

Budget Committee Meeting
Thursday, March 13, 2025
4:00 p.m., Hampden Academy Library

Attendees: Budget Committee members Luke Field, Allan Gordon, Stacey Haskell, Brooke Miller, Board member Kristin Peet, Nick Raymond, Superintendent, Kris Franklin, Finance Director. Matt Lachance - Town of Hampden, Casey Ashy - Town of Winterport, Mike Shaw - Town of Frankfort and, Ed Lovell - Town of Newburgh

Elect Budget Committee Chair

Stacey Haskell motioned to nominate Brooke Miller, seconded by Allan Gordon. The motion passed unanimously.

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Process and Background

Superintendent provided an overview of the budget process. It starts in November with school principals and directors working with their team members on their wants and needs. Their requests get submitted to the Central Office for review. The Superintendent and Finance Director meet with principals and directors to discuss individually. The Superintendent and Finance Director then go through the proposed budget from a global perspective.

Budgets associated with warrant articles are discussed at Budget Committee meetings. The committee reviews the easiest Articles first. Article 1 (Regular Education) & Article 2 (Special Education) are reviewed last. The Budget Committee summarizes, discusses, and makes recommendations regarding changes.

Final budget review for the Board of Directors is in mid-May, followed by a board meeting a week later for Board approval. Once adopted, on June 5th the district budget meeting will take place at Hampden Academy, 7:00 p.m in the gym. The public can make changes to the proposed budget at that time. They can add dollar amounts but can't specify what the funds are for. The school budget then goes to a budget validation referendum vote on June 10th at the town's respective polling locations.

The Budget Committee meetings are recorded and available on the district's website, as are handouts from meetings. The level of detail provided at meetings is not to the degree of textbooks for which middle school but provides a total for middle school textbooks. Principals and other administrators will present their budgets broadly, then explain significant changes from prior year.

Budget Committee meeting schedule

All Budget Committee meetings will be held at Hampden Academy in the Library. The meeting time is 4:00 p.m.

March 20 - ED 279, Article 8: Transportation, Article 10: Debt Service, Article 11: All Other (Nutrition)

March 27 - Article 4: Other Instruction, Article 5: Student & Staff Support, Article 9: Maintenance

April 3 - Article 6: System Administration, Article 7: School Administration, Article 15: Adult Education

April 10 - Article 1: Regular Education, Article 2: Special Education

April 15 - Fund Balance, Reserve Accounts, Revisions to all Articles, Revenue Projections

Priorities

The Priority list was distributed and reviewed - emphasized in no particular order. Asterisk to the left indicates priority. These topics will come up at Budget, Finance, and Building Committee meetings. Anyone can ask that an item be added to the list. Things in red have been completed. Quotes on sheet are from last year. Reserve column, notes.

Question regarding playground equipment - damaged or anticipated needed replacement? One at Hampden (McGraw), one in Winterport (Smith). Add pre-k for Winterport (one in McGraw last year). If repaired, warranty voided. Vendors won't sell parts. Plan to transfer out older items and replace them over time. Question: what's the warranty if they don't repair or replace a broken. The Superintendent will find out. Question: is the school eligible for any community grants? Possibly, it depends on what's available.

Brooke Miller - biggest concern is possible loss of state funding. Suggested new reserve fund to address loss of Title funds.

Matt Lachance - are we in violation of Trump's or Mills' positions? No, loss of funds would be Title funds associated with dismantling of the Department of Education.

Stacey Haskell offered to format the list before the next meeting for ease of use.

Would any amounts for the Title loss reserve come from fund balance? Yes, for all reserves.

Main concern from Winterport - having a budget that won't have a yo-yo effect on the mil rate. Can provide some perspective on other things going on in Winterport so that can be kept in mind.

From Hampden - repair anything that needs to be repaired between town and RSU, view of two entities at odds with each other.

Between Ashey and Lachance, wants to be able to explain to taxpayers things in the budget, answer questions.

Frankfort - big step to get everyone on the same page, have input and be able to ask questions early in the process, make it simple to explain - appreciative of being included in the process.

Superintendent - have an open mind, come up with something reasonable.

Stacey Haskell - thank you for participation, being involved. Schools are a big reason people choose to move to our towns because of the schools.

Brooke Miller - we're all taxpayers in the RSU. Main goal is to strike a balance. Keep in mind the constraints on peoples' budgets while providing a quality education.

The next meeting is Thursday, March 20th at 4 p.m., at Hampden Academy - Library.

The meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

cc: Board of Directors