

**Newfound Area School District
Budget Committee Meeting
Wednesday, December 7, 2016
Bristol Elementary School, Room 101**

Present: John Jenness (Chair), New Hampton, Jeff Bird, Bridgewater, Christen Dolloff, Bristol, Ruby Hill, Danbury, Gina Rescigno, Groton, Jeff Levesque, School Board Representative, Stacy Buckley, Superintendent, Michael Limanni, Business Administrator

Absent: Skip Reilly, Alexandria, Stan Newton, Hebron

Meeting called to order at 6:31PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approve Minutes from October 12 Meeting

The committee reviewed minutes from the October 12th meeting at Danbury Elementary School. Ruby Hill moved to accept the minutes as submitted, seconded by Jeff Bird. Motion Passes 6-0-0

Presentation of budget.

Stacy Buckley, Superintendent, presented the PowerPoint slideshow that had been brought to the school board in November. She opened with the goals of budgeting for the 2017-18 (FY18) school year as well as some of the considerations to keep in mind with the budget (for example, teacher's contract, staff step increases, health insurance and transportation increase of 3%). She provided a comparison of year-over-year budget from FY17. Ruby Hill asked why there is a proposed decrease in the food service fund. Michael Limanni responded that it is due to a decrease in revenue.

Ms. Buckley then continued with a summary of staffing changes proposed in FY18. New Staffing: The district will separate the shared principal position between Danbury Elementary School and New Hampton Community School. The proposed DES principal position will take on additional responsibilities at a district level because of DES being such a small school. There is an increase proposed to substitute pay. Ruby Hill asked about the increase in substitute teaching from years past. Stacy clarified that this increase is in the daily rate paid to substitutes to stay in line with districts surrounding us. Lastly, the facilities director position will replace the current facilities manager position.

Principals from each school then presented budget requested "wish list" items to the committee. Stacy noted that these requests have already been pared down in accordance with the cuts needed to hit the tax cap in FY18.

Jay Lewis, Principal from NMM requested desks, security camera maintenance, and general facility improvements.

Paul Horiis, Principal from NRHS requested replacement of lost/damaged texts, equipment replacement, and costs associated with standardized testing, NEASC visit for reaccreditation, security camera maintenance, facilities improvements, soccer/field hockey field improvements.

Dana Andrews, Principal from BHVS requested a new laminator and security camera maintenance.

Ann Holleran, Principal from DES requested desk/chair replacement, facilities improvements (specifically bathroom fixtures), and tree removal for student safety.

Ann Holleran, also the Principal from NHCS requested desk/chair replacement, tree trimming.

Sara Rollins, Principal from BES requested security camera maintenance and boiler room structural improvement.

Stacy presented the district wide improvements including a 504 management system and a food service increase in district contribution from \$45,000 to \$95,000.

Ruby Hill asked about a concern from several years ago that the district contribution was too much. Michael Limanni clarified how the district can subsidize school lunches and added that the board voted to increase the lunch prices in FY18.

Stacy then shared some of the items that were taken out of the budget because of the tax cap constraints.

Ruby asked how much money is currently in capital improvements to which Michael Limanni responded that there is about \$219,000. Michael also shared that the facilities committee recently approved going out to bid for an energy contract. His hope is to include some of the items cut out of the budget and that energy savings will make up for the cost.

Discussion continued of items that were cut from last year's budget (e.g. art tables at NRHS) and had to be cut again this year. Discussion continued on about technology and security camera items that were cut. Jeff Bird asked Stacy how important the cameras are to the district. Stacy stated they are invaluable to running the schools. Stacy further shared that servers at each school have been cut, but the hope is that work will be done by the end FY17. Ruby asked about tablets at the high school. Stacy shared that there are a few in the LMC but not enough to support a digital art class. There were other general reductions to the budget including dropping an open position that the district holds on to for the purpose of unanticipated staffing needs.

Stacy shared that the teacher's contract will be a warrant article and be for 2 years. The first year there will be no COLA increase, step increases only. The second year includes a 1% COLA in addition to step increase. The contract also added a longevity stipend for those teachers at the top of their scale with at least 10 years in district. The contract also includes language clarification around professional development and leave time. John Jenness asked if 2 years was standard term for teacher contracts to which Michael and Stacy responded that they are.

Jeff Levesque shared that while this budget meets the tax cap and looks flat funded, its actually \$750,000 net effect less to the students because of staff increases and health insurance (things the district has no control over). Jeff Bird asked about the transportation increase to which Michael Limanni shared that it is a 3% increase

Ruby asked for what was purchased with surplus funds (retained fund balance) at the end of FY16 before being given back to the towns. Discussion continued about usage of the retained fund balance and what constitutes an emergency for the use emergency funds. Ruby asked how the revenue from Hill was factored into FY18. Michael Limanni stated that he used the tuition agreement to come up with the FY18 estimate based on projected enrollment, but there is not a firm number yet.

Christen Dolloff stated that this is the year the tax cap has become a problem. Discussion about bottom line budget and that items added to the budget from the floor do not HAVE to be spent on specific items, but it is general practice to honor what is asked by the body.

Jeff Levesque said he voted for this budget because he had to. He will not be voting to recommend it. He hopes people stand up and add funds back in to the budget to facilitate necessary facility improvements (e.g. Roof at NRHS) and to benefit the students.

Michael returned to Ruby's earlier question about FY16 surplus and stated it was spent on radios and minor repairs.

Jeff Levesque brought up that the auditorium at the high school was nearly shut down by the fire marshal this past year because of safety issues.

John asked about e-text books/tablets vs textbooks. Discussion about one-to-one programs and providing each child with a tablet to replace library books, text books, etc. Everyone conceded that there are challenges to implement a one-to-one program with very rural areas such as Danbury and the lack of broadband internet access.

Next budget meeting will be Wednesday, December 14th at NMMS.

Motion to adjourn by Jeff Levesque. Seconded by Ruby Hill. Motion passed 6-0-0 and meeting concluded at 8:05PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Bliss
Budget Committee Clerk