

Wakefield Budget Committee  
SAU Budget Proposal FY 2020 - Paul School Library  
12-6-18  
Approved

In attendance:

**Budget Committee:** Jerry O'Connor, Dave Mankus, Priscilla Colbath, Howie Knight, Denny Miller - Selectmen's Rep., Tracey Kolb-School Board Rep., Peter Kasprzyk-Water District Rep, Elizabeth Conner, Frank Zappala, Charles Shine

**SAU 101:** Christine Tyrie-Superintendent, Jerry Gregoire-Paul School Principal, Kim Haley

Meeting opened at 6:30 PM.

Mr. Knight outlined the remaining steps in the budget process, pointing out that the numbers could change at any of these times:

- When the budget committee is done with the preliminary review of the proposed budget
- After review of the Town & School Warrant articles
- As a result of the public hearing to be held in January, 2019
- As a result of the Deliberative Session to be held in late January or early February, 2019

Mr. Kasprzyk asked for a moment of silence in honor of George H.W. Bush.

Mr. O'Connor explained that there is a new formula for the calculation of the default budget. The formula will result in a number that will be significantly lower than the proposed budget.

Returning to Line 2110 – Truant Officer, Mr. Miller returned to the problem of the duplication of this salary between the town & school budgets. **Mr. Miller made a motion to remove \$80,000 from the budget. Mrs. Colbath offered the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The motion carried 10-0.**

Line 2222 – Library: Mrs. Tyrie explained the salary increase, which is caused by moving the library assistant from a part time position to a full time one, to enable the librarian to better address her various existing functions between 2 positions. **Mr. Knight made a motion to move the line at \$132,345, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> from Mr. Miller. Motion carried 9-1.**

Line 2310 – School Board: **Mr. Knight made a motion to remove \$50,000 from line 53240 (Improvements). Mrs. Colbath offered the 2<sup>nd</sup>.** Discussion: Mr. Knight offered that as the proposed feasibility study is a 1 time expenditure, it should be a warrant article, not part of the operating budget. **The motion carried 10-0. Mr. Knight then moved the line at \$44,500.00 with a 2<sup>nd</sup> from Mr. Miller. Motion carried 10-0.**

Line 2320-SAU Expense: It was pointed out that in previous years the budget committee has had little control over the SAU budget because it was shared between Milton & Wakefield, with Milton having the controlling votes and Wakefield paying approximately 65%. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> year of total new control of SAU 101. Mr. Miller asked for clarification of the payment to the Gafney library, cited at line 55610 for

the GED program. Mr. O'Connor wondered how many positions SAU 101 has vs SAU 64. The numbers are 6, a combination of full & part time positions, for SAU 101, and 9 full time positions for the former SAU 64. **Mr. Knight moved the line at \$256,825, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> from Mrs. Colbath. Motion carried 10-0.**

Line 2410-Principal:

Item 58900-graduation expenses: The reappearance was questioned when "nothing" was spent last year. It was pointed out that most of the expenses were allocated to "supplies", but will be returned here this year. The dues line was questioned until Mr. Gregoire confirmed it is for association dues, not union dues. The Principal Tuition line was questioned by Mr. Kasprzyk. Mr. Gregoire confirmed it is for college level courses deemed necessary for professional development, with courses taken on his own time. Mrs. Kolb offered that covering this education item is included in the contract, and maintained to keep Paul School competitive. Mr. Miller was told that the health line covers 2 individuals.

**Mrs. Colbath moved the line at \$346,666, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> from Mr. Knight. The motion carried 10-0.**

Line 2510-Fiscal Services

The Salary & Benefit Contingencies line was questioned. Mrs. Tyrie explained that it covers unaffiliated salaries. Nothing was spent in this line last year because the individuals involved did not get a raise last year. This year a 3% raise is proposed. Line 58100 shows, depending on which version of the report you have, a \$42,593 expenditure, which is a tax item, plus penalties that was returned to the school in error and needed to be repaid, and it is not included in the \$268,201 proposed for the line. Item 54300-Maintenance Agreements-was questioned. The vote for Fiscal Services was deferred until this item is resolved.

Line 2610-Operations/Maintenance

**Mrs. Colbath made a motion to remove \$7,000 from the electricity line (56220), as the anticipated rate increase is not going to happen. Mr. Knight offered the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried 10-0.**

**Mr. Knight made a motion to remove \$26,000 from the new special project line (54320) and \$14,020 from the 54230 (care of bldg). Mr. Miller offered the 2<sup>nd</sup>.** Mr. Knight explained that the renovations proposed in these lines would be better served being by adding the funds to the existing "renovations" trust fund, and should be proposed in a warrant article as an addition to this fund. **Motion carried 10-0.** Mrs. Conner wondered about the additional ½ a custodian. Mr. Williams explained that the additional staff is needed to properly clean the school. Mrs. Colbath was told that the contracted services number was the total of all existing contracts plus needed repairs. **Mr. Knight made a motion to remove \$20,000 from the contingency line. Mr. Zappala offered the 2<sup>nd</sup>.** Mr. Knight explained that these funds would be better served by being added to the existing trust fund established to replace heating systems. **Motion carried 10-0. Mr. Knight made the motion to move Line 2610 at \$550,850. Mr. Miller offered the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The motion carried 9-1.**

Line 2720-Regular Transportation

Mr. Kasprzyk asked about owning vs leasing buses, and the rotation schedule. The transportation manager responded that the SAU is moving from leasing to owning because it had been determined that ownership was less expensive in the long run. There are 2 outstanding leases, one expiring in 2019, and the other in 2020. The warranties attached to the vehicles are the same whether owned or leased. Mr. Miller added that there was an extensive conversation last year that convinced the Committee that

ownership was the way to go. Mrs. Conner asked about the insurance line, and was told that the budget item had been moved from Transportation #2721-55200 to Ops/Maintenance #2610-55200. **Mr. Knight made the motion to move the line at \$420,359, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mrs. Colbath. The motion carried 10-0.**

#### 2722-Special Ed Transportation

It was confirmed that the current Trust Fund is wording so that it will cover the purchase of any kind of motor vehicle needed to serve the school district. **Mr. Knight made the motion to move the line at \$110,589, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mrs. Colbath. The motion carried 10-0.**

#### 2724-Athletic Transportation

Mr. Gregoire explained that the increase is due to an increase in away games. When questioned about the lack of year-to-date use for the current budget, he explained that most of the games are in the spring. **Mr. Kasprzyk made the motion to move the line at \$3,229, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Knight. Motion carried 10-0.**

#### 2725-Field Trips Transportation

**Mr. Knight made the motion to move the line at \$4,629, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> from Mrs. Colbath. The motion carried 10-0.**

#### 2820-Technology

Mrs. Colbath wondered why the new Chromebooks were included here, and not part of a warrant article adding funds to the appropriate trust fund, adding that the trust funds should be used if they exist. **Mr. Miller made a motion to remove \$15,000 from line 57340(new computer & comm. Equip) and \$10,790 from 57380 (computer equip replacement) from the operating budget and move these funds to a warrant article adding funds to the technology trust fund. Mr. Knight offered the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried 10-0.** Mr. Zappala asked about the new salaries. Mrs. Tyrie explained that NH House Bill 1612 mandates that schools have someone in-house for tech support for the Governance Plan and daily IT needs. Mr. Zappala wondered if there wasn't someone in town who could meet these requirements under some kind of contract, rather than adding to staff. Mrs. Tyrie agreed to look into it. It was agreed that voting on the line would be deferred until Mrs. Tyrie had a chance to look into alternatives.

Mr. Kasprzyk went back to an open item from the 11-27-18 meeting, the LNA issue, wondering what the SAU had found out about the possibility of reimbursement from the child's medical insurance. He was informed that new laws allow for some reimbursement from other sources for any child requiring health related services. A diagnosed disability is not required. Mr. Gregoire added that they had looked into the alternate, less expensive, source for "epi pens", had found one, and secured a supply.

#### 2900-Other Benefits

**Mrs. Colbath made a motion to move the line at \$49,980 with a 2<sup>nd</sup> from Mr. Knight. The motion passed 10-0.**

#### 5221-Food Services

The Committee was reminded that prices were increased this year, and that food service seemed to be working better.

Mr. Miller opened a discussion about the overall budget increase, stating that he believed the Committee was not ready to approve the proposed budget, and asked for a straw vote by the Committee. Various members expressed their concern about the size of the budget and its probable rejection by the voters, forcing the SAU to work with a much smaller default budget. Several members cited suggested budget increases that might be more palatable, ranging from 3% to 9%. Mrs. Kolb, speaking for the school board, expressed its support of the budget as presented, reminding the Committee that for several years the size of the budget precluded the school from making some needed adjustments in the curriculum & the building that can no longer be deferred. Committee members responded that they understand the need for major updates, but advised the Board that it could not correct all the deficiencies in one year. Mrs. Kolb asked that other School Board members be allowed to speak. Mr. Knight asked the Committee if it was willing to make the exception. 2 Committee members objected, reminding everyone that while the Budget Committee meeting was held in public, it was not a public meeting. Ultimately, with a vote of 6-4, the Committee agreed to allow 1 other member of the School Board to speak. This member said that the Board had gone through the budget line by line, eliminating what it thought it could, and then found that after the special education mandated costs there was nothing left for the rest of the school; that there were too many children not be challenged; that our kids need to get a fair education and that 3% is just not reasonable. Mr. Zappala spoke to the potential for a self-fulfilling prophecy. With the proposed budget, the risk of asking for too much is so great that it leads to a failed vote, which leads to more reduced scores, which leads to "see-we didn't get what we wanted, so the scores went down". Taking a position that money will lead to success is not necessarily correct, while success will lead to more money is more probable. Mr. Mankus expressed is distress at Paul School scores when compared to others in the state. Mrs. Colbath said she understands the need for an increase, but the increase requested is just too much. A straw vote by the Committee showed about 5 members believing 8.5% to 9.4% was a more reasonable increase. When asked what should be cut, the Committee responded that it's the School Board's responsibility to make those decisions. Mr. Zappala added that expenses in town have had a lot of attention recently, with the tax reduction, the property assessment increases, the tax bill increases and the town expense increases. To add this much more is asking for failure.

**Mrs. Colbath made a motion to approve the minutes of 11-27-18, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Knight.** Mrs. Gauthier noted that she had already corrected Mrs. Conner's name. **The motion carried 10-0.**

A meeting to review the town & school warrant articles, as well as open items was set for 12-18-18 at 6:30, at Paul School.

Mr. Miller offered a motion to adjourn, with a 2<sup>nd</sup> from Mrs. Colbath.

Mr. O'Connor closed the meeting at 9:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Deborah D. Gauthier.

Note – subsequent to the meeting, the 12-18-18 meeting has been moved to Town Hall.