

Wakefield Budget Committee Meeting

November 30, 2020

Approved

Members present: Jerry O'Connor, Relf Fogg, Frank Zappala, Connie Twombly, Ken Fifield, Peter Kasprzyk. Priscilla Colbath, Dave Mankus and Denny Miller, Paul Romano and Elizabeth Connor by Zoom

School Board present via Zoom: Bob Ouellette

School Administration and Department Heads present: Via Zoom Jerry Gregoire, Anne Kebler, Marie D'Agostino, Jim Lampron, Brennan Peaslee. Present in person Joe Williams

Public Present: Town Administrator Dino Scala, Community members by Zoom and Jim Miller with Clearview Community TV

Mr. O'Connor opened up the Budget Committee at 6:00.

Mr. Miller asked if we should wait to make an adjustment to the Spaulding High School line at Deliberative session. Mr. O'Connor and Mrs. Colbath agreed. Mr. Gregoire explained the grid on page two. The number is \$523,828 and that's the proposed increase in the budget on November 20th for Version 1. On page 3 you'll see in red the negative number of \$576,183. That's the proposed decrease on Version 2 on November 25th. The difference between Version 1 and version 2 is negative \$52,355. This is a negative .49% decrease in the budget.

Mr. Connor said when we met last, we didn't have an approved budget from the School Board. What we have here is the result after the Board reviewed it.

1100 Regular Education

Ms. Connor questioned the reduction in students that seems to be significant and asked why, when there is a 7% decrease in the number of students, they keep the same amount of teachers. Mr. Gregoire answered that right now we have a record number of homeschooled students. They break up over grade levels. One class doesn't decrease significantly. There are often bubble groups. Mrs. Conner asked about Line 14, teacher retirement rate went up 17%, new employer contribution rate. Mrs. D'Agostino said health insurance rates increased 5.7%. This is because people changed plans or new hires. NHRS rates go up every two years. Employee rate will be 14.06% and the current rate is 11.17%. The teacher rate will increase next year to 22.02% and it is currently 17.08%. Mr. Miller suggested that all Budget Committee members look at page 47 and look on the left-hand side for a summary of benefits. There's a million dollars just in benefits. Mr. Zappala asked who determines the rate the taxpayers are obligated to pay? Mrs. D'Agostino said the New Hampshire Retirement System sets the rates based on the amount they will need to pay retirees currently and in the future. Mr. Miller explained that the state is making adjustments. Mr. Kasprzyk asked when the teachers are going to pick up some of the cost of health insurance. Mr. Fogg said that is being addressed in negotiations. Mr. Fifield asked if the school would be willing to partner with the town for health insurance to get a better deal. Mrs.

D'Agostino explained that they are two different pools. The town is in Health Trust and the school is in Cigna. Mr. Gregoire said the insurance for the school is negotiated in. The town pays 82.5% of the insurance for the teachers. Mr. Kasprzyk said people working pay a lot more towards their health insurance and he would like to see this negotiated down to about 70%.

Mr. Zappala made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Twombly to approve Function 1100. Roll call: O'Connor aye, Fogg aye, Zappala aye, Twombly aye, Fifield aye, Kasprzyk aye, Colbath aye, Mankus aye, Miller aye, Romano aye, Connor nay (Vote 10-1)

1200 Special Education

Mrs. Connor asked for clarification on line 46. Mrs. Kebler said the 3% increase is based on the contracted services we use Strafford Learning Center. She increases all contracted services by 3% when she's doing the budget. The 29% increase is based on the number of services projected for next year. Line 47 is for out of district services for one student. Mr. Kasprzyk asked why, in line 24, there is such a large increase in the student service coordinators salary. Mr. Gregoire said you are seeing an increase in this line and a decrease in the SAU Line 143 on page 27. The Student Services Director line has been brought down to zero. The two positions have been combined. He feels these are positions that should not be combined. **Mr. Miller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Zappala, to move the 1200 function. Roll Call: : O'Connor aye, Fogg aye, Zappala aye, Twombly aye, Fifield aye, Kasprzyk nay, Colbath aye, Mankus aye, Miller aye, Romano aye, Connor nay (Vote 9-2)**

1410 Co-Curricular Activities

Mr. Kasprzyk made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Twombly, to move the 1410 function. Roll Call: O'Connor aye, Fogg aye, Zappala aye, Twombly aye, Fifield aye, Kasprzyk aye, Colbath aye, Mankus aye, Miller aye, Romano aye, Connor aye (Vote 11-0)

1420 Athletics

Mr. Kasprzyk asked how much athletics are going on with Covid happening. Mr. Gregoire said we are back in school and hope we can have the Spring sports.

Mrs. Colbath made a motion, seconded by Mr. Romano, to move the 1420 function. Roll Call: O'Connor aye, Fogg aye, Zappala aye, Twombly aye, Fifield aye, Kasprzyk aye, Colbath aye, Mankus aye, Miller aye, Romano aye, Connor aye (Vote 11-0)

Mrs. Colbath suggested only those voting nays speak and eliminated the roll call vote due to the weather conditions, people losing power and the confusion. By consensus that's how we will continue to vote.

1430 Summer School

Mr. Kasprzyk made a motion, seconded by Mr. Zappala, to move the 1430 function. (Vote 11-0)

2110 Truant Officer

Mrs. Twombly made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg to approve function 2110. (Vote 11-0)

2120 Guidance/Social Worker

Mr. Kasprzyk asked why we are picking up the cost of this grant funded software. Mr. Gregoire said this is a valuable piece of software used for assessment and the grant has run out but the expectation was they we would pick up the cost and continue to use it.

Mrs. Twombly made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg to approve function 2120. (Vote 11-0)

2130 Nurse

Mrs. Twombly made a motion, seconded by Mr. Zappala to approve function 2130. (Vote 11-0)

2150 Speech

Mr. Kasprzyk made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Twombly, to approve function 2150. (Vote 11-0)

2210 Professional Development

Mr. Miller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg, to approve function 2210. (Vote 11-0)

2220 Library

Mr. Kasprzyk made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Twombly, to approve function 2220. (Vote 11-0)

2310 School Board

Mr. Miller asked if the School Board secretary was a new position. Mr. Fogg said no, it was paid from an SAU line.

Mr. Kasprzyk made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Twombly, to approve function 2310. (Vote 11-0)

2320 SAU Administration Expense

Mrs. Twombly asked what is the decrease? Mr. Fogg said there were some major deductions by looking at the Withdrawal Plan.

Mr. Miller made a motion, seconded by Ms. Connor, to approve function 2320. (Vote 11-0)

2410 Principal

Mr. Miller asked if the assistant principal position will be part time. Mr. Fogg said with student numbers dropping the Board felt the assistant principal position could work as part time.

Mr. Zappala made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Twombly, to approve function 2410. (Vote 11-0)

2510 Fiscal Services

Mr. Miller asked if the Software was just financial software and doesn't have any impact on student learning? Ms. Connor said they moved it to a warrant article. Mr. Kasprzyk asked why Line 184, health insurance jumped 197%. Mr. Gregoire said right now you have a part time BA but with a full time position you will need to offer health insurance for that position if it does. Mr. Fogg said there has been no Board discussion about that.

Mr. Miller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Twombly, to approve function 2510. (Vote 11-0)

2610 Operations/Maintenance

Mr. Miller asked to see the quotes for items listed in the notes under Line 211 page 33 Special Projects. 9 Exterior doors, Fire panel/CO2 detectors, 3 door sets of Aluminum glass doors, and lighting upgrade along with ramps/stairs handrails for modular. Mr. Williams said he will get those for us. Mrs. Colbath said the problem she has with the items on page 211 that they are putting in a warrant article is that usually a warrant article is used to save money for a big item or big project and these items seem more like things that would be done next year so wouldn't they be a budgetary item? Mr. Miller said all the warrant articles we will approve for the town every one of them are for a purchase that will go out two, three, four years in the future. The CIP Committee has continually said if it's an item you will buy in one year put it in the budget. This

is a policy that's been around for twenty years. This is all one-year items and ought to be in the budget. Mr. O'Connor said we put money into highway maintenance each year. Mrs. Colbath said if you look at the Schools CIP their items are two, three four years out. It just seems that these items should be in the operating budget. Mr. Zappala said some of these special projects are in the budget and part has been moved to a warrant article. He said this looks like an effort to move money off a budget to maintain a zero-increase budget. Mr. O'Connor said having this in a warrant article gives the voters the option of approving or not approving the project. Mr. Fogg said these are actually projects not a project. We decided which of the projects needed to be done so we left that in the operating budget. He does not recall talking about putting these items in a warrant article. He asked if it would be a good idea to have a warrant article for each of the projects. Mr. Miller said the risk you run by having all these items in one warrant article is if the Budget Committee votes no none on the projects will get done. Mr. Fogg believes they should be separate warrant articles but it would be a Board decision. There was a discussion on the best way to proceed. Mr. O'Connor said this would mean four more capital reserve funds added to what we already have. Mr. Miller said when Mrs. Colbath, Mr. Knight and himself, from the CIP Committee met with the school we asked numerous times if that was all the warrant articles they were going to bring forth. The previous year we went through the CIP and we ended up getting four or five warrant articles we hadn't seen before. Between the software and these there are five new warrant articles no one knew about. They should have been given to the CIP Committee five weeks ago. He said this is the second year we're getting sandbagged. Mr. O'Connor asked about a maintenance warrant article. Mr. Williams said these were never intended to be a warrant article. But if that happens the asbestos removal and renovation warrant article would probably be the best place for them. He would like to see the money go back into the operating budget so all the projects get done. Mr. Mankus said the School Board members should know more than we do about the need for these items. They seem to be safety items and we should encourage the Board to put these back in the budget. If the Board thinks they're important than put them in the budget. Mrs. Twombly agreed. Mr. O'Connor assumes that the School Board took these out of the budget and put them in a warrant article so we're not undermining what they wanted to do. Mr. Fogg said he thinks if the Budget Committee wants to up the bottom line it's their prerogative. Mr. O'Connor asked if anyone wanted to put that \$138, 895 back into the budget? Mrs. Colbath said she thinks we should look at the quotes Mr. Miller requested before we add any money back in the budget.

Mrs. Twombly made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg, to approve function 2610. Mr. Fogg withdrew his second and Mrs. Twombly withdrew her motion.

Mr. Kasprzyk asked in reality what are the real necessities here? Mr. Williams said in reality these are going to eventually go. The fire panel is not yet mandated through the State for CO2 detection but the mandate is going to be coming two years, five years down the road. We're trying to get ahead of the curve. It is a functioning fire panel, inspected each year and it is working. The lighting is through NH Saves for LED lighting. Eversource would match the \$42,000. The money is available for two years and this is the second year. Mr. Kasprzyk said those aluminum/glass doors aren't that old. The treads are popping up and the hardware is obsolete. Mr. Kasprzyk said they were originally put in for safety. Mr. Williams said they still lock. The nine exterior doors are all rusting out on the bottom. You could put a sweep under

them and get a couple more years out of them. One door barely closes. By fire code they have to swing freely. Mr. Kasprzyk said the lighting sounds like a good thing to do, the outside doors could wait. He also asked if Mr. Williams ever searches out grants? Mr. Williams said he hasn't researched it to the full extent but he could take a look at that. Mr. Mankus strongly recommends putting these items in the budget and get them done. Mr. Kasprzyk feels if we table this it will give us a little time to think about this. Mr. Fogg said he just found out that the Board did not discuss putting these items in a warrant article. Mrs. Twombly said this could be brought up at tomorrow's school board meeting. Mrs. Colbath said the Board weren't the ones that wanted to make this a warrant article. They should discuss this tomorrow night and see what they bring back to us. Mr. Gregoire said the Board hasn't voted. He was the one that made the suggestion. **Mr. Fogg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Twombly, to table this function until the next meeting. (Vote 11-0)**

Mr. Gregoire said the school hasn't touched the warrant articles yet.

2721 Regular Transportation

Mr. Miller questioned Line 225 and 226 and asked if they had taken the Transportation Manager down to a bus driver. Who manages the fleet? Mr. Fogg said a bus driver will receive a stipend to manage the fleet. Administration will handle buying of buses etc. He said the Transition Plan never had this position as an administrator. Mr. Miller asked who was going to decide when to buy a bus and when to retire a bus. Mr. Fogg said the school board should be making these decisions based on recommendations from our administrators. Mr. O'Connor said it would be a natural attrition with the busses retiring after a certain number of years in service and mileage. Mrs. Twombly asked if the bus manager is gone. Mr. Fogg said there will be a lead bus driver with a \$15,000 stipend. The buses do not have an easy pass as they are a government marked vehicles so they don't have to pay the tolls.

Mrs. Twombly made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg, to approve function 2721. (Vote 11-0)

2722 Special Transportation

Mrs. Twombly made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg, to approve function 2722. (Vote 11-0)

2724 Athletics Transportation

Mrs. Twombly made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg, to approve function 2724. (Vote 11-0)

2725 Field Trip/ Co-Curriculum Student Transportation

Mr. Kasprzyk made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Twombly, to approve function 2725. (Vote 11-0)

Mrs. Colbath said the \$10,000 was from someone at Deliberative Session adding that to the budget last year for Camp Calumet. That's why it was taken out.

2820 Technology

Mr. Miller asked how much money we have in Warrant Articles for the school. How do you decide what goes into the budget and what goes in the warrant article? Mrs. D'Agostino said the Trust Fund is for computer replacement. We have held off spending money from that Trust Fund because we have received money from the Cares Act. New equipment is not coming out of the budget.

Mrs. Twombly made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg, to approve function 2820. (Vote 10-1)

2900 Other Benefits

Mrs. Twombly made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kasprzyk, to approve function 2900. (Vote 11-0)

Mr. Miller asked if Workmen's Comp was going down. Mrs. D'Agostino said that is the number from the bill they received from Primex.

Minutes

Mr. Zappala made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fogg, to approve the minutes of 11-4-20 and 11-16-20. (Vote 8-0-3)

The Board discussed the date for the next meeting to finish off the Operation and Maintenance function and also review the warrant articles for the school and the town and possibly the teachers and paras' contracts. It was decided that they will meet on December 21st at 6:30.

Respectfully submitted for approval at the next Budget Committee meeting,

Priscilla Colbath
Secretary Pro Temp