position was justified on enrollment numbers. Ms. Connor replied that it is a demanding job with some challenging children that would benefit from more time. She suggested another guidance counselor 3 days a week would benefit the children, given their academic demands and needs for comfort.

Archie Auger, Bristol, spoke to the tuition agreement with Hill and if the agreement is made if the staffing level will meet the demands of any additional students. Stacy Buckley responded that they are anticipating about 10 students per grade level and there is no anticipation of a need for additional staffing should they come to Newfound.

Susan Colby, Bristol, asked about the reduction the school board made to the technology plan and if the budget committee would consider adding those funds back in as we are still below the tax cap. Simon Barnett spoke to her question and asked Michael Limanni to clarify. Mr. Limanni said that the amount reduced came from technology plan and replacement schedules for new equipment. Mr. Barnett stated that as the budget committee discussed the changes, they chose to focus on the facilities and the buildings in need of repair. He also stated that while technology is important and there is money left to reach the tax cap, there is no need to spend it all.

Slim Stafford, Groton, asked if there is any evidence that the rumors that Hill has a lot of home schooled children that will be dumped into Newfound now that they can avoid Franklin. Stacy Buckley stated that Hill only has 11 home schooled children based on the DOE website, so the chances of Newfound being overwhelmed with home schoolers is fairly low.

Article 5: (By Petition)

To see if the surrounding towns of the Newfound School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand (\$15,000) per school year in supporting the Newfound Memorial Middle School to assume the responsibility and operation of the Newfound Football Junior Bears program at the request of the Friends of Newfound Football Organization. Without the feeder system, the football program that the Junior Bears provides, Newfound Regional High School could not be a competitive program versus other surrounding schools.

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Bryan Richardson, Alexandria, was asked to speak to the article. He deferred to Lynn Comeau, Hebron, and president of Friends of Newfound Football. She spoke to the benefits the football program offers to children in the district. She noted that football is the only high school sport lacking a middle school “feeder” program to keep it running. She noted her concern that the high school program will suffer. She noted there would be no cost for maintenance, exclusive of mowing, to the district.

Bryan Richardson, Alexandria, provided a history of the high school program. The Jr. Bears program has been operating since 2005. This article would allow for more oversight of the program by being under the umbrella of the athletic coordinator.

Andrew Szendre, not a resident, asked for permission to be heard because he is the head football coach at NRHS. He spoke to the benefits of the high school football program and the service projects they have undertaken. He noted the reputation for good sportsmanship in the high school program. He noted the players that have benefited from the program by winning scholarships to play at the college level.

Susan Colby, Bristol, asked how the \$15000/ year compares to other sports already supported by the district. Stacy Buckley noted that we do not have those figures prepared.

Lynn Comeau, Hebron, noted that the amount asked for is for the equipment and uniform replacement. She stated that the figure also includes helmets and transportation costs, but they are still seeking donations for equipment.

Kathleen Connor, Hebron, said that she advocates for sports, but she would like them to consider the costs of sports versus the cost of academics and day-to-day support for students.

Annie Learned, Bristol, she supports athletics, but would like to speak to the reduction in technology plan in comparison with money for football. She feels that the focus should be on improving educational outcomes for students.

Slim Stafford, Groton, shared an experience with a Newfound student in regards to a verbal exchange about geography. He thinks more money should go towards academics then sports.

Simon Barnett closed the discussion on article 5.

Simon Barnett closed the Budget Hearing at 7:17PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly Bliss
Budget Committee Clerk