

# **Newfound Area School District**

## **Budget Committee Meeting**

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### **Minutes**

**December 4, 2014**

**New Hampton Community School, 6:30pm**

Budget Committee Members: Simon Barnett, Danbury                      Harold "Skip" Reilly, Alexandria  
   Jeff Bird, Bridgewater                      Christen Dolloff, Bristol  
   John Jenness, New Hampton                      Stan Newton, Hebron  
   Sharon Nelson, Groton (6:37)  
Absent: Jeff Levesque, School Board Representative  
District Staff: Stacy Buckley, Superintendent                      Michael Limanni, Business Administrator  
Members of the Public: None

Meeting called to order at 6:30 PM by Simon Barnett followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **Approval of Minutes from November 19 Meeting**

Before reviewing the minutes, the committee took a short tour of the NHCS facility. Business resumed at 6:47pm.

Motion by Jeff Bird to approve the minutes of November 19th as submitted. Seconded by Simon Barnett. So Voted.

#### **Review of Proposed Press Release Regarding NATA Contract**

Stacy Buckley provided the committee with a draft press release. Skip Reilly noted his concern that the press release is too generic and difficult to explain to people. Michael Limanni noted that this is just a brief statement; where there has been an article already written on in the media, but the idea is to just state support or non-support of the contract. Mr. Reilly stated that he is OK with the release, but would like a "cheat sheet" to help explain the budget when the public ask him questions. Ms. Buckley offered to have something at the next meeting. The consensus was that the committee accepted the press release stating support of the NATA contract.

#### **Overview of Unexpended Fund Balance from Last Fiscal Year**

Michael Limanni spoke to the unexpended fund balance. There was \$1,501,639 unexpended fund balance after last year. Per the warrant article that passed last March, \$60,000 in surplus was transferred to a facilities trust, leaving about \$1,396,000. Because the district may only retain a percentage of those funds, the district was left with \$1,091,000 in fund balance in surplus. The source of the difference was from the excess money received in revenue versus the expenditures. Examples of that revenue include \$422,000 more than what was anticipated at the beginning of the FY14 (\$131,000 came from Medicaid reimbursements on eligible students). Local assessment also went up because of the loss in adequacy aid from the state. The largest number was a lawsuit against the LGC insurance risk

# ***Newfound Area School District***

## **Budget Committee Meeting**

---

pool which was settled and premiums were returned to the district. \$389,000 was returned to Newfound by LGC. Jeff Bird clarified that this was one-time unanticipated revenue.

Sharon asked about the Medicaid reimbursement. Stacy noted that children with medical disabilities that received services such as OT, PT, one-on-one aid, etc. at the district's expense are eligible for reimbursement from Medicaid.

The additional revenue netted to \$422,000 over what was expected.

On the expense side, the district looked to improve efficiency in order to save money. Nearly \$200,000 was saved by removing contingencies from the budget, also changes in staffing, transportation, and student placements.

The district is able to retain 2.5% of the net assessment which is where the \$407,000 in fund balance comes from. The surplus \$1,033,000 was given back to the towns.

### **School Board Input**

Jeff Levesque was absent from the meeting but Ms. Buckley noted that there was no discussion of the budget at the last school board meeting.

### **2015-2016 Budget Proposal Review**

Simon moved on to review of the budget. He noted that the committee has added about \$104,000 to the budget for repairs to the NMMS roof, floors at NMMS and NRHS.

Stan Newton asked who directs where the painting takes place because he was disappointed this evening with the state of the walls and bathrooms at NHCS. Stacy noted that the facilities committee is going to prioritize and come up with a continuous strategy for improvement. Michael Limanni noted that in regards to staffing, Newfound is way below cohort districts in facilities maintenance.

Michael Limanni also added that projects are getting completed and things are improving, but we need to use our resources a little better. Sharon Nelson asked about part 6 of the budget binder. She was surprised to see all of the travel expenses for custodians. Stacy noted that these expenses are for travelling to places such as Home Depot as well as other places with their own vehicle because they do not have a district vehicle. Christen asked about investing in district trucks. Michael Limanni noted that the cost of leasing a couple of trucks might increase costs dramatically where reimbursing them for use of personal vehicles is less expensive.

Skip Reilly noted the condition of school parking lots and walkways. He continued that 5 years ago, there was truck purchased with plow and is curious why it isn't being utilized. Ms. Buckley noted that there is a new contract for parking lot maintenance.

Simon Barnett directed attention to part 2 of the budget binder. He wanted a summary of the increase of the district wide SpEd Budget. Ms. Buckley noted that a portion of the increase comes from the second half of adjustments to the special education aides pay rates, as well as the addition of some positions due to changes in enrollment. Also, the additional pre-school program incurred cost.

Skip Reilly asked about full-day kindergarten. Stacy noted that the board did not vote to add the program to FY15 at a cost of \$250,000. She does think it is a good program for the district, but it needs more thoughtful and meaningful planning.

# ***Newfound Area School District***

## **Budget Committee Meeting**

---

Sharon asked about part 5 of the budget binder, the afterschool program. Ms. Buckley clarified that the grant covers salaries for employees while the budget covers FICA and Medicare costs. She noted that this is a reallocation of funds to keep the costs transparent to the tax payers vs. what the grant covers. Michael Limanni also noted that they are currently working the numbers and evaluating what portion of costs grants cover and what portion the district is responsible for picking up.

Simon Barnett to part 2, asked about speech and OT contracted services. Stacy noted that we are trying to add more in-house people instead of contracted services, depending on district needs.

Simon Barnett asked about part 3 of the budget, replacement of computers. What is the rough number of machines that have been budgeted for? Michael Limanni went into the budget software and looked at the budget line in detail to provide an explanation of the expense. He noted that the majority of the figure in the copy provided to the committee does not reflect the cuts made by the school board, in this case, the phone system upgrade that was cut.

The remaining line is about \$56,000.00 which is what was recommended under the district technology plan. This figure includes Chromebook carts at several schools, as well as other technology purchases.

Michael Limanni stated to the committee that the budget is currently \$105,000 under tax cap.

Skip Reilly moved to add \$15,330 back in the budget for auditorium projector at NRHS. Seconded by Simon Barnett. Simon asked for the actual line item it was cut out of. There was discussion of what is remaining to reach the tax cap. John Jenness said that with the number of facilities projects that keep adding up, there is so much more to take on rather than a projector in the high school auditorium. 2 in favor, 5 opposed, motion fails.

Jeff Bird asked about the General Funding section, (pg. 71-72), \$460 typist/vision screener, \$458 district eye vision machine and if these are required. Ms. Buckley stated that, yes, this is required by the state.

Skip Reilly asked about the Curriculum coordinator and her qualifications/job duties. Ms. Buckley explained that the former superintendent had a curriculum coordinator background, and the separate position was eliminated back when she was hired. The position oversees curriculum district wide to make sure teachers are aligned in instruction. The person in the position has extensive background and is focused on closing gaps in our curriculum.

After some research, Michael Limanni stated that he stands corrected and the budget is currently \$70,589 below the cap.

Sharon Nelson asked about \$900 music department field trip. Stacy Buckley said that it could be one of two things: group lessons for band in 5<sup>th</sup> grade transportation costs, or it could be a performance they are planning to go to.

Christen asked about part 6, and clarification for why graduations are all in the negative. Mr. Limanni stated that the expenses were moved to different line items.

John Jenness asked about the electricity expense. Mr. Limanni stated that he is working on it, but rates are still going up on electricity. He budgeted for a 7% increase, but as rate has gone up, thankfully our usage is down.

# ***Newfound Area School District***

## **Budget Committee Meeting**

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### **Next Meeting Date and Location**

Simon discussed our next meeting. Next meeting moved to Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at NRHS, room 106.

### **Review Agenda Topics for Next Meeting**

Stacy noted that at the next meeting the budget should be finalized and the committee can begin to prepare for the budget hearing. She should have the warrant articles available by that time.

### **Public Input**

None

### **Adjournment**

Skip Reilly motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Jeff Bird. Motion passed unanimously and meeting adjourned at 8:31PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kimberly Bliss  
Budget Committee Clerk