

Wakefield Budget Committee Meeting

January 9, 2020

Approved

Members present: Jerry O'Connor, Priscilla Colbath, Denny Miller, Elizabeth Conner, Paul Romano, Tracey Kolb, Peter Kasprzyk, James Reinert, Frank Zappala and David Mankus

School Board present: Bob Ouellette, Relf Fogg and Sandy Johnson

School Administration and Department Heads present: Jerry Gregoire, Anne Kebler, Marie D'Agostino, Jim Lampron, Jenn Specter, Brennan Peaslee and Joe Williams

Public Present: Dave Lee, Norma Joy, Mary Collins, Deb Wilson, Jess Cormier, Mark Kolb, Steve Brown, Gavin Kerns, Kylie Joy, Mr. and Mrs. Leone, Sandra Taliaferro and Jim Miller with Clearview Community TV

Mr. O'Connor opened up the Budget Committee at 6:00 to finish the Warrant Articles that were tabled by the budget Committee,

Article #6 Feasibility Study: The School Board voted 4-1 on this article. Mrs. Colbath pointed out a typo.

Mrs. Kolb made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mankus, to accept Article 6 to raise and appropriate \$45,000 for the purpose of a Feasibility Study. (Vote 2-7) Motion failed.

Article #7 Window Expendable Trust Fund: The School Board voted 3-2. Mr. Miller said he doesn't have an issue with the window replacement but he does have a problem with the amount of money the School Board is asking for. The window quote is \$403,000. You'd have to take out the five steel doors. You can't buy doors under a window contract and if the trustees did it he would take them to court. The \$11,000 for five steel doors should not be in there. There is \$15,000 in there for removal of calking and part of the calking is to remove asbestos. He doesn't know how you would break that out but you already have an asbestos abatement Trust Fund and part of that calking should come out of that Trust Fund that has \$40,000 in it. If you take out the \$11,000 for the doors and there is 202,000 in the Trust Fund that would leave \$190,000 which is \$60,000 less than what you're asking for. Mrs. Kolb said that's the quote that the Facilities Manager gave them and she said if they didn't need the full amount it would go back to the taxpayers. Mr. Miller explained how difficult it is to return left over money to the Town from a warrant article and it's not a simple majority, it's a 2/3's vote. That's why we try not to overfund a warrant article. Mrs. Colbath said at the last meeting she had asked Mr. Gregoire if there was film in the windows and he had said no it's clear glass. There is film in these replacement windows. He said, you were asking about a specific film and the windows being replaced do not have film. Mrs. Colbath responded that they do have film in them. She went on to say she had also asked him if there was any asbestos in the calking and you said no. Mr. Gregoire said we hope there's not but you never know what you get when you take a building apart. Mrs. Colbath said those windows have been tested and it's been proven that some of the calking does contain

asbestos. He said not in his tenure have they tested windows. Mr. Miller said he has the quote in front of him and it says for \$15,000, proper removal and legal disposal of asbestos calking. Mrs. Kolb said the quote has been around for ten years. The intent was to improve the school not to deceive. Mrs. Colbath said this quote is from August 2019. Ms. Conner asked if anyone had looked at the exclusions. She said the Davis Bacon prevailing wages, they have to pay prevailing wages and if they're excluding the prevailing wage then the cost could go up, Mr. Gregoire was not familiar with Davis Bacon prevailing wages. She said the exclusions concern her especially if they're not paying the prevailing wages and they are required by law to pay them. She feels someone should investigate the exclusions.

Mr. Miller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Kolb to move the Window Replacement article (Vote 1-8) Motion failed

Article #12 SAU Office Capital Reserve Fund: The school voted 3-2. Mrs. Colbath asked if they found out if they're one entity. She said the building belongs to the school. The SAU is in it but it's a school owned building. There were classrooms in that building. The school owns the building so why wouldn't the school budget or school warrant article take care if the maintenance on the building? Mr. Gregoire said it's the lesson we learned from the parking lot. It's very specific. It's for the school and the SAU is not the school. It's not a classroom anymore. Mrs. Colbath said this is different. This is a building and the building belongs to the school not the SAU if you're saying that you're a separate entity. Mr. Gregoire said it is a separate entity. Mrs. Colbath said then the school owns the SAU building and maintenance is the schools responsibility. Mr. Gregoire respectfully disagreed.

Mr. Miller made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Kolb, to move the article putting \$10,000 in the SAU Trust Fund. (Vote 3-6) Motion failed

Mr. Miller asked to talk about Article #14 and #15. Mr. Knight asked Mr. Miller to present these two article and can't call the other two trustees because that would be an Illegal meeting. Mr. Knight does not like Article #14 or #15. He said maintenance items should be in the operating budget. He said also that it sounds like we're talking about the same thing. His comment is in the future we shouldn't have these. It's very confusing for the trustees when they are handed a bill and they don't know if it's a maintenance item or a capital item. He's unhappy with both of these articles. Mrs. Colbath asked if this meant that they should check with the Trustees prior to spending to make sure they can get the money? Mr. Miller said that would be his recommendation. Mr. Miller said he also talked to the Town attorney and he asked about having a Public Hearing after the funds have been expended as opposed to before. The Town attorney said if the funds are expended prior to having a Public Hearing then the Trustees of the Trust Funds should not release the funds, absolutely should not release them. He said the RSA said you have a Public Hearing before you spend the money. Mrs. Kolb said they were advised by two of their school attorneys that we are doing it correctly. Mr. O'Conner said all through the 2000's the School Board had their public hearings prior to expending funds. He was there at the time recording meetings. Mrs. Kolb said they would be happy to do it correctly and she has the letter from Attorney Barbara Loughman. Mr. O'Conner said we all have that letter. Mrs. Colbath asked to speak about the two petition Warrant Articles #17 and #18. She just wanted to speak about the vote as the articles won't be discussed. Mrs. Colbath said the School Board voted not to

recommend the articles and the law does not authorize the inclusion of recommendations on non-money articles. So they can't recommend or not recommend these articles.

Mr. O'Connor recessed the Budget Committee meeting at 6:24.

He called for a six minute recess before beginning the Public Hearing.

The Public Hearing was opened by the Chair at 6:30.

Mr. Kasprzyk took a moment to ask everyone to think about our troops and the danger they're in and wish our troops a peaceful existence. Mr. O'Connor said it's important to support them.

1100 Regular Education \$5,367,342 an increase of \$89,594.

The proposed teacher's contract is not included in this function. It will be a separate warrant article.

1200 Special Education \$2,466,534 an increase of \$170,199.

Mr. Brown asked for an explanation of the increase. Mrs. Kolb said it was actual costs. There are no ghosts. There is a potential student. Mr. O'Connor said if you look at the variance lines you will see where the increases are. He wanted to know if we are hiring additional employees. Mrs. Kebler said we are not. Salary lines have increase because we've had some paras move into ABA tutor positions. We're actually under the number of support people in the building. Mrs. Collins asked about the anticipated student. This would be included in the budget not the warrant article because this student is anticipated. Mr. Gregoire said we began the Partner Program and as a cost savings we are now able to have some past out of district placements in the school. The paraprofessionals will receive increases based on the CBA passed last year. Mrs. Kolb said they have a warrant article to add \$200,000 to the Special Ed Trust Fund but it didn't pass the Budget Committee level.

1410 Co-Curricular Activities \$44,306 an increase of \$2,615.

1420 Athletics \$9,635 an increase or \$317.

1430 Summer School \$4.00.

2110 Truant Officer \$0.

Mr. O'Connor explained that the School Resource Officer will take over this job. Mrs. Joy said there was a question as to whether the SRO could do the Truant Officers job but she never heard the answer. Mr. Gregoire said they have a memorandum of Understanding. Mr. Brown was concerned that this would take time away from the school during the day. Mr. Gregoire said there will be times when there isn't an SRO in the building, he may be sick or other reasons. Mr. O'Connor asked about the discussion about rotating officers or having a replacement if the officer is sick. Mr. Gregoire said no and that the MOU doesn't name the particular officer. Mr. Fogg said the original MOU did have the Truancy under the SRO's job description.

2120 Guidance and Social Worker \$172,433 an increase of \$1,079.

2130 Nurse \$85,275 an increase of \$11,362.

Mr. Brown asked if there was enough money for aspirin and Band-Aids. Mr. Kolb said it was the amount requested by the nurse. Mrs. Collins inquired whether there would be a part-time LNA for the nurse. Mrs. Kolb said yes, it's budgeted. Mr. Brown asked if that was someone who would fill in for the nurse or are we adding an additional person to work in the Nurses office? Mr. Gregoire stated there are significant medical issues in the building so we are hiring a part-time LNA/part-time Para. This would not be covered by Special Education or grants. Mrs. Joy asked if the LNA had to also be with a Special Ed student. Mrs. Kebler said the LNA is coving three students who are not Special Ed but have health issues. Mrs. Leone is concerned about the duties of the nurse and LNA because of their limitations and the severe medical issues. Mrs. Kebler said the students under the LNA's care are within their certifications.

2210 Professional Development \$65,000 Increase of \$0

2220 Library \$123,003 an increase of \$8,012

2310 School Board \$47,600 an increase of \$13,100. Mr. Brown asked about the legal line. Mrs. Kolb said they use the NHSBA attorney services. Mrs. Colbath said but the NHSBA doesn't give legal opinions. Mr. Gregoire said NHSBA certainly does give legal opinions. He speaks with Will Phillips quite frequently. Mrs. Colbath said, then they should probably change their website. The NHSBA is not the same firm as Barbara Loughman and the rest. Mr. Gregoire said if he can get a free opinion he usually does. Mr. Brown said he has dealt with the NHSBA over many years and he has never ever once got any legal opinion from those attorneys. So he's not sure what Mrs. Kolb and Mr. Gregoire is talking about. He would also like to ask why the Superintendent is talking to the NHSBA attorneys when he has the NHSAA to use. Mr. Gregoire said that would not be the opinion of the NHSBA. Mr. O'Connor said the NHMA and DRA will give us guidance and interpret a law but they're not going to go to court and represent us. They're not going to go head to head with the School Boards attorneys. Mr. Brown said so all the time we hear, we've got a legal opinion it doesn't really amount to much. Mr. O'Connor said until a precedence is set we don't want to be the ones spending money in litigation so we move on in hopes in the future things will straighten out.

Mrs. Collins asked what the \$1,000 for background checks was for. Mrs. Kolb said volunteers. Mrs. Colbath said volunteers pay for their own. Mrs. Kolb agreed. Mr. O'Connor asked. Does the School Board decide what lines these things go in? Mrs. Joy asked about the miscellaneous line. The actuals were \$1,182. Mr. Gregoire said that money is used for food for negotiations luncheon, continental breakfast for teacher and workshops. Mr. Zappala asked if they felt it necessary to have a Superintendent Search. It appears that there is a good match between Superintendent and school. Mr. Gregoire said there are two articles reducing the number of hours for the superintendent or going back to the original Transition Plan. Mr. Zappala asked what the typical Superintend Search cost. Mr. Gregoire replied, he thought it was \$10,000 for the last search and it was cut back to \$7,500. They can be quite pricey if you go through the NHSBA it could be up to \$15,000 he would guess. Mr. Brown said MRI had a menu of services of how much or little work you want them to do. The last search was \$6,500. The NHSBA wanted about \$18,000 and Mrs. Leone said her son is involved in one right now for \$25,000.

2320 SAU Administrative Expense \$306,866 an increase of \$35,344. Mr. O'Connor asked if the BA position was still in Financial Services. He asked if it wouldn't be more appropriate in the SAU function. Mrs. D'Agostino said this was decided before she got here. Mr. Kasprzyk asked about the additional \$1,000 for professional development as there is \$65,000 in the Professional Development Function. Mrs. Colbath said the \$65,000 is contractual for teachers and there is PB in different functions for those who are under those functions.

Mr. Brown asked for an explanation of the 22.38% increase in the Superintendents salary line. Mr. O'Connor said it's because the position went from part-time to fulltime. Mr. Brown said Wakefield has always had a part-time superintendent. Now we are separate with one town and one school. He asked why we need a full-time person when we have shared a superintendent with several towns prior taking care of multiple towns and multiple buildings. Mr. O'Connor said it's a decision the School Board made. Mr. Brown also questions the salary at \$110,000 and another 51% benefits package which brings up the total compensation to \$161,000. He asked if the Budget Committee could reduce that back to the \$80,000. Mrs. Joy said she believes Milton is comprised of three schools and they have a part-time superintendent. And he probably makes less than what we're paying. She said it concerns her that we're paying \$161,000 for one person for one school. She hates to agree with Steve Brown, ever, but she agrees with him on this point. Something isn't right here. Mr. Brown said Milton is following our Withdrawal Plan and saving money. Mr. O'Connor said, Norma you were on the School Board and you know the power they have. They do the hiring and the compensation packages.

Mrs. Joy said in 2017, the last year we were with Milton, comparing apples to apples, we paid \$497,256 for our share. This SAU for next year will cost us \$690,085. Mrs. Kolb said the tax rate in Milton is \$23.56. Their school rate is \$12.41 and our tax rate is \$12.47. For the school portion we're \$6.27. Mrs. Joy said it's costing us more than when we were together. Mr. Kolb said he thought the School Board was elected to improve the school not to keep it the same. He doesn't understand the reticence in trying to improve the school. Mr. O'Connor said he thinks sometimes spending money exorbitantly doesn't necessarily improve the school. Mr. Kolb said his point is the School Board made a conscience decision to try and improve the school by hiring these people. They're not wasting the taxpayers money they are trying to improve the school.

Mr. Jim Miller said during a meeting about the new SAU we were told that it was going to save us \$100,000. He said our tax rate has nothing to do with the budget. We have a low tax rate because of all the lakes. We have 1.1 billion dollars to spread the burden over. Mr. Gregoire pointed out the costs over the years to run the SAU. In 2014/15 it cost us \$519,555. In 2015/16 our share was \$497,256. In 2016/17 \$538,869. In 2017/18 \$492,168 and when we added Fiscal Services it went up to \$462,308 and this current year it's \$514,227. The salary of the Milton Superintendent is \$107,100. He said he wanted to put some accuracy to this. Mr. O'Connor said he believes we would have had some savings if the Plan had been followed. He doesn't believe the School Board members have even read the Plan. It would have had to be implemented the way the DOE had approved it to show a savings. Mrs. Colbath said she wanted to give some accuracy here. She said it's deceiving when you group disability, unemployment, workers comp, phone, custodian, treasurer, postage, propane gas, electricity, attorney's fees, tech services, Curriculum Coordinator in the school budget. If these items were broken out we'd have a more honest number of what it costs to run the SAU. Its closer to the number Mrs. Joy gave, over

\$650,000. Mr. Miller said the numbers Mr. Gregoire brought forward he totally doesn't agree with. So many accounts have been moved he'd need a forensic CPA to come in and analyze it. He said Mr. Gregoire's numbers are not accurate, they're low. You have moved more accounts out of the SAU function and buried them in the school operating budget than he can count. He said the SAU is costing us probably \$650,000 to \$680,000. The last year at SAU 64 cost us \$538,000. The costs have exploded in that area and the only reason they look lower is because we're spreading these costs throughout the school budget. Mr. Gregoire responded saying whether you're right or wrong this budget that we're in right now was not developed by this administration. These are the numbers that are hard and fast and whether accounts have been buried somewhere he couldn't answer. This is not something that Marie or I have done. Mr. Miller said I'm saying the accounts have moved and they're not comparable anymore. Mr. Gregoire said he takes issue. Mrs. Johnson said she knows about the transition plan. She was at every meeting. She knows what that plan was. Several times she purposely asked, so you're doing it to save money? She was told repeatedly by past board members that it wasn't necessary to save money. So she'd like to correct that. She said we're doing the best we can. Even if she wasn't a board member she'd support them. Mr. O'Connor said he was on that Withdrawal Committee and one thing we said was the cost savings wasn't the only driving force.

Mrs. Kolb said the insinuation that this board changed the transition of the SAU, in fact almost all the changes were done by the previous superintendent and the Financial Manager was moved from a full-time to a part-time position by the previous superintendent that was hired by the Transition Team. The single change that this Board did make was to switch to the full-time superintendent. And the school a year later is doing phenomenally well. That is the only change that this Board has made and they did it out of necessity not by choice. All other changes took place by the administrator that was chosen by the Transition Team. Mrs. Colbath said that Plan has never been followed since day one. You have added employees. Mrs. Kolb said please be clear, no we haven't. The only thing our board did was go from part-time to full time superintendent. Mrs. Colbath responded that Mrs. Kolb was on the Board last year and you hired employees. Mr. Gregoire said there are some positions that have been added. Mrs. Kolb said it was all done by the previous superintendent who chose to make those decisions. Mrs. Colbath said enough, she's not here to defend herself and Mr. O'Connor said we don't want to throw anyone under the bus. He said that Superintendents don't hire people the school boards hire people. Mrs. Kolb said the School Board hires the Superintendent and the superintendent hires people. Mrs. Leone said she doesn't understand why we need all this administration with such a small number of students. Why are we top heavy on the administration side? Mr. Gregoire said there's a lot to do in all these rolls. Mrs. Joy said at one time we had a principal and a Vice Principal who was also a part-time Curriculum Coordinator. She asked what happened to that position. She asked if they hired a curriculum coordinator. Mr. Gregoire said the vice principal was taking classes around curriculum/language arts. She asked if we were going to have a part time vice principal/curriculum coordinator. Mr. Gregoire replied that that was the first year of the Transition Plan. She wanted to know what happened to that. He said it wasn't working. Not much was being done on the curriculum side because of the needs of the building. A smaller SAU doesn't change the needs of the building. He wouldn't have stuck around if the vice principal was eliminated. Mr. Mankus said he was around for the split from SAU 64 and he said when we were sold that budget he knew it was a phony budget. He addressed the difficulty

finding a superintendent part-time. He believes the budget number for superintendent was \$70,000 and he was assured that it would be easy to find superintendents that would work part-time although the information he had was just the opposite. The SAU budget was unrealistic. No matter the number of students the superintendent's job stays the same. If you split the duties and cost between two schools it will be cheaper. We weren't getting along with Milton and we paid the larger amount. He said he disagreed with the split and here we are we've had a part-time superintendent and it didn't work because generally they're going to want to go to a full time job. Mr. O'Connor said he could almost be offended by that phony budget because I was part of the team that created the phony budget that we used to hoodwink the public. Mrs. Colbath said when she presented it to the DOE they said it was probably one of the best Withdrawal Plans they'd seen and other districts are using that Plan, She also takes offense at his comments.

Mr. Zappala said, as a taxpayer not a Budget Committee member, he happens to think that \$89,000 is a pretty good full time salary. He's flabbergasted that an \$89,000 part time job must be extrapolated to \$161,000 full time compensation package then be surprised when the taxpayer questions it. He's flabbergasted over what he's heard over the last two years that the School Board didn't have a choice but to make it a full-time position. He's shocked by the abdication of their responsibility or lack of fortitude. The comments: phony budget; didn't expect savings; didn't implement Plan. He looks forward to better management of all of this in the future. Mr. Brown said he was also part of the withdrawal process. The so called phony budget is being successfully used and working well in Milton and they also have to take care of their high school students where ours are pretty much taken care of by Spaulding. He said Milton, following our sham plan has five employees and we have seven. Mrs. Kolb said she has the Pupil cost, just released from the DOE. The average cost per pupil in New Hampshire is \$16,520. Wakefield's cost is \$14,875. Out of 162 districts that's 24 from the bottom. Milton's cost is \$16,356 for the elementary school, at the middle school they're \$17,149 and the high school they are \$20,080 or an average of \$17,500. She's a resident as well and she cares about the cost but there's a cost to run the school and she believes it's pretty efficient. She said the costs are still low. Mrs. D'Agostino did a wonderful budget with five years of actuals. She said if we don't come to the town with the actual cost to run the school we have to come back and she won't ever do that again. If you don't cover the costs for the school it's horrifically disruptive.

Mr. Kasprzyk asked, what our school ranking is amongst the other schools in the state? She said she had that answer and she did a lot of research. We are not aligned with the assessments. Mr. Kasprzyk asked, where does our school rank? Mrs. Kolb said she doesn't know. She asked if Mr. Kasprzyk would like to give the students the data they need to do well on the test? Mr. Kasprzyk asked, why she was more concerned with money and not the actual education? She said she is that's why she knows that we're not aligned. Mrs. Leone said she still didn't get a satisfactory answer why we're so top heavy in administration. She asked, are we such a high crime, drug infested town that we need all this administration? Mr. Gregoire said we provide educational leadership to the teachers as well as working with the students to help them with their social emotional learning and their behavior management. It's typical to have two administrators in a building. And he said you are required to have a superintendent. Her point is that Mr. Gregoire is full time. She questions a full time superintendent with one school. Mr. Gregoire said you're still doing the same work but that work may be reduced in the amount of work you're doing but

you're still doing the same things. Mr. O'Connor said, why is the workload so heavy here is a question that's come up many times. Mr. Fogg said we are not required to have a superintendent and the superintendent knows we are not required to have a superintendent, we are required to have superintendent services at a reduced rate. Mr. O'Connor said he believes MRI offers superintendent and financial services. Mr. Miller said that Mrs. Kolb said we spend \$14,000 per student. He said the total budget that we're spending in this town is \$10,740,000. If you subtract the high school tuition of \$2,555,991 the balance is \$8,183,000 and you divide that by 504 students it's \$16,300. So the \$14,000 is a low number. This is what the taxpayers in this town are paying for this school and SAU. Mrs. Kolb said this is from the DOE Office of Finance, dated December 18, 2019. Transportation is not included in working out the numbers. Mr. O'Connor said we are just going with the actuals, what the taxpayers are paying. She said you'd have to take the Transportation out of the other schools as well to make the numbers the same. This is at least apples to apples. Mrs. Colbath asked if Mrs. Kolb has ever looked at the individual schools on the DOE site. She said she had done that this afternoon. Mrs. Colbath asked if she'd ever noticed how inaccurate those numbers are. She said there are 26 schools below us.

Mrs. Collins said 57% of the budget goes to salaries and benefits and this is not including the new teacher contract amounts and only 3.64% goes to supplies. She said we're kind of losing the kids in this. The test scores went up and the teachers are fantastic. She said this is the first time the Superintendent, principal and vice-principal have been in these positions and they're getting a lot of money for their first year. Mrs. Kolb responded that every single one of them are below state average. Teachers are 15% below average and didn't get a raise at all. Mr. O'Connor said the problem with using the state average is that they are including places like Concord, Portsmouth Nashua, Manchester and places like that that kind of skew the results.

Mrs. Joy said we cut the supply line again, by \$9,500. Why are we cutting supplies for our kids? Mr. Gregoire said he always brings what the teachers request. This is not a cut but actuals. Mrs. Joy said you put \$56,000 in the budget for math books even after the Math Interventionist came to a School Board meeting and said the teachers don't want them. She asked if this money was being spent on something else. Mr. Gregoire said it's being spent on what the teachers asked for, PD around math. Mrs. Joy said you were made aware of this prior to the budget going to the Budget Committee and you kept it in the line. Why wouldn't you have put it in the PD line? He said at that time he was the principal and he didn't think they needed new math books. Mrs. Kolb thought Mrs. Joy was talking about the money for Fountas and Pinnell. Mrs. Joy feels that Mr. Gregoire should add more to supplies and take away from the SAU expense. He tells his teachers to bring him what they need. Mrs. Colbath said last year the Board cut \$4,000 from supplies when they were trying to pare down the budget from 19% to 9%. The Board did not go with your request. This year Mr. Gregoire cut another \$5,500 out of the supply line. She said she knows he says these are actuals but wouldn't you question why this line has decreased so much? That's \$9,500. He said if they ask for it they'll get it. Mrs. Colbath said costs are going up not down. She said this is where she'd like to see him add \$5,000 to the budget that's a year and a half away. There may be things the teacher's don't know they'll need. Mr. Gregoire said he would applaud her adding that to the budget.

Mr. Jim Miller said he's not going to compare numbers or micromanage. He likes to deal in facts. Fact; the school budget added close to a \$1.50 to the tax rate last year. Fact; we're on our

way to doing that again. Fact; this school board came to this committee last Spring saying they were running out of money and wanted a couple extra hundred thousand dollars and it's a fact they actually returned \$154,000 to reduce the tax rate. His concern as a taxpayer is they don't have any credibility with him anymore. And it's also a fact that the current budget, that was approved, has been increase by, he's going to guess, by about \$175,000. He asked, does that means we're going to be in a deficit next spring? Mr. O'Connor does not think we anticipate that happening. Mr. Jim Miller said last year they came with about a 16% increase and it was pared down to about a 9% increase and they said they weren't going to have enough money. Mrs. Kolb said we were over \$400,000 in Special Ed and it was a level funded budget. She said we used the \$200,000 and the \$100,000 in the Trust Fund and the DRA allowed them to use excess funds. She is very concerned that there is no money in the Special Ed Trust Fund that's now empty. This will impact regular education if we do get costs for Special Ed.

Mr. Zappala following the credibility comment said last year the School Board pared down the budget and eliminated the Health teacher. Someone jumped up and demanded the \$89,000 be returned to the budget for the health teacher. Will there be cuts that will critically be put back into the budget? He's hoping that isn't a budgetary tool we see repeated. Mrs. Joy said last year there was a \$200,000 warrant article added to the budget in case it was needed and Mrs. Kolb said we do not anticipate using all \$200,000. You used that money and came back and requested more. When you were told no you somehow found the money. This makes her a little uneasy, how can you not have it one day and have it the next? Mrs. Kolb said the superintendent anticipated using the \$200,000. The Regular Ed was under but Special Ed escalated. There was money to offset the increase in Special Ed with Excess funds. Mr. Kasprzyk is frustrated because they are not allowed to ask questions about Special Ed.

Mr. Gregoire said when we came to the Budget Committee during the summer for the money to offset the deficit in Special Ed from revenues the Budget Committee said no based on the warrant article passed a few months prior. Mr. O'Connor said to be accurate, the process was that you were going to apply to the DOE to overspend the budget. And part of that process was that we had the ability as the Budget Committee to join you on the application to the DOE. And we chose not to join you as there was recently a vote taken to not have the school hold any of the excess revenue or surplus to use in that fashion. So in order to honor that vote we declined to join you in that petition. You then called DRA and DRA said its Special Ed money and you're obligated to pay so you used the excess money. The only thing we did was decline to join you in that petition. Mr. Gregoire didn't intend to say anything like that. He said we went to you and based on the vote you said no. It was a learning curve for everyone. It was the revenues that saved the day for us and we didn't find that out until later in the process. Mrs. Colbath said nobody knew the process. It was confusing and we got different answers from different people. But we never denied you any money. Mr. Gregoire agreed. Mrs. Colbath said the money they used would have gone back to offset taxes. He wanted to make sure people don't think this was intentional or that they were socking money away. Mr. O'Connor said it's a difficult process, it's a \$10,000,000 budget, you must expect to answer a few questions. Mrs. Kebler said she's worked in this district for seven years and she thinks most people would agree that she's very transparent. I will answer any question I can but will always protect the confidentiality of students. We had two students that moved into the district last September that cost is \$200,000.

We have gone from five out of district placements to two and we have done a great job reducing our costs. We have most of our students being educated in the building. She said she prides herself in being transparent. Mr. O'Connor said and we appreciate that too. Last year you had given us the most comprehensive report on Special Ed that we've ever received. We don't mean to disparage you in any way for the job you do. Mr. Kasprzyk wanted to make sure she understood that he was in no way criticizing her job performance. He's criticizing the system. Mr. Miller asked if we would be receiving catastrophic money back. How much do you anticipate and what year will we receive it. Mrs. D'Agostino said they budgeted \$45,000 for two students for this year. Mrs. Kebler said they begin the process when the amount spent reaches the cap of \$56,000. The initial number is around \$100,000 but gets decreased as a result of Medicaid billing, state funding levels so it's about 60% that goes to DRA and that gets cut again. Mr. Miller said that seems very low. He said shouldn't we be getting \$45,000 per student? Mrs. Kebler said not based on the formula. Mrs. D'Agostino said not every expenditure qualifies. Marie explained the report that tells what we were entitled to and when we set the tax rate when DRA indicated the x number of dollars. Mr. Miller said this is the frustration the Budget Committee goes through. He said he asked a pretty basic question and you kind of talk in circles and never answer us. Last year we spent \$200,000 for two students that you could give me a ballpark number on how much we're going to get back. Mrs. Kebler said the formula begins at 60% and we end up at \$46,000 for the two students using the formula. Mrs. D'Agostino read the formula and amount. The projection is \$62,000 but we are slated to get \$45,000 but that's an estimate. We could get more. Mr. Jim Miller said we've heard a lot about costs we can't control. But what about the costs we can control? This School Board added \$80,000 to the Superintendents line by going to a full time superintendent. There was no requirement. It wasn't a special needs child. And they did it with one email and one closed door session. The public was never even asked. That's an optional expense they chose to increase this budget by. He said there are at least three members of this School Board that have figured they have a better way of doing things than our established process.

2410 Principal \$335,556 an increase of \$14,301.

2510 SAU Fiscal Services \$251,709 an increase of \$9,004.

Mr. Gregoire said the support staff for Fiscal Services is Human Resources and Accounts Payable and they're both part-time. Mr. Fogg asked for an explanation of the software line, the money that was used to pay the additional money for the full time superintendent. Mr. Gregoire said the current financial software will soon be obsolete in a couple of years and will need to be replaced. It's been in the budget the last couple of years but we weren't ready to change it. The intention is to change it this year. Whether we do it this year or next it's going to be necessary. Mrs. D'Agostino said when SAU 101 was created back in 2017/18 there was a turnover in staff and no leadership to do the conversion. And we need appropriate people to do it. We had a new staff at the SAU that had not had experience in the current software we're using. We need to keep personal, contract, all records. Technology has streamlined efficiency. In 2019 we had a \$42,000 penalty from the IRS. It was determined the software would be put on hold to cover those expenses. This line was put on hold once again to supplement the pay for the superintendent. The staff of the SAU said they weren't ready for the conversion. She contacted the software company and asked that they hold their costs and that's why it's in next year's

budget. It's a huge learning curve. Milton has done the conversion. Mrs. Joy, addressing the BA's salary increase said, you don't give raises on someone else's promise. At one Board meeting we were told that they were just made aware of the promise in July and at the next meeting we heard that the Board members were sitting in the room when the promise was made. She believes we should pay the staff but does not think we should give a \$9,300 raise based on something no one actually heard or was it in writing. We take things away from the children but fight to give the BA a raise that was never validated. She agrees that she should get a raise but not an almost \$10,000 raise. Mrs. Kolb responded that she was told repeatedly about the raise. The original Plan had a fulltime BA with benefits. That position went to part-time for Mrs. D'Agostino and the superintendent went to fulltime so there wasn't an extra \$80,000 that was spent. They offset each other and it was actually a net increase of \$3,000. Some of the money the previous BA had was distributed by the previous SAU and left not enough money to hire a qualified BA. She has saved us money. Mr. Zappala defended this line. He said some of the lines are worth the money and some are beyond laughable. He believes this line is worth the money. He believes this is a winner amongst a whole lot of stuff that makes him angry. Mrs. Joy said this is nothing against the BA personally, you're doing your job. In the real world we don't give raises like that based on a promise that nobody was witness to. Mr. Fogg questioned the BA position not being in the SAU budget. Mr. O'Connor felt for tracking purposes it would have made it easier. Mrs. Colbath doesn't understand why the SAU isn't under one function for easier comparison. Mr. O'Connor said the School Board decides what functions lines go into. Mr. Fogg said this was the budget we received, we didn't make these decisions. Mrs. Johnson said when we separated from SAU 64 it got separated out. She wanted to let the public know it wasn't this board who separated it into two different functions.

2610 Operation and Maintenance \$584,396 an increase of \$46,307. Mrs. Collins asked if the Opt/Maint Supply line increase of \$7,512 was all for the new feminine hygiene products. This is in response to SB142. The dispensers are already installed in the middle school bathrooms. She feels considering the number of female students this number seems excessive. Mr. Williams said the line also includes an increase for paper products like paper towels and toilet paper. Mrs. Collins asked for a breakdown of the cost of those supplies. Mr. Williams said he can give her last years which was fine with Mrs. Collins. Mrs. Colbath asked what line the window shades and blinds were in. Mr. Williams responded Care of Buildings line 222. Mr. Kasprzyk asked what the \$13,000 for special project was for/ Mr. Williams said a music system and it has been completed.

2721 Regular Ed. Transportation \$483,989 an increase of \$55,000. Mr. Fogg questioned if we were being frugal enough. We didn't use to buy a bus every year. Mr. Fogg believes a bus is good for 250,000 miles, safely. Mrs. Peaslee said right now the buses run ten years, 200,000 miles whichever comes first. She puts them down to a spare bus at 150,000/175,000 miles. There is no bus in the FY21 budget. She said she bought a large bus, a fourteen passenger bus and a van out of the CRF this year. She said a bus will be purchased every year because of rust being a problem. Mrs. Colbath asked if they undercoat the buses. Mrs. Peaslee said no but the last three buses came with undercoating. The Town offering to undercoat our buses was not quite legitimate. Mrs. Johnson thought the state had regulations on bus ages and recycling programs. Mrs. Peaslee said not that she knows of. She determined best practices with the help of WC

Cressey and other districts. There's no facility to wash buses on a regular basis. She said the leases cost about \$10,000 more than the outright purchases. Mr. O'Connor asked, you bought those buses this year and the money came out of the CRF for bus replacement not out of the operating budget? Mrs. Peaslee said correct. Mrs. Colbath said they have come out of the budget right now. They have to go to the Trustees to ask for the money but right now it's come out of the operating budget. Mr. O'Connor asked Mrs. Peaslee if that was accurate she said yes. He asked if there was a line in the budget for purchasing buses. She said no so Mr. O'Connor asked what line was used to purchase buses. Mrs. D'Agostino said right now going through the process of purchasing a bus it gets allocated to line 256 Equipment Replacement and once we get reimbursed from the Trust Fund it goes to offset that expense. Mr. O'Connor asked if their lawyer said that's the way to do it. She didn't say that's the way the lawyer said to do it, the expense and the revenue has been applied. As an example she said last year they took money out of the Special Ed Trust Fund after we spent the money when we had a deficit appropriation. We took \$105,000 from the Trust Fund and applied it to the out of district cost line. So initially the 1200 line when we closed the books for 2019 was over by something like \$400,000. Once we applied the \$105,000 it was reduced to \$300,000 and something. So when we ask for the Trust Funds it's to replenish expenditures. Mr. O'Connor said when the Town bought the fire trucks and highway trucks they approached the Trustees and we made a check to the dealer. Mrs. Colbath asked, don't you have to have a line item in your budget in order to purchase busses? Mr. O'Connor said I would think so. Mrs. D'Agostino said it's for replacing equipment and that's where it went. We're purchasing replacement equipment. When we purchase it that's where we allocate the cost. If you want to go back and look at the history of it you could see the revenue coming in to offset the cost. As part of the minutes of the Deliberative Session It was requested that we apply any revenue from selling old buses to the purchase of new buses. Right now that line is over by the \$177,000 that will come from the Trust Fund to reimburse the line. Mr. O'Connor asked if they have had the Public Hearing yet. She said they had the Public Hearing last night along with the one for the room renovation project.

2722 Special Ed Transportation \$218,743 an increase of \$106,000.

Mrs. Collins asked about the student that needs transportation to a Maine school. She wants to know what will happen to the money if the student doesn't come. Mrs. Kebler said this is for more than one student.

2724 Athletic Transportation \$3,229 and increase of \$0

2725 Field Trip/Co-Curricular Student Transportation \$4,629 an increase of \$0.

2820 Technology \$108,595 an increase of \$20,055.

2900 Other Benefits \$51,079 a decrease of \$271.

5221 Transfers to and from Food Service Fund \$10,000

Grand Total: \$10,739,924 an increase of \$578,421 or 5.69% which doesn't include any warrant articles

Mrs. D'Agostino asked that Mr. O'Connor to keep that number in mind that will be the draft Operating Budget warrant article number. Mr. Miller said using just the operating budget number alone at 9 cents per hundred thousand dollars that has the potential of increasing the tax rate by about 50 cents.

There was a discussion whether to continue the meeting or recess it.

Mrs. Colbath made a motion, seconded by Mr. Reinert, to recess this meeting at 9:33 until 6:00 on January 21st (Vote 10-0)

Respectfully submitted for approval at the next Budget Committee meeting,

Priscilla Colbath
Secretary Pro Temp