

**Budget Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 27, 2025**  
**4:00 p.m., Hampden Academy Library**

Attendees: Budget Committee members Luke Field, Allan Gordon, Stacey Haskell, Board members Kirstien Davidson and Kristin Peet, Nick Raymond, Superintendent, Kris Franklin, Finance Director, Matt Lachance - Town of Hampden, Casey Ashey - Town of Winterport, Mike Shaw - Town of Frankfort, Ed Lovell - Town of Newburgh, Rebecca Cross, Adult Ed Director, Barry Terrill, Athletic Director, and Bill Booth, Maintenance & Facilities Director

Absent: Brooke Miller

Article 15 - Adult Education

Ms. Cross provided an overview of the Adult Ed programs and described the benefits of the program to the community, including improved community wellness and workforce participation. She provided demographic information about current students and the success stories of a few students. Ms. Cross thanked the RSU for its support.

Superintendent Raymond praised the work Ms. Cross has done with the program and the success of the program.

Article 4 - Other Instruction

Mr. Terrill explained the opportunities for participation in a range of athletic activities provided by the RSU. Depending on the sports season, the percentage of participation are as follows: 29-40% of Hampden Academy students, 27-44% of Reeds Brook students, and 23-41% of Wagner students. There are 24 programs at Hampden Academy, including a couple of co-op teams with other schools. Reeds Brook and Wagner Middle Schools each offer 13 programs, including two for which the schools combine to form a team.

The RSU pays competitive wages to attract good coaches and to hire assistant coaches for activities with a lot of student interest. Equipment and supplies needed for safe play are provided to participants, as are two full-time trainers. Improvements include new paving and a moveable fence. The weight room has been upgraded and student use has increased.

The budget includes all game balls, safety gear, including newly required corner masks for field hockey, and neck guards for hockey players. The rental of facilities not available at the RSU are included in the budget, including ice arenas, ski slopes, and indoor tennis facilities when the RSU courts are snow-covered. New uniforms are provided on a multi-year cycle, typically funded  $\frac{1}{3}$  from budget,  $\frac{1}{3}$  from fundraising, and  $\frac{1}{3}$  from boosters.

Question: How much was saved with mobile fencing vs rental of field space? It will take a few years to recover the cost of the fence with savings on rental.

Turf usage is maxed out. How are we able to put more sports on the field when the field is already being maxed out? Careful scheduling. Lights allow for night games. Fair amount of time spent grooming and repairing with pellets.

What is done/allowed for advertising to raise funds? Advertising is allowed, and the RSU has a sponsorship account. There are some opportunities to be pursued. Mike Shaw knows someone who is interested in a sponsorship.

How do we budget for a planned turf replacement? The RSU puts \$150k into a reserve fund each year to accumulate funds for that purpose. A portion of gate receipts is added to that account. Could some of the fund balance be added to it? The answer is yes. It is already used for this.

Co-curriculars generally are clubs. Extra-curriculars are generally sports. For middle school sports there is no booster club and there is less fundraising. The uniforms are purchased through the general fund.

There are some added positions for co- and extra-curriculars.

The athletic trainers are contracted through Northern Light. The budget for athletic trainers is split  $\frac{1}{3}$  for each middle school and the high school. Northern Light will provide an extra trainer when needed for events.

Superintendent Raymond explained the two-year process for establishing a new activity. The process allows for the demonstration of ongoing interest and for it to be included in the budget.

Is there anything in this budget that could be funded from the unallocated fund balance? Not really, it's all general use items and supplies. It wouldn't make sense to use the fund balance for something you're going to need every year. Is there a capital plan? Not other than the capital reserve fund for turf. There has been some discussion of setting aside funds for tennis court surfacing.

Mr. Gordon voiced concern that setting funds in a reserve fund results in the loss of purchasing power due to inflation. He believes the RSU would be better off borrowing by a tax-exempt bond. The RSU is in compliance with State requirements with using the fund balance over a three-year period.

#### Article 9 - Maintenance

Superintendent Raymond prefaced the discussion by explaining the current budget includes a 17.89% increase in health insurance costs.

Mr. Booth described the five-year plan to maintain facilities with painting, etc. Plumbing repairs other than mixing valves are being done in-house. Same with other repairs. He praised the team and explained the effort to upgrade equipment, including furniture. The RSU is now 100% green in the cleaning materials that are used. The exterior of all buildings have all been rekeyed. Safety coating has been installed on the windows. Soccer fields have been irrigated to save on water. The RSU is doing all the flooring work in-house.

Can any of the fund balance be used for any of these projects? It's been considered for roofs, etc. - Superintendent Raymond referred to the "priority list" from a previous meeting.

The Town of Hampden is planning to redo sidewalks this summer. The sidewalk between Weatherbee and Route 1A is owned by the RSU and many people walk here. Could it be redone?

Could some of the fund balance be used for furniture rather than including it in the budget? Yes, it could be. There is also equipment that needs to be replaced, including heating units.

How many people do you have working? Twenty-one, one more to start soon, two part-time custodians, one part-time grounds person. This may not be enough staff. The RSU is lucky in the staffs' desire to learn new skills. It has been difficult to hire. There are currently two openings.

Mr. Shaw praised Mr. Booth's leadership as demonstrated by his team's willingness to do the work and learn new skills.

Any particular things driving the increase? Need to add \$45k to Architect and Engineering. Oil and propane will result in approximately \$20-\$22K in savings - not reflected in these values. Furniture adds \$15K per school for five schools. Cost of supplies and equipment has increased. Cardboard compactor is included. This would save money because the RSU is charged per pick-up. If the RSU compacted our own, it could sell the compacted cardboard.

Could the compactor come out of fund balance? The answer is yes.

Why is the architect and engineering still included? If we go ahead with a new administrative building, we would need an engineer to present at the town's planning board. Was a new location found for the building so the apple orchard wouldn't have to be torn out? The plan was to relocate the trees or to start over with new trees. It's been recommended that the RSU start with new trees because the fruit has not been as great lately.

Has lease of vehicles been considered? An example was given of Waldo County having a five-year

The next meeting is Thursday, April 3rd at 4 p.m., at Hampden Academy - Library.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

cc: Board of Directors