

INTER-LAKES SCHOOL DISTRICT
Inter-Lakes School Board Budget Public Hearing
Inter-Lakes Community Auditorium
1 Laker Lane, Meredith, NH
February 5, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hanson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. RECORD ROLL

Members Present:

Mr. Richard Hanson
Mr. Howard Cunningham
Mr. Craig Baker
Mr. Mark Billings
Mr. Charley Hanson
Ms. Lisa Merrill

Administrators Present:

Mrs. Mary Moriarty, Superintendent
Mrs. Trish Temperino, Assistant Superintendent

Others Present:

Chris Mega, Video Recorder
Public

Members Absent:

Mr. Duncan Porter-Zuckerman*
(*with notice)

IV. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED 2020-2021 INTER-LAKES SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

Chairman Hanson opened the hearing at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Hanson announced that the Board would not take any action this evening; the purpose of this meeting was for the Board to hear the public's thoughts, comments and suggestions. The Board will meet on February 10th at the Humiston Building Conference Room at 6:00 p.m. to vote on the bottom-line budget that will be forwarded to voters at the Annual School District Meeting on March 4, 2020.

Mr. Hanson noted that Superintendent Moriarty has previously held Budget Information Sessions in all three communities to help better inform the public about the proposed funding for the schools.

Mrs. Mary Moriarty, Superintendent of Schools gave a detailed presentation of the proposed \$27,728,183 operational budget which represents an increase of \$1,027,395 or 3.85 percent compared to the prior year. She also reviewed proposed staffing changes, and the warrant articles which include a three-year Collective Bargaining Agreement with teachers, and proposed appropriations for previously established expendable trusts for Special Education, Facilities and Multifunction School Activity Buses.

Demetra Daly of Meredith, ILES Kindergarten Teacher said 13 years of data show the need for one Paraeducator to be assigned to each of the four sections of Kindergarten and asked that the Board consider increasing that number from two to four.

Joan Eversole of Meredith, asked what happened to the approximately \$100,000 that was added from the floor of last's year Annual School District Meeting to fund a specific position.

Superintendent Moriarty responded that \$121,130 is being returned to taxpayers. The District did have the opportunity to hire a STEAM Teacher and was able to fund that position through other shifts in the budget. She said students have been able to enjoy some amazing experiences as a result.

Don Crowell of Meredith, prefaced his comments by saying no disrespect was intended. He voiced his concern about the significant increase in the budget, while noting he has never voted against anything that benefitted kids. Mr. Crowell questioned significant raises for two administrators and how that impacted the morale of teachers; also of concern was the significant increase in curriculum contracted services as well as the budget line for legal fees.

The administration responded that a number of factors were involved. Several administrators retired last year and their replacements had different qualifications. As a result of changes in the amount of Title I and Title II funds and how they can be used, additional money was needed for contracted services relative to curriculum. The increase in the legal fees budget was attributable to Special Education and to personnel but that further information could not be publicly disclosed.

The Instructional development line item has increased by 26% according to Crowell who questioned how much Mr. Stack was paid for his public presentations. Given the small number of people who attended he suggested that money could be better spent. With the estimated tax impact on a home assessed at \$250,000 in Meredith, at \$163.00 Crowell urged the Board to think about the financial impact on senior citizens and asked that they consider cutting some of the areas of the budget he identified as having some of the largest increases.

Nancy Fredrickson of Sandwich, gave positive comments about the experiences of her two sons in the district's newly launched STEAM curriculum. She questioned how the proposed reduction of a 0.5 FTE High School English position would impact English class offerings.

Superintendent Moriarty explained that the reduction would not impact English offerings; one position has been intertwined teaching three sections of English and three sections of Social Studies. Adding a 0.5 FTE High School Social Studies teacher will increase certified Social Studies content area teachers.

Lynn Montana of Meredith, said she knows the Administration and the Board had worked hard to develop the budget but voiced concern about the amount of the increase. Citing the administration's comment that Special Education and Facilities were the primary drivers of the budget increase. Ms. Montana asked for details of the proposed projects attributed to Facilities.

A total of \$725,000 in work is part of the budget this year including new roofs on sections of Inter-Lakes Elementary School and parts of the roof of the Middle/High School.

Ms. Montana asked if the \$725,000 would be a recurrent expense in next year's budget.

Assistant Superintendent Temperino responded that they try to develop a 10-year Capital Improvement Plan. Last year, because of other budget pressures several of the roof replacements and repairs were pushed out.

Ms. Montana said her concern was the amount of the proposed increase, and the ongoing trend of annual increases and the impact on taxpayers. The townspeople have always supported the schools and passed the budget but asserted that a \$27 million plus budget to educate 1,032 students was excessive; maintaining the budget eclipsed that of the City of Laconia that provides services for 15,000 people. It is becoming difficult to support continued budget increases for the schools for people making \$25,000 a year.

Nancy Fredrickson of Sandwich asked whether the Multifunction School Activity Buses could be used to offset some of the costs of Special Education transportation. She suggested doubling the amount to be placed in the previously established Inter-Lakes School District Multifunction School Activity Bus Expendable Trust.

Superintendent Moriarty said it was difficult to quantify the potential costs savings and that time was needed to make the transition; to train drivers and put policy in place.

Ms. Fredrickson also asked whether the tax impacts listed in the Budget Information Packet included the Operating Budget, the Collective Bargaining Agreement with teachers, and appropriations to the expendable trusts for Special Education, Facilities and the Multifunction School Activity Buses. The administration confirmed that information was included, but noted that revenue estimates were conservative.

Superintendent Moriarty noted that revenues have declined as a result of the Legislature's decision to shift funding Kindergarten with Keno profits to using that revenue to fund Adequacy Grants. Inter-Lakes previously received Keno proceeds but does not qualify for Adequacy Grant funding.

Chairman Hanson told the audience he appreciated their comments and said the Board needed to hear them. As stated at the opening of the meeting, the Board will be making a decision and vote on the bottom-line operating budget that will be forwarded to the Annual School District meeting during the February 10th meeting to be held at the Humiston Building Conference Room at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Hanson closed the public hearing at 7:39 p.m.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Monday, February 10, 2020

Inter-Lakes School Board Meeting @ Humiston Building Conference Room – 6:00 p.m.

B. Monday, March 2, 2020

Inter-Lakes School Board Special Meeting – Location to be determined – 6:00 p.m.

C. Wednesday, March 4, 2020

Inter-Lakes School Board @ Inter-Lakes High School Gymnasium

- Annual School District Meeting – 7:00 pm

D. Monday, March 9, 2020

Inter-Lakes School Board @ Humiston Building – Conference Room – 6:00 p.m.

- Regular School Board Meeting

E. Tuesday, March 10, 2020 – Town Elections / Voting

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Hanson adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bea Wheeler
School District Clerk