



Timberlane Regional Budget Committee

Meeting Minutes

Joint Budget Committee/School Board Meeting

December 16, 2024

7:00 PM

Call to Order at 7:05 PM by Liz Kosta

Roll Call taken by Heather Greenfield

Present: Liz Kosta, Karen White, Lauren Schlerf, Katie Knutsen, Julie Hammond, Sierra Dolce, Kathryn Consalvo, Kristi Auclair

Not in Attendance: Sue Sherman (Excused), Sabrina Alberg (Excused)

Administrators Present: Justin Krieger – Superintendent, Maria Watkins – Business Administrator/CFO, Lisa Oliver – Assistant Business Administrator, Chris Martin – Director of Operations and Special Projects, Sandy Allair – Assistant Superintendent

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Katie Knutsen motioned to accept the meeting minutes of December 12, 2024.

Seconded by Karen White

Motion passed: 7-0-0

Liz Kosta addresses that as we approach the end of this budget cycle she hopes that we are keeping the taxpayers in mind.

DELEGATES AND INDIVIDUALS –

Sheila Lowes, Sandown wants to talk about catastrophic aid and how it went from 85% to 67% but for Timberlane it is not that bad. She also wants to touch on the \$2 million owed for the lease payment. It looks like we are only going to owe around a million and the rest of the \$2 million should still go to the lease because it only makes sense. Shiela talks about the 2% after it went up 20% in the last 2 years.

John Downing, Sandown if the goal is to reduce the budget, lets talk about the revenue budget in the packet. Fund balance to reduce taxes \$16 million. \$200k buffer between regular and special education transportation. \$36k was left over in the CTE tuition last year. According to his calculations he believes that we need \$11 million less.



Ryan LeBreque, he believes that the district has been chronically over budgeting for years. He brings up the tennis courts and that we just had the money sitting around to spend. They weren't planned or budgeted for. He thinks \$11 million is the bare minimum that should be cut, he thinks it should be closer to \$20 million.

ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Justin talks about his meeting with HealthTrust this morning. 77 employees in the SOS plan and a 41% increase from FY22. HealthTrust is outperforming other states as far as Health insurance rates.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

NEW BUSINESS

Warrant Articles – Jim O'Shaughnessy

Jim O'Shaughnessy goes through a prepared presentation regarding Article 4 which is asking to rescind the lease purchase agreement.

Mr. LeBreque thinks that this is illegal and that the lease can't be used for equipment/construction. He thinks that this was presented as a lease so that we didn't need a 2/3 vote for a bond. He wants to know how a roof is considered equipment. Jim responds that the lease will cover what is required for the project.

Shiela asks if the citizens petitions can be rescinded. Jim responds that they can't, but they can be amended at the deliberative session. Shiela states that the intent of this citizens petition was not to enter into any more phases of the lease to raise the debts. She believes that we are borrowing money yet continue to have surpluses.

Michael Boucher asks when the equipment would need to be removed and returned. Jim explains this would land us in litigation and tie that up.

Marianne Springer asks about the lease being legal and if NH has changed the law so that this current lease would now be illegal.

Ryan LeBreque thinks that the bank would be stuck holding the bag and wouldn't actually take anything off the roof. He thinks it's the banks stupidity for entering into a lease that the tax payers can turn around and rescind. He thinks the district hoodwinked the tax payers into entering this.

Jack talks about the windows being single paned, the roofs leaking, etc. He then asks about the banks coming for us and whether Jim thinks that the bank would not come after the district for the equipment.

Shiela asks if there is anywhere in the lease agreement that specifies that we need to spend all \$25 million. Justin states that the Master agreement that we entered into was for the full \$25 million.

John states that he believed that the lease agreement was more like a home equity line and questions



whether the BA took the course that is referred to in the master agreement.

Mark speaks to the fact that this was not a non-compete as there were other companies that were involved in the RFP. He also states that he has attended several facilities tours when the basketball courts were warped, the roofs were leaking, the windows were so drafty that classes had to be moved/cancelled because the rooms were so cold.

Ryan thinks the lease was entered into creatively to bypass the 3/5 majority vote. He believes that we should have gone to RFP for a designated list of projects. He thinks the process was flawed to begin with. He talks about how for years we ignored maintaining the buildings until it came to a head.

Jim has a second presentation that he goes through regarding warrant article 3 the 2.5% tax cap.

Karen asks about the voters approving the teachers contract that ends up being more than a 2.5% increase. It is explained that the warrant articles would also be subject to the cap.

Ryan LaBrequé states that the common theme is when you get fed up to the point of doing things that's when warrant articles like these are proposed. Put forth appropriate budgets that aren't juiced by 20%, get rid of 30% of administration, be 100% transparent. He believes that until we do that we are going to keep getting these petitions.

Sheila says that this came out of a 4% increase, and a 16% increase with a \$16 million surplus. This CP is intended to bring people back into a reasonable budget.

Budget Process

Maria explains that we have a proposed budget and default budget. The budget process begins in the summer when the superintendent, business administrator, and departments meet to come up with budgets that meet their needs. Then in the fall these budgets are presented to the budget committee. 75% of the budget is salaries and benefits.

Unfinished Business

Justin goes through open positions and contracted service providers 61 open positions. He states that if the lines were double budgeted there wouldn't be a need to make a transfers from the personnel budget to contracted services like they have had to do.

Jack asks if on average it costs 2/3 more to hire contracted provider over a district employee. Can we terminate the contract if we are able to bring in an employee. Do we leave these positions open in case we are able to fill these positions.

Don asks if this is a Timberlane problem or a regional problem and what kind of ways are other districts coming up to try to solve these problems.

Maria presents the revenue budget but states that these numbers are hard to predict and are just based off



of trends. She also goes over how the unassigned fund balance is calculated.

Recess

FY26 Proposed Budget

Sierra talks about how difficult this is with the amount of budget that they actually have control over.

Liz had asked the superintendent to look into the budget to identify areas where the budget could be cut. Justin speaks to the fact that this budget was really looked into and they came up with a number that they believe has been examined very closely.

Liz motions to reduce the budget by \$4 million, Julie seconds.

MOTION: Liz Kosta motions to cut the budget by \$4 million. Seconded by Julie Hammond.
Motion failed: 4-4-0

Katie states that if we are asking for the district to cut \$4 million then we need to go through the budget line by line and identify the areas that we would like to cut money from.

Katie states that she doesn't agree with the blanket of \$4 million cut. She believes that the budget committees job is to go through these budgets and make cuts that they see fit.

Julie states that it is more effective to have the BA and superintendent go through the budget lines to identify areas that can be trimmed.

MOTION: Katie Knutsen motioned to cut the school board stipends by \$14k. Seconded by Karen White
Motion passed: 8-0-0

MOTION: Karen White motions to cut the budget by \$2.4 million. Seconded by Sierra Dolce
Motion passed: 7-1-0

Adjournment – Liz Kosta at 9:18 PM

Minutes Submitted By: Heather Greenfield

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/1039812821>