

Winchester, NH Budget Committee Meeting Minutes for Tuesday December 8, 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, Emily Holmes.

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

Members of the Public: Natalie Quevedo, Brendan Hubbard, Barb Depew, Sheena Bushee.

Chester opens the meeting at 6PM.

Ben makes a motion to approve the minutes from the December 1st meeting with corrections. Tiffany seconds the motion. Corrections include 15 out of district students to 14, MRI stands for Municipal Resource Inc and changing there may be a deficit warrant article to there will be a deficit warrant article.

Theresa would like to allow public comment at each meeting. Theresa makes a request to have the School Board members introduced. Theresa feels that they should be seated in the front of the room.

Chester makes a motion for face masks to be required at all budget committee meetings. Lindseigh seconded the motion. There was discussion on a previous email chain that discussed mask requirement. Chester explain the initiative behind the motion. Ben referenced the governor's order that masks should be worn when six feet of space is not possible. Lindseigh asks to amend the motion to say that masks should be required for everyone except those exempted for health concerns. Chester supports the amendment to the motion. Chester acknowledges a comment from Todd Kilanski that mask wearing is a personal decision. Theresa mentions if the motion were to pass, those in attendance that were not wearing masks would have to put one on. Chester calls the vote. Motion fails, 2-3. Voting no were Ben, Tiffany and Theresa. Lindseigh mentions that the committee should consider using zoom for their meetings.

Ben brings up the Conant Library budget. Theresa makes a motion to approve a budget for the Conant Library for \$88,575. Ben seconded. Motion passes 5-0.

Ben notes that South West Community Services is asking for a revision to their requested amount. Ben makes a motion to approve the new amount of \$9572. Chester seconded. Motion passes 5-0.

Theresa would like the committee to know that the town of Chesterfield is holding a seminar on conducting Zoom meetings. The seminar is on December 17th and people should talk to Karey if they are interested.

Chester starts discussion on the school budget. Lindseigh would like to request that they go through documents that have been provided to the committee. The committee agrees.

Val Carey address the staffing for the school for 2021-2022. The administration and school board have considered four different scenarios. Val Carey references the document on staffing. The administration is considering scenario #2 as the most likely for next year. This would include students returning to school without distancing requirements and having remote only as an option for parents. There would be no hybrid schooling with this scenario. If the current number of teachers are teaching in person five days a week, then the school needs additional staff for remote teaching. The school is proposing adding 5 ½ more teachers. This would also cover bringing back full day kindergarten and preschool.

Lindseigh notes the information provided for staff development and which lines are for each position. Val notes that the staff development lines that have been questioned are for non-CBU employees that need to be certified. The development lines fund that certification.

Lindseigh mentions that this information is also provided at the school website for the public to view.

Val addresses the School Psychiatrist line. The funding for the position and service comes from three different lines. The IDEA Grant-\$20,000, special education- \$60,000 and a salary line which covers benefits- \$70,000. That is how the total of \$150K is reached.

Val talks about the related services line. Val explains the OT position and how it is shared with the Hinsdale School District. We provide 50% of the salary and benefits for the position.

Lindseigh references the documents that list the SAU Staff and current salaries. Information in the documents reference four area districts and notes the lower pay grade for Winchester. Theresa asks if the superintendents are full or part time in the other districts. Do they work 2 ½ days a week like our superintendent. Lindseigh responds that she never said that. Dr. Dassau addresses the committee and states that he is contracted to work 102 days per year. Ian notes that the information provided comes from the municipal websites of each district. Theresa mentions that our principal salary is low. Lindseigh tells the committee that the school board would like the district salaries to be competitive.

Lindseigh wants to correct some information that was discussed at the last meeting. The proposed budget is built with a 3% increase for some specific positions at the school that include Speech, Guidance and Nurse. The increases in non-CBU positions are as follows. \$18,488 for those getting 2.5% and \$12,531 for those getting 3%.

The committee addresses the out of district placements. They total \$790,166. This total includes the current 14 students and placement costs. Val would like the committee to know that the line reflects this year's tuition rates, not 2021-2022.

Val notes that they are budgeting \$473K to add high school transportation and a 4th elementary school bus for the 2021-2022 budget.

Theresa asks if the attending school board members have anything to say to the budget committee. Do they have questions? Assuming there is agreement? Lindseigh says the board voted unanimously for the

proposed budget. Todd says he is in favor. James Rokes JR says he voted for the presented budget but is open to hearing recommendations from the budget committee.

Theresa questions the bus contract. Why does the rate go up when the cost of fuel is down? Val- We are currently in year one of a seven-year contract that was bid on by only two companies. There are other districts that were bundled into the bid. There is a fuel surcharge in the contract. If the cost of fuel goes higher, that is when the district would pay more.

Lindseigh mentions her concerns over having more in-person meetings. She expects a vote and recommendation on the vote tonight. Is the committee considering a cut?

Ben would like to process the material that presented tonight. Chester mentions there is a lot to look over. Theresa is not ready to make a motion and would like more time. Theresa does not want what happened at last year's school deliberative session to happen again. Tiffany agrees.

Ben notes that the last day for a public hearing is January 19th.

Theresa asks about the default #. Lindseigh answers around \$11,200,000. (This was corrected later in the meeting to \$11,600,000) Theresa notes that this is over a million less than the proposed budget. People generally vote for the lower amount.

Todd Kilanski mentions that committee members should not get information just before the meeting.

Mary explains the one-time expenditures that would not appear on the default budget. Contractual obligations will be in the default.

Chester proposes they meet next Tuesday, December 15th at 6PM. Asks if everyone can use Zoom.

Ben notes that the last day to post a public hearing is January 12. He would like to see the town and school hearing be on the same day and back to back.

Lindseigh notes that the town has \$700,000 in their General Fund. The school has a \$712,000 deficit. The school board would like to see this deficit addressed. They have considered using money from the special education trust fund. Lindseigh thinks the budget committee should consider a warrant article to use an amount in the general fund to reduce that deficit. Ben clarifies that the general fund that is being referred to is the Unreserved Fund. There are RSA's that specify what the fund can be used for. Ben does not they can use it for this.

Theresa made a motion for Ben to speak with the town attorney on whether the Unreserved Fund can be used by the budget committee and whether it can be used to lower the deficit and get the answer in writing. Lindseigh seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

The budget committee scheduled the public hearing for January 14,2021 at 6PM at Winchester Town Hall. Snow date is January 19,2021.

Lindseigh asked if the budget committee had any other questions. They did not.

Ben would like to thank Mary for her service to the school district.

Brenden Hubbard asked about the deficit amount. How did it get to be \$700,000? Mary answered that the audit findings were not noted properly for many years and the district also budgeted for Medicaid revenue that did not come in, in the past two years.

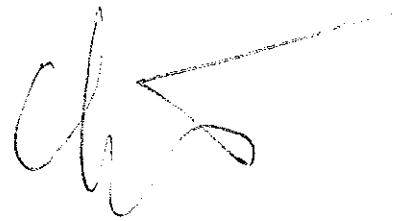
Kevin Bazan expressed his disappointment in the result of the earlier vote on mask requirements. If the public can't be assured that people are at the meeting are wearing a mask, they must take their health into consideration to attend. These are public meetings; everyone has a right to attend in person and know that they will be safe at the same time. The budget committee should reconsider the vote.

Natalie Quevedo has the same opinion. Natalie asks Tiffany why she voted no. Tiffany responds that like Ben, she supports going along with what the governor is suggesting. Natalie asks about the vote that the budget committee took through email. Ben answers that it was before the governor's mandate.

Jennifer Howe states that she is a member of the town's Broadband Committee. She states that their data has shown only 18% of residents in town have reliable internet access.

Ben makes a motion to adjourn. Theresa seconds the motion. Motion passes 5-0.

The meeting ended at 7:50PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.