

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

**2016-17 Budget Season
October 8, 2015
7:15 PM**

**Superintendent's Office
30 Greenough Road
Plaistow, NH**

Call to Order (00:00:10)

Committee Chairman Dennis Heffernan called this October 8, 2015 Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:18pm with the roll call followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Committee Members Present

Tony Cantone, Kate Delfino, Lee Dube, Tom Geary, Julie Hammond (7:40pm), Dennis Heffernan, Josh Horns, Michelle O'Neil, and school board representative, Rick Blair. Absent: Cathy Gorman

Administrators Present

Dr. Earl Metzler, Superintendent of Schools
George Stokinger, Business Administrator
Deb Armfield, Executive Director of Curriculum,
Assessment & Professional Learning

John Holland, Technology Director
Lois Paul, Technology Integration Coordinator
Susan Rasicot, Director of Student Services
Beth Rincon, Director of Special Education

MOTION: Mrs. O'Neil motioned to change the order of the agenda to move forward with budget presentations under new business in consideration of the presenters; seconded by Mr. Horns. With no further discussion the motion passed unanimously (9-0-0).

New Business (00:01:40)

2016-17 Budget Presentations

SPECIAL EDUCATION – BETH RINCON (00:02:20)

Mrs. Rincon began her presentation outlining the special education department's commitment to educating students with disabilities along with citing specific areas of support. She iterated that in addition to the goals and mandates of the services provided, the focus of the work will be to create a model regional preschool with the capacity to accept students from surrounding towns on a tuition basis. She then provided an overview of significant expense account changes in the proposed 2016-17 special education budget which included a decrease in professional services (they are providing more in-house services), a decrease in transportation (there are fewer out-of-district placements and an effort to coordinate shared bus rides) and a decrease in supplies (fewer assessments needed). She noted a significant increase (\$17,000) in the replacement computer line due to the need to replace laptops that were originally purchase through an ARRA grant.

She went on to request the committee's support to add a behavioral specialist, a certified occupational therapist assistant and three additional paraeducators to the 2016-17 budget providing justification for both cost savings and student needs. Committee members inquired about actual cost savings as it relates to both salaries and benefits of new staff members, acquiring school board approval for adding positions, and the use of said monies earmarked for these positions in the event the school board does not add the positions. Mrs. Rincon indicated she would work to identify actual costs associated with the behavioral specialist in relation to minimizing the use of consultant services. Other questions were posed concerning transportation, information access, and the computer replacement cycle. It was noted that overall the proposed budget was down 4% but that this did not include the request for new staff.

Mr. Stokinger noted that numerous budget lines contained a placeholder of one dollar to address any confusion

about line items being zeroed out.

STUDENT SERVICES – SUSAN RASICOT (00:33:40)

Mrs. Rasicot provided an overview of the services delivered through the student services department which include meeting the academic, nursing, emotional and social development needs of every student in the district as well as the state and federally mandated services associated with evaluations, charter schools, McKinney-Vento and out-of-district placements. Significant expense account changes for the 2016-17 budget include a decrease in professional services (new evaluation tool not required as it was a one-time purchase in 2015-16), a decrease in student transportation (efficiency of transportation for McKinney-Vento students), a decrease in private tuition (more students serviced in-district), and a decrease in supplies. Committee members inquired about McKinney-Vento responsibilities and projections as it relates to transportation costs, as well as the process/verification of purchasing laptops and computers. Mrs. Rasicot explained the mandates associated with students who are deemed homeless under the federal McKinney-Vento act and that the technology purchases are coordinated with the district's IT department.

CURRICULUM AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING – DEB ARMFIELD (00:46:45)

Ms. Armfield provided an overview of her responsibilities as it relates to the oversight of curriculum development, purchase and implementation as well as professional learning which will result in some budget overlap between the two departments. She highlighted that the largest decrease in the curriculum budget is associated with the purchase of textbooks as the school board approved the purchase of math books in the 2015-16 budget. She then presented the significant expense account changes of an increase to the replacement of equipment line (desks and shelving needed at central office), an increase to elementary information access fees (DOE requirement for 11th graders to take SATs, numerous elementary software programs), an increase in secondary information access fees (STAR and Tripod), a decrease in elementary software (not utilizing all funding) and decreases in both elementary and secondary textbooks. Although the textbook line items are down, there is still a need to purchase materials to support new science, social studies, ELA and middle and high school literacy. Committee members inquired about the math program and decrease in budget. Ms. Armfield reported that the testing data reflected reading level changes at middle and high school levels which resulted in the re-writing of curricula and the need to purchase supporting instructional material.

Fielding further questions related to the professional learning budget, Ms. Armfield noted that the travel expense lines are newly developed by her and are intended to provide professional development support to principals and assistant principals. She developed the budget by allotting \$1,000 for each administrator for conferences and another \$1,000 each for travel. This will allow top administrators to attend state level workshops which will benefit them in their current roles. She iterated the professional learning budget is fairly stable as the decreases are associated with the removal of funds for a no longer offered paraeducator certification cohort.

BUSINESS SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY – JOHN HOLLAND AND LOIS PAUL (01:06:05)

Mr. Holland began his budget presentation clarifying the difference between business services and technology. He stated the business services budget is up mostly due to initiatives at the district office which are related to professional services, infrastructure, and data processing and reporting. Federal mandates, including online employee access requirements and insurance reporting associated with the Affordable Care Act carry a deadline and hefty fine if not in compliance by January 2017. Infrastructure upgrades are needed for TEN as they are still using old co-axle cable and wish to upgrade to fiber optic which will allow them to meet the newer standards for broadcast and communication. Responding to committee member questions, Mr. Holland listed the numerous software applications currently used for payroll, human resources, substitute management, and food service meal accounts that require annual upgrades. Mrs. Paul noted that the Superintendent has recently established

a grant management team to investigate and apply for grants to offset programming costs. It was noted there is a district business partnership program that could also benefit technology funding and that Comcast opportunities for upgraded infrastructure have decreased over the years. Chairman Heffernan took an opportunity to commend Dean Zanello for his ongoing contributions to both the school district and the Town of Plaistow.

Mr. Stokinger reminded committee members that the business services budget supports the business operations of the SAU only and not the educational portion. Furthermore, anything that supports SAU work, HR or finance gets billed to the SAU and allocated to the two school districts (approximately 77% Timberlane and 22% Hampstead). He highlighted the new automated substitute teacher management program (AESOP) that is projected to save the district \$8,000 a year.

Mr. Holland then went on to present the technology budget noting an overall decrease of approximately \$200,000. He stated this is due primarily to a reduction in the cost of equipment replacement (number of replacements). The district is at about 65% of the way to providing a 1:1 ratio for computer to student. This plan includes grades K-2 using tablets, and grades 3-12 using Chromebooks which are Google-based devices that align with the district's use of Google apps. Questions were raised about IT purchases and leasing options. Mr. Holland iterated that all purchases are made collaboratively with his department to assure products are uniform across the district. He agreed to look into leasing options and configurations for leasing cycles to determine if it is cheaper to lease devices or purchase them outright. Discussion on the timeframe for the district technology plan transpired resulting in him stating that he would work to complete the budget portion of the plan in time for the 2016-17 budget. He reported the district is undergoing a network infrastructure assessment as well as the completion of the installation of the business class internet line in the elementary schools.

Questions were asked about the costs associated with distant learning, damage prevention for iPads used by the youngest students as well as inventory management, prepaid cellphones and iPods. Mr. Holland explained that the district purchases distant learning sessions as part of their curriculum, rugged iPad cases have been purchased to protect the devices from damage and teachers are responsible for monitoring and keeping close inventory on computers and devices. Additionally, the devices are traceable via a technical function. Prepaid cell phones are used for the mobile app design class at the high school and iPods are used for movie making at the middle school.

Noting this was Mr. Holland's last budget presentation due to his upcoming retirement in June, committee members expressed their gratitude for his 35+ years of service to the district. Budget presentations ended at 9:35pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (02:16:15)

Committee members reviewed the minutes of September 24, 2015 committee meeting and noted corrections related to Mr. Geary's absence from the meeting and a reference to the March 2017 vote.

MOTION: Mrs. O'Neil motioned to approve the September 24, 2015 Budget Committee meeting minutes with changes; seconded by Mr. Blair. With no further discussion the motion passed unanimously (10-0-0).

CORRESPONDENCE (02:18:50)

The correspondence folder was viewed by committee members.

DELEGATES AND INDIVIDUALS (02:19:00)

No delegates or individuals were present.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT (02:19:15)

Mr. Stokinger noted the October 1, 2015 official enrollment report that is submitted to the Department of Education was added to the committee's agenda packet. This information will be posted online as are past enrollment reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS (02:20:35)

Chairman Heffernan indicated that although he was not present the CIP Committee met and made updates to the CIP document. Additionally, the school board granted the committee's request to add another budget committee member to the CIP Committee to which Julie Hammond has volunteered to serve. By general consensus, the committee approved Mrs. Hammond's seat on the CIP Committee.

Mr. Blair reported that the school board has approved the budget committee's initiative to write a budget process document to which Mrs. Delfino is drafting. He stated the school board is not planning to hold budget presentation meetings this year.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (02:23:30)

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS (02:23:40)

Already completed by previous motion to change the order of the agenda.

OTHER BUSINESS (02:23:45)

Mr. Dube thanked the administration for providing the budget in Excel format as this has been very helpful to him.

FUTURE AGENDA AND DATES (02:24:12)

The list of future dates was reviewed noting the next meeting on October 22nd would include budget presentations from the elementary school principals and the facilities department.

With no other business before the board, Chairman Heffernan adjourned the meeting at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Belcher
Recording Clerk Pro Tem

Approved by the Budget Committee on October 22, 2015.

This meeting may be watched in its entirety by logging onto <https://vimeo.com/143008155>.