

**REGULAR MEETING
TIMBERLANE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

**2018-19 Budget Season
January 18, 2018
8:43 PM**

**SAU #55 Boardroom
30 Greenough Road
Plaistow, NH**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gerns called this January 18, 2018 meeting of the Timberlane Regional School District Budget Committee to order at 8:43 PM with the roll call.

ROLL CALL

Budget Committee Members Present: Mr. Alan David, Mrs. Eileen Dube, Mr. Lee Dube, Mr. David Gerns, Mr. Daniel Guide (School Board Rep), Mrs. Julie Hammond, Mr. John Hughes, Mr. Michael Mascola, Mr. Shawn O'Neil, Mr. Jim Paul.

Administrators Seated at the Committee Table:

Dr. Earl Metzler, Superintendent of Schools
Geoff Dowd, Business Administrator

Chairman Gerns began with some opening remarks regarding the process for warrant articles and the public's role.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Budget Warrant Discussion & Recommendation

James O'Shaughnessy attorney from Drummond Woodsum provided a review of NH education law related to public hearings on budget proposals, and the working relationship between a Budget Committee and School Board. Per RSA 32:5 Budget Preparation, the Budget Committee is required to hold at least one public hearing on each budget, in which all purposes and amounts of appropriations to be included in the budget or special articles shall be disclosed or discussed at the final public hearing. Attorney O'Shaughnessy noted that this, along with SB-2 (Budget Committee develops proposed operating budget) and the School Board developing the proposed default budget per statutory formula, allows for various interpretation at the local level. Attorney O'Shaughnessy noted that the legislators most likely assume a certain level of collaboration between the Board and Committee to allow for a meaningful hearing for the public. He noted that public hearing guidelines are created and enforced at the discretion of the elected officials.

Mr. Dowd inquired if increasing the proposed operating budget will require the Budget Committee to hold a supplemental public hearing. Attorney O'Shaughnessy confirmed that this will be required as this would be a change in purpose and/or amount of appropriation. Discussion ensued on the legal language and definition of "purpose changes" that would require another public hearing. Discussion ensued on the guidelines, purposes, history of Timberlane public hearings, and the future of Board/Committee collaboration, in preparation for the supplemental 2018 public hearing. Dr. Metzler had consulted with School Board Chair that there will be a presentation and a public comment section on the default budget, noting that moving forward this would be good consistent practice to benefit the public.

Mr. Guide reported that the School Board will not be writing a warrant to draw from capital reserve, and that the School Board recommends to the Budget Committee to add \$200,000 into the capital proposed operating budget for boiler replacement and repair. This would be for any school, as many in District are old/have failed and have

no redundancy (high risk are Pollard, Atkinson, TRMS).

9:05 PM (00:22:45)

MOTION: Motion to add \$200,000 into the capital proposed operating budget for boiler replacement and repair. Made by Mr. Guide, second by Mr. Mascola.

Discussion ensued on why a capital reserve draw would not be going to warrant. Dr. Metzler explained the concern for a possible failed vote, which may inhibit the Board from acting on boiler repairs during the year, and that including this in the proposed budget as an identified need would be the best solution. Dr. Metzler provided an overview of Mr. Geary’s reporting on facilities and the current budgeting as only addressing repairs. Mr. O’Neil inquired about why this was not included in the CIP, to go through a planning, approval, and bidding process to allow for proper budgeting. Discussion ensued on the timing of this recommendation, and the confidence in the estimated cost amounts.

9:15 PM

The board voted by	David – no	Hammond – no
poll:	E. Dube – yes	Hughes – no
	L. Dube – no	Mascola – no
	Gerns – no	O’Neil – no
	Guide – yes	Paul – no

VOTE: The motion failed (2-8-0), with Mrs. Dube and Mr. Guide in favor.

9:16 PM (00:34:04)

MOTION: Motion for the Budget Committee to recommend to the School Board that a new warrant article be introduced to the warrant, which asks the legislative body to appoint the School Board as agents of the Capital Reserve Fund. Made by Mr. Dube, seconded by Mr. Guide.

Mr. Dube explained the intent of the warrant article: if passed the legislative body would delegate control of the Capital Reserve Fund to the elected governing bodies, and when addressing emergencies this would allow for the School Board to protect the operating budget and expend from the reserve. Mr. Mascola noted that the Timberlane attorney explained this to be a common structure in school districts, and Atty. O’Shaughnessy elaborated. Currently, the School Board would need to hold a Public Hearing with advanced notice, and the public would vote on the reserve use. Mr. Dube inquired about a checks and balances system that could protect the Reserve Fund, and also if it could be revoked at the next voting cycle. Atty. O’Shaughnessy confirmed it could be revoked next cycle, and also that the elected officials must be responsible and understand their agency to be for emergency purposes only.

School Board Chair Mr. Boyle noted this would need to go in front of the Board and that the fund should be expended for emergencies only. Discussion ensued on writing and enacting School Board policies after the warrant passed. Mr. Dowd inquired if the agency is given to the School Board, would citizens be able to continue to vote on a draw from the capital reserve. Atty. O’Shaughnessy explained that this would be redundant. Mr. Dowd inquired if the District can apply to a federal body to release Capital Reserve Funds, an idea brought up previously by School Board representative Mrs. Green. Discussion ensued on the voting and expending of the District’s retention fund balance every year, with permission of DRA and the DOE. Mr. O’Neil inquired about if the warrant article can have binding language for the School Board to expend the funds with a two-thirds vote. Atty. O’Shaughnessy said this could be written, and discussion ensued on the difficulty to truly control the authority once granted.

9:33 PM (00:50:50)

The board voted by	David – yes	Hammond – yes
poll:	E. Dube – yes	Hughes – yes
	L. Dube – yes	Mascola – yes
	Gerns – yes	O’Neil – yes
	Guide – yes	Paul – yes

VOTE:	The motion passed unanimously (10-0-0).
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Citizens Petition Discussion & Recommendation (00:51:00)

Jack Sapia of Atkinson presented on his citizens petition, accompanied by Andrew Dyjak of FieldTurf.

Warrant Article: Shall the district vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$800,000 for the purpose of increasing athletic player safety and decreasing district operating costs by professionally installing an artificial turf surface to an existing sports playing field with a projected savings that will pay back this investment within 5 years? This will be a multi-purpose field supporting a host of district sports. It shall be made available for a fee to outside parties when not in use by the district, for the purpose of generating additional revenue to further offset costs and shorten the time to maximize return on investment. Payments will be spread out over a term of eight years at a maximum interest rate not to exceed 4.75 percent and shall be installed during the budget year. (MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED)

Mr. Sapia proposed the turf field to replace the football field, which already has stadium features, such as lighting which allows for extended playing time. Mr. Sapia reviewed purposes for the turf and benefits, which include student safety, short and long term reduction in operating cost, ecological impact, consistent and improved field conditions, economic/ revenue opportunities, enhanced performances and extended usage, and positive financial impact to town assets. Mr. Sapia spoke to scientific studies that analyzed athlete-to-field injuries which indicate turf benefits over regular fields, and the ecological impact of reducing water usage. Mr. Sapia provided a financial breakdown of the plan, both short and long-term of the turf expenses (installation, yearly maintenance) and revenue (from other districts, sports organizations, or bands renting turf time).

Discussion ensued on the frequency of student injuries, the revenue projections, and the long-term financial feasibility of the project. Mr. Sapia stated he will post more information on social medias and present at the supplemental public hearing.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Gerns announced the supplemental Public Hearing will be held at the PAC next Thursday January 25 at 7 PM, and logistics of putting signage at the SAU was discussed.

Mr. Hughes inquired about the increased revenue budgeting for Full Day Kindergarten, that was based on a recent update of possible increased state funding. Mr. Hughes expressed concern for the District’s eligibility for state funding and therefore revenue, because the funding requires the District make full day kindergarten available to all students (currently full day students must tuition in). Dr. Metzler stated the DOE is developing a technical advisory to address the varying interpretations of making full day kindergarten available to all students.

9:59 PM (01:16:50)

MOTION:	Motion to remove \$123,000 from the Revenue Budget. Made by Mr. Hughes, second by Mr. O’Neil.
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Discussion: Mr. Dowd provided his understanding of the state funding for full day kindergarten, and therefore

revenue. He compared total NH enrollment numbers for full day kindergarten with the budgeted state funding, which appears to suggest that the DOE will be funding all the enrolled. Discussion ensued on whether there is enough evidence to budget this revenue at this time, and the conditionality of grant revenue.

Mr. Dowd reported that Mr. Geary has been applying for NH Public Infrastructure funds for shovel-ready district projects, and that the district has been conditionally approved for \$79,220 (80% of the total project cost) for budgeting purposes. Discussion ensued on budgeting revenue as a forecast, and the history of revenue budgeting at Timberlane.

10:09 PM (01:26:40)

The board voted by	David – yes	Hammond – yes
poll:	E. Dube – yes	Hughes – yes
	L. Dube – yes	Mascola – yes
	Gerns – no	O’Neil – yes
	Guide – yes	Paul – yes

VOTE: The motion passed (9-1-0), with Chairman Gerns against.

Mr. Dube inquired about the conditional approval for the infrastructure project, and Mr. Dowd read the correspondence from Governor Sununu.

10:12 PM (01:30:00)

MOTION: Motion to increase the Revenue Budget by \$79,220. Made by Mr. Dube, second by Mr. Guide. Chairman Gerns called the vote which passed unanimously (10-0-0).

10:13 PM (01:30:50)

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 10:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Katarina Curtin
Recording Clerk

Approved by the Budget Committee on March 29, 2018.
This meeting may be watched in its entirety by logging on to: <https://vimeo.com/251838559>