

**Newfound Area School District
Budget Hearing
Friday, January 13, 2017
Newfound Regional High School, Auditorium**

Present: John Jenness, New Hampton, Christen Dolloff, Bristol, Gina Rescigno, Groton, Ruby Hill, Danbury,

Absent: Jeff Bird, Skip Jenness, Stan Newton

School board: Jeff Levesque, Chair, Vincent Paul Migliore, Sharon Klapyk, Jason Robert, Sue Cheney, Don Franklin, Christine Duvoll

Staff: Michael Limanni, Stacy Buckley

Called to order at 6:34

Followed by the pledge

John opened the meeting and introduced the present members of the budget committee, school board and administration.

He clarified the format of the hearing and started the presentation with an overview of Warrant Article 1: **To choose all necessary School District Officials for the year ensuing.**

Elections (second session) will be held March 14th, and both school board and budget committee members will be elected from Bristol and New Hampton. The position of school district moderator is also up for election.

John Jenness opened the floor for questions on Article 1:

Paul Manganiello, Bristol, stated that the voting for the town of Bristol will not be at the Marian Center as stated in the pamphlet. Stacy Buckley responded that she is waiting for final confirmation from the town of Bristol as to where polling will take place.

Article 2:

(BY PETITION): TAX CAP RESCISSION: Shall we rescind the provision of RSA 32:5-b, known as the tax cap, as adopted by the Newfound Area School District on March 13, 2012, so that there will no longer be a limit on increases to the recommended budget in the amount to be raised by local taxes? (3/5 Majority required).

Lucille Keegan, petitioner, Bristol, spoke to the article. She wrote the petition not because she wants spending to be out of the control but because she felt that removing items such as building maintenance, that the tax cap needs to be reviewed.

Article 3:

(BY PETITION): SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER: Shall the Newfound Area School District raise and appropriate the sum of no more than Seventy-Two Thousand Dollars (\$72,000) for the hiring of a School

Resource Officer for the Newfound Area School District? Said officer will be available to support all schools within the Newfound Area School District. If approved, this amount will become part of the Default Budget for the 2019 Fiscal Year.

((Stan Newton arrived at 6:41))

John Sellers, Bristol, asked who the officer will report to if the article is passed. Stacy Buckley responded that he or she would be an employee of the Bristol Police Department, and would report to both the police department and the school district.

Don Franklin, Hebron, stated that, the funding may not be available after the first year if the tax cap remains in place.

Paul Manganiello, Bristol, stated he was curious where the amount of \$72,000 came from. He stated that this amount will not cover the cost of a new employee. Stacy Buckley stated that the Bristol Police Chief provided the petitioner with the dollar figure.

Article 4:

EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND: BUILDING MAINTENANCE: Shall the Newfound Area School District vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) 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, 2017 for this purpose? (This article is not included in Article 3 – Operating Budget).

John Sellers, Bristol, stated that \$100,000 does not seem like enough given that pending projects are currently valued at about \$2 million dollars.

Vincent Paul Migliore, Bridgewater, stated that this article deals with any potential surplus at the end of FY17 and the amount that will be put into the trust in that case. At the end of the last FY, the district put away \$350,000 in to the retained fund balance. However, the use of that money is governed by the budget committee and special meetings. This money will be added to the fund balance IF there is a surplus and ONLY for maintenance purposes. Regarding, the tax cap, he clarified that the budget committee and the school board were unable to raise the funds needed for building maintenance because the cap is in the place, however, individuals from the governing body are always able to make the increase the budget at the deliberative session.

((Jeff Bird arrived 6:49))

Sue Cheney asked if there are any limits on the governing body changing the budget. Vincent replied that the governing body can add 10% of the budget at the deliberative session.

Article 5:

TEACHER CONTRACT: To see if the Newfound Area School District will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Newfound Teachers Union and the Newfound Area School Board which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2017-2018	\$248,042
2018-2019	\$214,551

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Forty-Eight Thousand and Forty-Two Dollars (\$248,042) for the current 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. *(This article is not included in Article 6 – Operating Budget)*

Jeff Levesque, School board chair, spoke to the warrant article. He stated the specifics of the teacher contract including that Year 1 of the contract includes no cost of living adjustment (COLA) increase. Year 2 will include a 1% COLA increase. There will also be a longevity stipend for faculty who have been in the district for 10 years and are on step 15 of the pay matrix (top step).

Article 6:

OPERATING BUDGET: To see if the Newfound Area School District will raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations 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-Two Million, Seven Hundred Fifty-Two Thousand, Five Hundred Eighty-Four Dollars (\$22,752,584)? Should this article be defeated, the Default Budget shall be Twenty-Three Million, One Hundred Eighty-Four Thousand, Three Hundred Fifty-Two Dollars (\$23,184,352) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustment 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.

John Jenness presented some key items of the budget: The goal of the budget was to meeting the needs of our students with increased rigor and higher outcomes, continue long range planning, improve facilities, improve and develop curriculum. Considerations included the teacher’s contract, support staff step increases (no COLA), Specialist and Administration increases of 2-3%, health insurance increase of 4.4%, retirement costs, transportation increase of 3%, support for increased building maintenance.

There is a decrease of \$249,541 from the proposed budget to the approved current budget.

Including the teacher’s contract, the budget is \$1,499 less than FY16.

Figures were also provided on the default budget, (\$21,202,155), Food Service Fund 21, (\$597,605), and Grant Fund 22, (\$1,275,749).

Staffing requests and changes include a change in the dual role of NHCS/DES principal to two separate positions. The current principal will remain at NHCS and the new hire for DES will have additional districtwide responsibilities. There will be a decrease in stipends to assistant principals, reduce a guidance counselor position to .6, eliminate secretary at DES. Other changes include an increase in substitute pay; add 2 Para educator positions, and the facilities manager position will be split into 2 new positions, a facilities director and maintenance person.

John Jenness then went over the specific to school requests as presented at the meeting on December 7, 2016.

Due to the tax cap, \$1,800,156 had to be cut from the budget. John Jenness discussed some of the items that were cut from the budget as discussed at the December 7th meeting as well. Academic cuts totaling \$57,012, facility related cuts at \$1,190,439, furniture and equipment items totaling \$21,020, and technology cuts at \$328,360. Additional cuts were also made totaling \$155,831.

John Jenness then opened the floor up for questions on Article 6.

Lucille Keegan, Bristol, asked about the teacher contract giving staff a 1% increase while there was a 2-3% increase included in the budget for administrative staff. Jeff Levesque confirmed that the contract included a 1% increase in the second year for teaching staff.

Ruby Hill, Danbury, wanted to clarify that anyone that is not on the top step of their matrix will still get a 2-3% increase in pay.

Becca Boudreau, Bristol, asked what the open position on the additional cuts page is. Stacy Buckley addressed the question by stating that it was an open position that was carried in the budget not knowing what incoming kindergarten numbers were going to look like. The position was retained in the budget as a security measure in case of increased enrollment.

Vincent Paul Migliore, Bridgewater, clarified that he is stating his personal opinion. First wanted to thank Ann Holleran for the role she has played as a dual principal in years past. He spoke to how the money in Article 5 (teacher's contract) really supports student outcomes. What concerns him about the budget is the terminology that will have an impact on the voters. He does not like the phrase "cut from the budget" and clarified that the items were proposed and not approved in the budgeting process. He is personally opposed to rescinding the tax cap. He fears that the voters will not approved the teacher's contract or operating budget when they see the tax cap warrant article.

Susan Colby, Bristol, wondering if the cuts proposed are set in stone or if the budget is bottom line and that the items could still go through. Specifically, security cameras which are important to the safety of our student, summer programs and desks at DES. Stacy Buckley responded that it is a bottom line budget, but that there is not a whole lot of "wiggle room" in it. It was challenging to make the decisions that were made for the items removed from the budget.

Christine Duvall, New Hampton, wanted to speak to the parts of the budget that were not approved. She stated that the administrators in the buildings are the individuals that the school board relies on to make those decisions.

John Sellers, Bristol, asked about the Hill students and where their tuition money is. Stacy Buckley stated it is on revenue page of the packet and the funds go to offset taxes. Michael Limanni called Mr. Sellers attention to the last page of the packet and the calculation of revenue and the tax cap. Without the Hill students, another \$682,000 would have to be cut from the budget.

Vincent Paul Migliore added a point of information, to Ms. Colby's point, that her items of question are a good example of items that can be added in to the budget at the deliberative session.

Jeff Levesque, Groton, speaking as an individual, said that items not ultimately included in the budget were presented as wants rather than needs. Others were what he would label as "least painful to cut." He has concerns about an individual making a motion to increase the budget by a substantial amount at

the deliberative session. He hopes to see the teacher's contract passed and those increases could potentially put its passing in jeopardy.

John Sellers, Bristol, asked for clarification on motions from the floor at the deliberative session. Can those funds be used only for the item mentioned in the motion? Jeff Levesque noted that because the district operates as a bottom-line budget they are not bound to spend the money on that specific item, but likely would in good faith.

John Jenness closed the hearing at 7:30PM.