

Wakefield Budget Committee Meeting
Tuesday, January 8, 2019
Town Hall Opera House
Approved

Budget Committee Members Present: Chairman Jerry O'Connor, Peter Kasprzyk, James Reinert, Elizabeth Conner, Priscilla Colbath, Dave Mankus, Tracey Kolb, Frank Zappala and Denny Miller

School Board: Sandra Johnson and Jennifer McCawley

Administration: Superintendent Dr. Chris Tyrie, Business Administrator Marie D'Agostino, Facilities Director Joe Williams

Donna Martin with Clearview Community TV

Mr. O'Connor opened the meeting at 6:30 and he led those present in the Pledge. He explained that the Committee will have a brief meeting and then he will open the Public Hearing, take a short recess and then open the Public Hearing with the town. Dr. Tyrie said she had talked with attorney Gordon Graham who advised them as to how the tie votes should be worded. Mr. O'Connor said there was a change in Articles #8 and #13 plus the figures for the Paras contract. Mrs. D'Agostino went over the articles with the word changes. Mr. O'Connor read Article #4 the Paraprofessional CBA.

Mr. Miller said he is not satisfied with the legal interpretation from the School Board's attorneys. It is his understanding that a tie vote is not a recommendation. A tie vote is a defeat vote. Mrs. Kolb read a letter from the School District attorneys stating that to get it correct that he suggests an article where a tie vote is present simply reflect the fact that whichever committee was tied in its vote the article, Budget Committee voted to 5-5 on a motion to recommend the article. That is a numeric tally on the vote that was requested and is, as I understand it, an accurate statement of the facts. Mr. Miller said, I'd like an opinion from our town attorney. Mr. O'Connor said the wording on that can be checked. Mr. Kasprzyk said they put not recommended at the end of Article #13 why not this one? Mr. Miller reiterated that he's never heard of a tie vote a vote to recommend. Mrs. Kolb said, we wanted to get it correct so we went to our attorney. Mr. Miller wants a second opinion because he disagrees. Mr. O'Connor will get clarification.

Article #4

Mrs. Colbath asked if there were any language changes or just monetary changes. Mrs. Kolb read the changes. Mrs. Colbath asked if the Budget Committee would be getting copies of the two CBA's. Mrs. Kolb said yes.

Mr. Mankus made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Kolb, to recommend Article #4. (Vote 5-4)

Article #5

Mr. O'Connor read Article #5 Special Meeting if Article #4 fails.

Mr. Mankus made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kasprzyk for discussion, to recommend Article #5. Mrs. Colbath said it's very expensive to have another meeting and the results are quite often the same. Mrs. Kolb said, having negotiated both contracts she thinks they deserve an opportunity to have it re-looked at. (Vote 2-7)

Article #8

Mr. O'Connor read Article #8. Educationally Disabled Children Trust. Mr. Kasprzyk said we voted at the last meeting to zero dollar the article and it says the Budget Committee recommends this appropriation 7-3. He feels this is very deceptive. Mrs. Kolb said it was not meant to be deceiving. It came back to the Board and they re-voted on it. They believe they are going to be in a deficit and they wanted to make sure, when they have to approach the DRA, that they let the Budget Committee know, loud and clear they will be in a deficit. They will use the money from that Trust Fund. Mr. Kasprzyk asked if they told DRA that they had \$200,000 in another warrant article to cover that. She said yes and they will be using that money as well. When they approach the DRA and DOE they have to make sure they told the Budget Committee, loud and clear that there is not enough money in the current budget. Mrs. Kolb said it wasn't deceitful and Mr. Kasprzyk asked why they left the Budget Committee vote 7-3. Mr. Miller said the \$100,000 is for next year not this year. We voted to zero it. He went on to say that he wasn't happy about wasting time coming in here only to have the Board put the money back in. He is upset with this entire procedure. We're trying to do our job for the voters. We all represent 410 voters and he finds the Board changing the amount back to where it was, insulting. Mrs. Kolb said we are going to empty this trust fund this year and we want to refill it. She said they just want to make sure they are clear with their message. Mr. O'Connor asked when they checked with DRA did you tell them you had \$105,000 in the fund along with the \$200,000 that could be used for this same purpose or did you tell them you were \$200,000 short? Mrs. Kolb said they hadn't gotten to that level yet. But they can see into the future where the budget is headed and they hope it doesn't go there. Mr. O'Connor thinks if they called the DRA and told them that you have \$100,000 in a trust fund and you had a potential \$200,000 overrun that could be a problem but if you told them you had a potential for another \$200,000, I think the answer they gave you might have been different. Mr. Kasprzyk asked if they would be more comfortable with leaving the \$100,000 in and taking out the \$200,000. Mrs. Kolb answered she believes the budget will be short not just in Special Ed so it would be irresponsible as you can use the \$200,000 in other areas not just Special Ed. Mr. Kasprzyk said being short was the whole reason the \$200,000 got voted in. We took the \$100,000 out and you put it right back in. Mrs. Kolb said we are being transparent. She wanted to make sure the Committee understood we are in trouble. Mrs. Colbath said if you wanted to drive a point home this is not the way you should have done it by changing the article. She still feels it should go back to zero, the way we voted on it in the first place. Mr. Kasprzyk and Mr. Miller wanted to say their tone is not directed at Mrs. Kolb but at frustration of the process. Mr. Miller said his concern is if it's voted to zero the next time we see this warrant article it will be \$100,000 again. Mr. Mankus made a motion. Seconded by Mrs. Kolb to vote on the article as written. (Vote 2-7) Not to recommend the article. Mr. Miller asked why there needed to be another vote as the article has already been voted on. Mr. O'Connor said we haven't voted on this changed article. Mr. Kasprzyk said the article had already been voted on when it was introduced.

Mr. Kasprzyk asked to revisit Article #6. Mr. O'Connor read the article and said this deficit appropriation is for this current year. Mr. Kasprzyk said he would ask to lower this article by \$100,000 and the reason being if the voters agree with the School Board they will get the \$100,000 in article #8 which is \$100,000 more than we intended to put in. If we reduce this to \$100,000 they still have the cushion. Mr. Miller said we are talking two different fiscal years. He said if you have the ability to use the \$200,000 at the end of the year why have Article #8. Mrs. Kolb said it is possible they could get more Special Ed children before the end of the year, a great concern of the Board. Mrs. Colbath said Special Ed challenges are a daily occurrence you never know when you might get them just like the highly unusual five out of district placements. She feels this article should stay as written. She doesn't believe the Board will use this money

unless they absolutely have to and will not be hiring people that aren't budgeted for. It's a cushion without having to go to a special meeting. Mr. Mankus explained that Article #6 is not built in as a tax right now it's only for emergencies. And Article #8 would ride over for a hundred years if it's not used. One is not raised unless you need it and the other is not used unless you have to. Mrs. Kolb said there are a great number of steps to access any of these funds. Mr. O'Connor said the money from the Trust Fund can be spent after just holding a Public Hearing.

Article #13

Mr. Miller said this is another article that's been zeroed twice and this is the third time it's appeared. Mr. Miller asked for confirmation from the Committee. Mr. Kasprzyk said that it was explained to him that the Committee preferred to do CRF's five years out. After some discussion and reviewing the minutes Dr. Tyrie, agreed this should not have been included in the warrant articles.

Article #17

Mrs. D'Agostino said this article was modified to say that this article is not recommended by the Budget Committee. Mr. Reinert said for clarification, shouldn't this article say the Budget Committee does not recommend this article 8-2? Mrs. D'Agostino said she went by what was in the minutes. Mr. Reinert said it was a double negative. Mrs. D'Agostino said they will switch the vote to 8-2 not recommended.

Mrs. D'Agostino summarized what she heard happen at this meeting. She wanted to know what the determination was on Article #6 the deficit appropriation, Article #13 roof repair, and Article #8 for Special Ed Trust. Is that going to stay at \$100,000 or going back to zero? Mr. O'Connor said we left Article #8 alone, Article #13, once it was zeroed you said wouldn't appear on the Warrant. Mrs. D'Agostino said the original Article #8 was for the security trust fund and that was eliminated and after discussion of what that money was going to be used for the School Board determined to eliminate that article. She asked what the outcome of Article #8 is. Mr. Miller said the final vote from this Board, in the minutes show the article zeroed out. Mrs. Colbath said if the amount stayed at \$100,000 it should read not recommended by the Budget Committee. Mr. O'Connor said if we zeroed it they could take it off the Warrant like article 13. Mr. Miller was concerned that if someone was reading the previous minutes they would see we zeroed it. Mister Kasprzyk said the original intent of the Committee was to have it at zero and it did not get done. Mr. Reinert asked if it would be prudent to zero it and leave it in to give someone an opportunity at Deliberative Session to change it. Mr. Mankus said it's more democratic to leave the decision to the voting booth. Mrs. Colbath agreed with Mr. Mankus.

Mrs. Colbath made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kasprzyk to zero that article. (Vote 7-2)

Mrs. Colbath made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Conner, to recommend the zeroed article (Vote 7-2)

Mr. O'Connor asked if Article #13 would be removed and Mrs. Kolb answered yes.

The meeting was recessed at 7:20

At 9:20 Mr. O'Connor made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Conner to approve the minutes of January 2nd. (Vote 9-0)

At 9:24 Mr. O'Connor made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Conner to adjourn the meeting. (Vote 9-0)

Respectfully submitted for approval at the next Budget Committee meeting

Priscilla Colbath

Secretary Pro Temp