

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

**2017-18 Budget Season
April 14, 2016
7:03 PM**

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

CALL TO ORDER [00:00:10] 7:03pm

Chairman Dube called this April 14, 2016 Meeting of the Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:03 pm with the roll call.

Budget Committee Members Present

Mr. Tony Cantone, Mr. Rob Collins (TRSB Rep), Mrs. Julie Hammond, Mrs. Kate Delfino, Mr. Lee Dube, Mr. Thomas Geary, Mr. W. David Gerns, Mr. Joshua Horns, and Mr. John Hughes. Absent: Mr. Alan David.

Administrators Present

Dr. Earl Metzler, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. George Stokinger, Business Administrator
Mr. Geoffrey Dowd, Business Operations Coordinator

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Committee Appointments:

Mr. Gerns expressed interest in the Capital Improvement Committee (CIP). With no other interest in the CIP, Chairman Dube appointed Mr. Gerns to the CIP who will serve along with Mrs. Hammond.

Discussion of Budget Committee Needs for the Next Budget Season:

Mr. Geary expressed an interest in understanding what the Technology Plan is for the District in order to plan capital expenditures. Dr. Metzler stated a Technology Director has been selected and we are negotiating at the moment. We will be in a better place in a couple weeks. Chairman Dube asked whether any details could be provided. Dr. Metzler thought it would be better to allow input from the new Director.

Mr. Gerns hoped that if the Technology Plan sought to add purchases, that input would be sought from CIP. Dr. Metzler stated some of the plan was replacement.

Mr. Cantone asked Mr. Stokinger if he could provide expense run rate for the past 4 or 5 years as in the past. Mr. Stokinger stated it could be done again. Mr. Cantone requested again whether the information could be posted in Excel again as well. Chairman Dube noted that format was useful. Mr. Stokinger noted the previously requested 5 year plan was posted last September 25. The year to year comparison was posted on September 2.

Mr. Horns asked if the CIP committee would be able to provide a list of capital improvements and needs which the School Committee would like to budget for. Mr. Stokinger stated this was provided at the second meeting of the Budget Committee in October. There is a new process this year, and its possible we'll have an overall idea earlier, but we would like to make sure its complete. The formal process will begin in May.

Mrs. Delfino thought that since there were two members from the Committee on the CIP, it would be good to get updates from the Budget Committee representatives.

Dr. Metzler stated we are going through a more comprehensive process with a lot of people involved. There may be some bumps in the road until we've gone through it once. Mr. Cantone acknowledged there were a lot

of moving parts.

Mr. Gerns requested how to obtain information on what's been done to date. Dr. Metzler stated Mrs. Sherman was the Chair. Mr. Stokinger is happy to share that information from the website at the end of the meeting.

Mrs. Hammond requested what the process was to place a portion of surplus into Capital Reserve. Mr. Stokinger noted this is done by Warrant Article proposed by the School Board and voted on the District Ballot. Dr. Metzler noted the School Board dealt with the budget once it was voted, but there was not much which could be done at this point with respect to additions to Capital Reserve from surplus.

Chairman Dube stated he would be pleased to have more information on staffing. Mr. Stokinger stated the NH DOE website does have staffing resources and the information was also available in the District Annual Report. There is a staffing summary broken down a number of ways. The information is available on the website likely for at least the past five years.

Mr. Collins noted that caution had to be used in using NH DOE data. The fine print has details on what is included in their figures. Chairman Dube asked where Guidance and Special Education teacher information could be found. Chairman Dube asked Mr. Stokinger to get back to him on that.

Mrs. Delfino would like to have basic information presented. We see department heads' information in great detail. It would be useful to have staffing information available, prior years and current year, to see where they end up. Mrs. Delfino stated she thought we're cutting a certain number of positions, but are never certain. Mrs. Delfino mentioned it would be useful to look at the report which appeared to be the source of the information contained in the Annual Report.

Dr. Metzler took a look in a similar way when he first started with the District, and realized that historically, not all positions were properly classified. The problem appeared to be between administrators and teachers who had dual roles. Chairman Dube asked when the reclassification would be complete. Dr. Metzler noted that Mr. Stokinger slotted employees where he was told to put them at the time. Since Dr. Metzler started, he has worked to make sure they are properly classified going forward and the classifications continue to be reviewed.

Mr. Cantone asked if the Committee had a view from all areas of the District and SAU represented before the Committee. Mr. Stokinger confirmed that all areas of the District are covered through the presentation. If that's the case, Mr. Cantone asked if it would be OK to ask what was happening to staffing in their budgets. Dr. Metzler stated it was not fair to do so as the Department Heads really don't have authority in that regard. Mr. Stokinger reiterated the nature of the process which typically requires projecting a year or more out. Dr. Metzler stated staffing was in flux until much later in the process. The process was reiterated by Mr. Stokinger.

Mr. Cantone asked how to get a picture of what staffing might look like in the next year or 24 months? Mr. Stokinger stated that Dr. Metzler is the authority on that and has to take a guess even in December. Dr. Metzler stated that he still does not have staffing done for July 1 of this year coming. There are still a number of changes which are still going on. There are a number of reasons why positions don't get refilled. We try to reduce staff without impacting the ability of the district to carry the work.

Mr. Cantone noted labor and benefits is over 70% of the budget and it would be good to look forward to have some view of what those areas will look like, even if it's an aerial view. Dr. Metzler noted that we've made cuts of 20 teachers and that's lean. Mrs. Delfino confirmed this is good information to know. Mr. Cantone stated that if things are lean and Dr. Metzler has done well in that regard, he may not be getting credit for it. This is an

opportunity to bring that forward. Mr. Collins remarked that teacher numbers hinge on class size. The scope of new residential development in local towns was discussed. As families move in, the enrollments change. Mr. Collins understands there is an 80 unit or so condominium development in Sandown, possibly ready for 2017-18 academic year. Mrs. Delfino noted Atkinson has a 150 unit development going in as well.

Mr. Stokinger also noted that graduation requirements were changed a few years ago with more stringent requirements, which impacts staffing.

Dr. Metzler has already brought elementary schools staff to a staffing number which is not incredibly comfortable. Middle School has had systematic reductions over the past several years. Dr. Metzler would like to maintain High School levels to maintain classes. Dr. Metzler stated that he would not be looking at staff as we move on as there is just not an opportunity to reduce.

Chairman Dube asked what state standards were and would District standards be for staffing. Dr. Metzler noted that state standards are 'minimum' standards. Chairman Dube asked if there are there any situations where we are at minimum standards? Mr. Collins noted that he thought at the High School we were at minimum and the Middle School we're getting there. Chairman Dube asked how the decision would be made to cut a class, is it a student or two? Dr. Metzler remarked it is a bit of a puzzle on these issues. Sometimes its scheduling as well. There are a number of programs which we list and are not run.

Mr. Gerns asked on enrollments and new developments. Is there a way to project enrollment for existing young families? Dr. Metzler commented NESDEC is a resource, and Kindergarten has been informative on projecting elementary enrollments. Mr. Geary asked how often NESDEC takes place. Dr. Metzler stated this is annual, but it has not been reliable. This is a survey provided as part of our membership. Mr. Geary asked if there was another firm to provide these estimates. No independent firm is known to provide this information.

Mr. Collins cited School Board Policy B IIB, K. Class sizes not to exceed (NTE) for K and Grade 1, NTE 20 students; Grades 2-3, NTE 23 students; Grades 4-5, NTE 26 students; Grades 6-12, NTE 30 students per class. State publishes minimum standards for approval of ED306.17 – K to Grade 2, 25 NTE 25 or fewer, schools shall strive for 20 students or fewer per educator; Grades 3-5, 30 or fewer, schools shall strive for 25 students or fewer per educator; Middle and High School 30 or fewer students.

Mr. Horns asked whether we know how many times we've had to split and consolidate classes? If you can do it right, you could optimize. Mr. Collins noted this happened often. There is one class in Danville with 28 students now. The teachers have bumped accordingly, from 3 to 2 per grade, as that grade of students has progressed through the school.

Chairman Dube asked if Mr. Stokinger what impact 200 additional students would look like in terms of teachers? Mr. Stokinger stated there was no real way to understand it until we know what grades. Mr. Collins noted that lower grades can be impacted by the addition of 1 student where it would cause the addition of a teacher. Similar discussion ensued.

Mr. Cantone noted the staffing discussion is great and informative. He would like to ask the SAU and/or School Board come to Budget Committee and present what their thoughts are in the next 18 months of staffing.

Chairman Dube would like to have another meeting with the School Board as the previous meeting was informative. Mr. Cantone suggested that such a meeting be against an agenda with both the Budget Committee and the School Board having input in creating that agenda.

Mr. Collins will take that request back to the School Board. Last year's timing was good. If that's the feeling of the Committee, let's schedule it again. Mr. Horns noted that as long as we know what capital improvements, and insurance Guaranteed Maximum Rate are, we are in good shape.

Mrs. Delfino provided a draft schedule for the upcoming year which was distributed to the Committee. Mrs. Delfino walked through dates and timeframes on the calendar. Discussion ensued among Committee members and changes to the calendar.

Mrs. Delfino made a Motion. [00:53:56] 7:56pm

MOTION: Motion to Add a Committee Meeting on September 22, 2016 made by Mrs. Delfino. Second by Mr. Gerns.

DISCUSSION: None.

Chairman Dube called the Motion to Add a Committee Meeting on September 22, 2016 which passed unanimously (8-0-0).

Mr. Horns asked if there were any early indicators on the NH Retirement System based on investment return? Mr. Stokinger stated that one factor alone is really not a solid driver. Further discussion ensued on this matter as well as the health insurance outlook.

NEW BUSINESS [01:01:40] 8:03pm

By-Law Modification:

Chairman Dube stated we do not have all members present, so we will not address.

Mission Statement Review and Adoption:

Chairman Dube thanked Committee members, including Mr. Cantone, for their input in the development of the Mission Statement. He read the Mission Statement as drafted.

“The Budget Committee will develop a fiscally sound annual budget that meets the critical needs of the District, by working with District personnel and in consultation with the School Board. Throughout the budget process, the Budget Committee will take into consideration the needs of students and District taxpayers.”

Mr. Geary wanted to see reference to student success referenced in the Mission Statement. Dr. Metzler proposed including language to the effect, ‘to take into consideration the drive for increased student achievement, the needs of the students and District taxpayers.’ After general discussion, the following was proposed:

“The Budget Committee will develop a fiscally sound annual budget that will optimally meet the needs of the District, by working with District personnel and in consultation with the School Board. Throughout the budget process, the Budget Committee will take into consideration district taxpayers as well as support for staff, rigor, evaluation and accountability initiatives that drive student achievement.”

Mr. Cantone made a Motion. [01:08:43]

MOTION: Motion to Approve the Mission Statement as Presented and Amended, made by Mr. Cantone. Second by Mr. Gerns.

DISCUSSION: None.

Chairman Dube called the Motion Approve the Mission Statement as Presented and Amended, which passed unanimously (8-0-0).

CORRESPONDENCE: [01:09:09]

Mrs. Hammond received an email which she requested direction on. Chairman Dube thought the communication was better placed with the School Board. A citizen was looking for information on the impact of the vote on funding for public kindergarten. The communication will be forwarded to the School Board Secretary.

There was no further communication.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: [01:12:20]

Mr. Horns made a Motion.

MOTION: Motion to Approve the Minutes from the March 24, 2016 Organizational Meeting made by Mr. Horns. Second by Mrs. Delfino.

DISCUSSION: Discussion among board members relating to corrections to the final version.

Chairman Dube called the Motion Approve the Minutes from the March 24, 2016 Organizational Meeting which passed unanimously (8-0-0).

Mr. Gerns made a Motion. [01:14:39]

MOTION: Motion to Approve the Minutes from the March 24, 2016 Meeting made by Mr. Gerns. Second by Mr. Horns.

DISCUSSION: Discussion among board members relating to corrections to the final version.

Chairman Dube called the Motion Approve the Minutes from the March 24, 2016 Regular Meeting which passed unanimously (8-0-0).

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT: [01:16:39]

There was no report.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES: [01:16:51]

Mr. Collins stated the School Board will hold its next meeting on April 21, 2016 in the Board Room.

FUTURE DATES: [01:17:08]

September 8, 2016 at 7pm at SAU, 36 Greenough Road, Plaistow, NH.

Chairman Dube wished all members a safe, warm and enjoyable summer.

ADJOURNMENT [01:17:20] 8:19pm

MOTION: Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Collins and seconded by Mr. Cantone.

DISCUSSION: None.

Chairman Dube called the Motion to Adjourn which passed unanimously (8-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

Geoffrey Dowd
Recording Clerk

Approved by the Budget Committee on September 8, 2016.

This meeting may be watched in its entirety by logging onto: <https://vimeo.com/163295853>.