

Winchester, NH Budget Committee Meeting Minutes for Tuesday December 1, 2020

Members Present: Chester Lapointe- Chair, Tiffany Melanson, Theresa Sepe, Ben Kilanski (Selectman Representative) Lindseigh Picard (School Board Representative)

School Board Members Present: Todd Kilanski, James Rokes Jr, Tina Perkins, Emily Holmes.

School Administration Present: Dr. Ken Dassau, Mary Henry, Ian Spencer.

Members of the Public: Natalie Quevedo, Brendan Hubbard, Jenny Rhodes.

Chester called the meeting to order at 6:00PM at Winchester Town Hall.

Ben made a motion to accept the minutes from the meeting held on November 21st. Lindseigh seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Lindseigh gave an overview on the 2021-2022 Winchester School Budget. She described how the budget process began in September. The school board and administration looked at cuts that were made after the current budget were adopted and decided it was important that they should include the following in the budget for next year.

Full Day Kindergarten

Transportation for all students including elementary students who live more than a mile from the school and all high school students.

Athletics

Raises for Non-CBU employees

The school board added an additional custodian to the budget for next year and four paraprofessionals.

The school board noted that there are monetary increases to the budget next year that are out of their control. Increases include the school's contribution to New Hampshire Retirement, the busing contract and the second year of the WSSA contract includes raises that were approved by Winchester voters in March of 2020.

The Winchester School Board voted unanimously to approve a budget amount for 2021-2022 for \$12,835,487.

The school board is looking to make a better presentation at the deliberative session.

Chester asked Lindseigh what area of the budget should be looked at first. Lindseigh asked what the big questions are?

Chester noted that the enrollment for Keene High School next year is the same as this year. How is that possible? Is that a typo? Answer from Mary- No. They are budgeting for 164 students total. Chester asked why the cost went down. Dr. Dassau answered that the rate is created by the Keene School Board and several different factors are used when the rate is created. It centers around their costs.

Theresa asks about salary. Does everyone get the same raise in this budget? Answer- Yes, for non CBU staff. A 2.5% raise was agreed for the staff of 20.

Theresa asks if there were any salary increases to the paras at the school. Answer from Lindseigh- Yes, that increase is built into the budget as it was approved by the voters in March. This will be the second year of their contract.

Theresa asks about Adequacy Aid. Does the state tell you how to use that money? Answer from Mary. No. Also remember that the adequacy aid is built of the Free and Reduced Lunch Applications. Fewer of those applications have been filled out. The district has a chance to received \$1900 per student if they qualify. Title 1 and the IDEA Grants are all built from that free and reduced lunch application. Chester asks how the district ensures that these forms are filled out? Lindseigh answered- the forms are sent home to parents; they remind parents at school board meetings and they have robocalled every student household.

Ben asks about the total student amount. The 2020-2021 paperwork says 506 students. Another source says 568. Why the discrepancy? Mary answers- These numbers are estimated by the state. They pick one day to establish average daily membership for the school. If a student is out that day, they are not counted. The state uses October 1st. The pandemic could have changed that number. Ben notes that the number is significant. It reflects 3% of the school population. Mary reminds everyone that out-of-district placements are in that number too. Ben states that this number needs to be accurate as the district is losing out on revenue.

Theresa asks about the capital reserve projects. Why were the oil tanks removed this year? Ian answered that there were three on the property that were between 29-30 years old. They were removed so that they do not have to be maintained.

Chester asked about class sizes. Lindseigh answered that they built the budget with two teachers for each grade. Ideally the average class size would be 15-20 students.

Chester asks about teacher salary. Lindseigh answered that they are in negotiations with the union now about a new contract for next year. There is no information available at this time for potential increases.

Theresa asks about bringing back full day kindergarten. How many additional teachers does that mean? Lindseigh answers, one for kindergarten. The budget is built on 25 ½ total teachers with all students returning to school, distanced in class with an option for remote.

Theresa asks if any teachers are retiring. Lindseigh answered one.

Lindseigh explained that there has been a budget increase for teachers since last year. Some teachers were cut, and others left the district. Their replacements ended up on different spots on the salary scale and that accounts for an increase of \$126,000. Lindseigh explained about the distribution of teachers at the school in regard to grade level.

Ben asks about student population again. Dr. Dassau asks if the budget committee can table the topic until the principal Valerie Carey can attend a meeting? Answer- Yes.

Chester asks about the field trip line. Is it wise to fund this line? Lindseigh- Yes, the school board thought it was wise to have some money in the line. The annual Natures Classroom trip is not in the line.

Chester asks about the increases to the supply lines. 102% increase? Why so high? Lindseigh explains costs are up for all supplies and only needs were recognized.

Theresa asked about kindergarten screening. Lindseigh answered that his line is back since we aim to have kindergarten screening. Ben says he remembers administration saying that this was not useful. Answer- No. It is useful and the current kindergarten teacher donated her time this year to see that it was done.

Theresa asks about the aid's salary increase. How many people. Lindseigh answered. If you are referring to paras, the increase is four. Remember, the increase also includes the raises for the contract. The budget is built on 29 total paras.

Theresa asks about Related Services for SPED. What is that? The total is \$375,000. Dr. Dassau answers that it is for students that need services for outside of the school. Theresa asks how many students are there? Dr. Dassau will get her that number. Mary notes that these costs are higher because we contact these services out rather than provide them at the school.

Theresa asks how many placements are there outside of Winchester and Keene High School? Also, when you do this budget, do you estimate? Lindseigh- No. The budget is built on the current numbers and what we have right now. Ben asks about what they might expect in out of district placements. Dr. Dassau answered, maybe one.

Mary stated that right now there are 14 out of district placements that cost the district between \$40,000-\$70,000 per year.

Chester asked about the athletics line. Lindseigh answered that the amount reflects bringing all sports back to the school. Lindseigh also mentioned what the Sports Boosters were able to provide this year.

Ben asks how many positions are there in the guidance salary line? Answer- three.

Theresa asked about the teacher retirement line for guidance. Mary answered that the retirement amount that is required by the state is higher this year.

Theresa asks about the nurse. Why the increase in salary? Lindseigh answered that this is a position that is in demand. After the person who had the position left for a higher paying nurse position in another school, the administration could not fill the position in the old salary range of \$44,000-\$55,000. This is a full-time position.

Theresa asks, what is OT? Dr. Dassau answers that this is the Occupational Therapy line. Ben asks if the school is adding another person. Answer- No. The school shares this cost with Hinsdale. Where is the assistant accounted? Answer- Under special ed related services.

Ben asks about the Staff Development Non-des line. There is a \$2000 increase. What are you anticipating? Lindsey answers that staff members of the school that are certified need additional certifications that are required.

Ben asks about staff development SAU. Is this the same? Answer- No. That would be for Speech, OT, Superintendent and Business Manager. Ben asks if there are new job requirements. No, this is a line that was cut.

Chester asks about the School Assistant/Secretary position. Lindsey states that this position was moved to a receptionist position this year. Currently, that is not working for the demands of the school. They want to bring it back to what it was before.

Chester asks about the Business Administrator salary line. There is a 42% increase. \$77,500. Mary answers that currently some of the salary is covered by grants. That is not the case next year. Average salary for the position is \$95,000.

Ben asks about Business Service. Mary- That is the staff accountant. They would like to increase the hours for this position. They are budgeting 32 hours per week for next year. That would include the 2 1/2 % increase as well.

Dr. Dassau points out that Mary is leaving her position soon. They have hired Municipal Resource Inc. to provide business administrator services. This position could be filled by a temp agency in the future as well. It is important to note that they will be paying the same for MRI for three days a week that they were getting from Mary for five days of work.

They will also be looking to have MRI manage their grants temporarily. Theresa asks if they are hiring more people for the same job? Answer- No. The SAU office employees are the superintendent, business administrator, superintendent assistant, and accountant.

Ben asks about the custodian wages. How many will this number represent? Ian answers that they have 4 positions currently and they would like to add one more. It is important to note that CARES Act money is paying for one of the custodians right now. That person is paid for sanitation work only. A 2 1/2% increase is built into the salary of each custodian.

Ben asks about the Disposal Service increase. Is it possible to renegotiate and include the town in the contract? Ian answers yes. The reason the school uses Waste Management is because they offer more recycling and take bottles and cans. MDS only takes cardboard.

Theresa asks about oil and propane use. Propane is 235% overspent. The year to date numbers don't match. Ian answered that last year we budgeted oil and propane. The loss of oil use will make up the increase in propane cost. The Ford Building still runs off oil.

Ben asks about the busing contract. He has heard that the school teamed up with area districts to bundle the cost and look for savings. Mary- Unfortunately, that savings did not happen. There were only two bids for the service. Both bids had increases in cost. First Student won the bid. Differences between the old contract and new include some recourse for missed service and no invoices will be paid after they are received four months from the service. The school could pull out of the contract if it had too.

Theresa asked about the Tech Assistant. Is that a new position? Lindseigh- Yes. This was a position that was recommended last year too.

Lindseigh asks the Budget Committee for questions that they can answer at their next meeting. The School Board will be meeting via Zoom on Thursday.

Ben asks about warrant articles. Lindseigh answers that the capital reserve request will be for \$125,000. There will be a deficit warrant article.

Lindseigh hopes to have the Default Budget number at the next meeting.

There was a request for public comment. Chester acknowledged the request.

Brendan Hubbard asked about increases to the travel expense line and the supply lines. Are these figures in line with what was spent?

School Psychologist is budgeted for \$150,000. Should this line be a separate line if there is nobody hired for the position? Lindseigh answered that where the money comes from to pay for the salary or service is a factor.

Brendan is asking for transparency. Mary says in regard to the supply lines, all the costs are up. The district spends \$6000 on paper alone.

Brendan asks about the school administrative assistant position. What are the increases? Lindseigh answers that there would be an increase of one hour per day and an increase in job responsibilities. There is also an increase of 10 additional days per year.

Brendan notes that the increases amount to over \$50,000 in additional cost.

Brendan asks about Tech Assistant. The school currently has one, correct? Answer- Yes. They are paid with CARES funding.

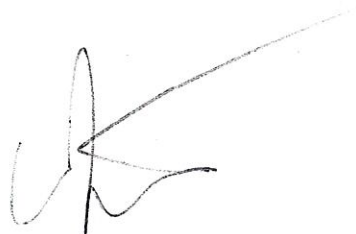
Lindseigh asks about the mask mandate. People in attendance are not wearing masks. The public should feel safe to attend. Ben notes that the town is following the governor's mandate. Chester notes that it was an oversight that some attendees are not wearing masks. Ben notes that the town is not planning on having a mask mandate.

Natalie asks about the governor's mandate and that it includes that people should be six feet from each other. The town hall is not a well-ventilated area. The budget committee should be following through with telling people to wear masks.

Chester announced that the next budget committee meeting will be December 8th at Town Hall at 6PM.

Theresa made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lindseigh seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AK', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.