



WAKEFIELD BUDGET COMMITTEE  
Tuesday September 14, 2021  
Approved

Jerry O'Connor Chairman	✓	Connie Twombly	✓	Dave Mankus	✓
Priscilla Colbath Vice Chair	✓	Paul Romano	✓	Relf Fogg School Board	✓
Dennis Miller	✓	Tom Daniels	✓	Ken Fifield Selectmen	✓
Howie Knight	✓	Elizabeth Conner		Peter Kasprzyk Water Dept	✓

School Board present: Bob Ouellette and Mary Collins

School Administration: Superintendent Pamela Stiles, Business Administrator Michael O'Neill

Public Present: Jim Miller with Clearview Community TV

Mr. O'Connor opened up the Budget Committee meeting at 6:30 and the Budget Committee met with the Town.

He opened the meeting with the school at 7:10.

Mrs. Stiles said they have a good process in place for creating a budget and is looking forward to sharing it with the Committee. She highlighted some of the successes and the challenges they had to face last year. As with everyone else Covid was a challenge. With changes in personnel and the turnover we're hoping to address some of those challenges. They are working very hard to address some of their transportation issues. She included in the packet an overview chart to get a sense of where they were with budgeting this past year to get a sense of savings as well as overages. All but four functions were under budget. The Nurses office with salaries, School Board with legal services and the SAU and Principals office with some salaries. Savings were in salaries and benefits because of staffing shortages. Both the savings and over expenditures were because of Covid.

The next section contained revenues and grants like the typical IDEA, Title I etc. ESSER is new, it is Covid related grant and the money can only be used for Covid. The revenues, Medicare reimbursement was sadly low because of underreporting due to lack of staff. She said this will be increased next year because they have already started inputting those expenses for reimbursement. The bottom line is there was \$517,000 returned to the town. Included in the packet is what is planned for this year. Some of the technology and support staff will come from the ESSER Funds so will not be in next year's budget.

They are in the process of evaluating their Special Education program and comparing some of the current costs and how we're delivering programming and how it might be delivered differently to realize some cost savings. They are hoping to have two warrant articles for collective bargaining. They are looking at utility expenses and contracts so they can make adjustments there. They are also looking at the CIP for possible warrant articles. Their process is in place for the budget development. She sees no problem with presenting the budget to the Committee in November. She told the Board that they requested a thirty day extension for this year's DOE 25 due to a whole host of reasons.

Mr. O'Connor commended Mrs. Stiles for the clear, concise, simple layout of the packet information. He said this is exactly what the Committee has requested for a number of years. Mr. O'Connor asked if Mrs. Stiles felt that everything is laid out as it should be in the functions, over the past few years items have been moved around which makes it difficult for the Committee to make comparisons. Mrs. Stiles responded that some of that might happen and she gave an example. She said the functions are where they should be and the objects are pretty well settled, nothing stands out to her.

Mr. Knight asked how long the school had to spend the ESSER grant. Mrs. Stiles said one is 2022 and the other is 2023. Mr. Miller asked if the School Board had to budget full population for high school when historically we've always lost anywhere from 3-10 students each year. This falls upon us to make the reduction. He is requesting that the Board make this reduction. Mrs. Colbath said that this year the high school line is \$58,000 over. She said we didn't take anything last year and perhaps with more people staying in town we may not need to do that this year. Mr. Miller asked what the official position is. Mrs. Stiles responded that the best practice is to go with the current numbers. Mr. Miller said he'd like to see that school look at these numbers just before Deliberative Session and make an adjustment and not leave it to the Budget Committee.

Mrs. Stiles said we received 2.1 million dollars in Covid money. The money is being used for staffing, computers and technology, wiring, field, playground, classroom teachers, social worker, and to address some of the learning loss. These new positions are to address Covid only and when the grant ends the position ends. Mr. Kasprzyk asked for a breakdown of all these ESSER grant expenditures for the next meeting.

Mr. Daniels asked why when the Business Administrator position increasing from part time to full time, and was supposed to cost between \$16,000 and \$17,000, ended up costing \$46,000? Mr. McNeill explained there was a savings in the support staff lines as the BA took over some of these duties because we were short staffed and that would show the actual increase in cost of around \$17,000. Mr. O'Neill said we received ESSER funds of \$147,000 for 2020-21. The \$729,00 was just approved a couple weeks ago. Mrs. Stiles explained that some of the grants are multi-year grants.

Members of the Committee thanked Mrs. Stiles for an excellent presentation. **The next Budget Committee/School meetings will be November 9<sup>th</sup> and November 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 in the Opera House.**

### **Minutes**

**Mr. Miller made a motion, seconded by Mr. Knight, to approve the minutes of March 22<sup>nd</sup> with the Water Precinct. (Vote 11-0)**

**Mr. O'Connor made a motion, seconded by Mr. Knight, to adjourn the meeting at 7:40.  
(Vote 11-0)**

Respectfully submitted for approval at the next Budget Committee meeting,

Priscilla Colbath  
Secretary Pro Temp