

Summary of March 2020 Board of Education Meetings

RSD 17 2020/21 Budget

Superintendent's Preliminary Budget Presentation - The first week of March, before schools were closed due to Covid-19, Superintendent Hageman presented her 2020/2021 budget to the HK Joint Boards of Education, Selectmen and Finance. Her budget proposed a gross increase of 2.46% with the largest increase associated with Special Education expenses. Other notable changes include adding a High School Gym teacher due to a change in state credit requirements, replacing the sunsetting accounting system and updating the website for ADA compliance. Four Middle School teacher positions would be eliminated. After revenue and reimbursements the proposed final increase to the towns would be 1%.

BoE Budget Workshops - In March the BoE held several workshops to focus on each area of the budget. With appreciation for the work Dr. Hageman put into the budget, the Board acknowledged the new realities of a Post-Covid economy and asked the admin team to identify ways to present a Gross Budget equal to, or less than, the 2019/2020 Gross Budget which had been approved by the community in the last referendum. At the end of March Superintendent Hageman proposed over \$1 million in various cuts for the Board's consideration including: reducing purchases in textbooks and classroom libraries expecting no or little impact, removing High School and Middle School late busses and after-school monitors, sharing Kindergarten Paraprofessionals between classrooms, and a change in the Capital Fund Contribution. The Board will hold their next Budget Workshop on April 14th to continue their work.

Covid-19 Effects on RSD17

Distance Learning - On March 14th RSD17 closed schools due to the Covid-19 virus. Staff shifted to provide distance learning opportunities for all students. On March 16th, RSD 17 Food Services staff began providing bagged breakfast and lunch needed for any child under the age of 18 in Haddam and Killingworth. Additionally the District's IT department started lending computers and guiding families who needed internet access. To date, teachers and students have completed two weeks of online learning, forty families have taken advantage of the bagged meals program, and over 200 computers have been handed out to aid our students in their education.

Governor's Orders - Since closing our schools Governor Lamont issued several Executive Orders directing the BoE on how to continue running public meetings and passing a 2020/21 budget. Per the Governor's orders. BoE meetings are now held by video conferences which can be watched live or recorded on our website. Statutes requiring town meetings and referendums have been suspended and a budget is to be adopted at the board level. Finally, the Board has been granted a thirty day extension to complete the budget. All information including how to access our meetings, our new budget timeline and how to participate in public comment can be found on our website. The Board is planning a budget vote on June 2nd.

Capital Improvements:

HKHS Field House - This project has been approved by the state and will move forward during school closure.

BES Carpet - The Facilities Committee recommended, and the Board agreed to, an alternative to replacing the damaged carpeting at Burr. While schools were closed, new carpet tiles were installed with a Permalink covering placed in between the existing and new layers of carpet. This system eliminated the need to remediate, shortened the time to install, and resulted in significant cost savings.

On our Website - The 2019 Annual Audit Report, which was presented to the BoE in March, can be found under "Business Office".