

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

**2016-17 Budget Season
November 12, 2015
7:00 PM**

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

Call to Order (00:00:02)

Committee Chairman Dennis Heffernan called this November 12, 2015 Budget Committee meeting to order at 7:01pm with the roll call followed by the Pledge of Allegiance which was led by Mr. Donald Woodworth.

Committee Members Present

Lee Dube, Tony Cantone, Dennis Heffernan, Josh Horns, Michelle O'Neil, Kate Delfino and Julie Hammond (arrived after the call of the role). Absent: Tom Geary, Cathy Gorman (excused absence), and School Board Rep. Rick Blair (excused absence).

Administrators Present

Dr. Earl Metzler, Superintendent of Schools	Michael Hogan, Principal, Middle School
Mr. George Stokinger, Business Administrator, SAU	Mr. Brian O'Connell, Assistant Principal, High School
Mr. Geoff Dowd, Business Operations Coordinator, SAU	Mr. Anthony DiBartolomeo III, Director of Music
Donald Woodworth, Principal, High School	

(00:01:20) Mrs. O'Neil made a request that in light of yesterday being Veteran's Day, that the Board hold a moment of silence for all of our Veterans. Mr. Heffernan called for a moment of silence for all those who have served and are serving for us.

MOTION: Mrs. O'Neil motioned to skip down the agenda to move forward with the 2016-2017 budget presentations under New Business (#10 on the Agenda).

DISCUSSION: There was no discussion.

Chairman Heffernan called the vote which passed (6-0-0) (Mrs. Hammond not yet present).
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NEW BUSINESS (00:02:39)

2016-2017 Budget Presentations

MIDDLE SCHOOL (7:04pm) (00:03:17)

Mr. Hogan outlined the current student population of 870 students, next year the projection is 821. Current year budget is \$259,939, and the proposal is \$258,495, a reduction of \$1,444. Among the changes are that the Middle School longer budgets for "Read 180" which is a computer based special reading program now budgeted at the District level. He added a tool called "Comic Life" which creates graphic/comic novels and can be used across all content areas resulting in an increase of \$1,705. He is also asking for \$1,300 for the new refrigerator from the FACS (Family and Consumer Science) Department. The current refrigerator is about 10 years old and he would hate to start the year without it. Library Periodicals has decreased \$1,164 to offset the cost of a new library mobile unit, which is needed to house books. Library information access fees is a decrease (of \$631). "Brain Pop" is out of the Library budget and into the School Curriculum Budget. "Homework Now" no longer exists and he is now using "Google Classroom" and he dropped "World Almanac" and Vimeo due to not enough usage. Library – New Equipment is increased by \$958. This is for a new double-sided mobile shelving unit which is needed to shelve an expanding book collection. The unit budgeted here matches the units that were

purchased in 2012 when we replaced most stationary shelving with mobile shelving to move towards a Library Learning Commons model. Each year he has budgeted for this to create more space and to fit the model of increasing reading and through books. Library Replacement Equipment is down \$935 from the \$2,000 previous budget. He needs to replace two tables where last year he had to replace a number of frayed chairs. Library A/V is up \$431. School goals to increase reading, and buy more books. Double sided shelves helpful. Two tables need to be replaced. Net of \$935 decrease. A/V equipment, "Nooks" have become important. Library AV New Equipment has gone up \$431. The school Nooks are popular and this will help meet the student demand. The increased cost is for buying those, prices have gone up. \$1,500 decrease in new equipment is offset by a \$1,500 decrease in Replacement Equipment. The Principal's office \$500 increase is offset by the \$500 decrease in replacement equipment. NEASC dues are up \$100 due to an increase in dues.

Mrs. Delfino asked what the Nooks were used for. Mr. Hogan indicated for reading and the librarians are at capacity and sometimes do have to turn away students. Mr. Horns asked about the decline in enrolment. Mr. Hogan indicated the 8th grade class was one of largest with a little over 300. Incoming is not as large at 260. Mr. Horns asked if the class size was larger than normal. Mr. Hogan indicated the class for 8th grade is largest. Over the past 10 years, it has declined.

Mr. Cantone noted that there is only \$4,800 in increases. But if that's added to the actual spend from 2015, this is about \$36,000 over what was spent. Mr. Hogan responded that curriculum areas have changed a bit and they did not use it because they were still sorting out curriculum areas. The school did not know what the total exposure was. This year, this will be spent in four new curriculum areas. Mr. Heffernan noted the District was operating under a Default Budget. Mr. Stokinger noted there was a spending freeze, and noted \$16,000 in equipment which was not spent, as directed by Central Office, in order to cover the transformer work. This was a part of the unspent.

Although next on the agenda, Mr. Heffernan requested Mr. Woodworth yield the High School presentation in order that Mr. DiBartolomeo be able to present the Music Budget as that budget would be faster than High School. Mr. Woodworth agreed.

MUSIC (7:14pm) (00:13:35)

Mr. DiBartolomeo apologized for being late. He is asking for a total increase of \$387. The large item is an increase in New Equipment for the purchase of acoustical shells used in music shows and productions at the Performing Arts Center. There are 6 units, and the cost is \$10,700. They have reduced \$16,750 in new equipment as an offset to the \$10,700 as well as to shift costs from New Equipment to Repairs to Equipment. Repairs to Equipment increased \$6,875 reflecting reconditioning of currently owned equipment instead of purchasing new ones at 1/3 or ¼ of the price at sometimes better than new quality. This is a great way to introduce great equipment to our students. The rest of the budget is stable in terms of supplies. There is some new equipment budgeted, but more equipment will be reconditioned.

Mr. Cantone noted the 2015 expended budget was \$85,000 and there is a 76% increase in proposed spending. Mr. DiBartolomeo noted the budget was frozen and new equipment was not purchased. The increase is not as dramatic as it appears. Mr. Cantone noted \$16,500 has been identified in new equipment, please elaborate on the spending. Mr. DiBartolomeo did not buy new instruments or recondition equipment. They are trying to recondition the equipment that he did not buy. Mr. Cantone asked to explain the difference between spending and budget. Mrs. O'Niel clarified that there was \$37,000 that was not spent in New Equipment from budget. Mr. Cantone noted that Mr. DiBartolomeo is rationalizing his current budget over last year budget. Mr. Cantone would like to see rationalization of spending in new year versus spending in the previous year. Mr. DiBartolomeo indicated that they are trying to make up for what they did not spend last year, by reconditioning

additional equipment. Mr. Heffernan clarified that they are budgeting to stay on their long range plans. Mr. DiBartolomeo clarified that this was an economic way to do. Mr. Horns inquired where the \$16,750 in savings was coming from. Mr. DiBartolomeo indicated that some of the lines are district wide, and some are high school. High school is down \$16K alone. Mr. Horns requested additional information. Mr. DiBartolomeo showed there were two lines down and one up. Mr. Horns made the comment he wanted to make sure he understood the re-allocation. Mr. DiBartolomeo indicated the re-allocated the new equipment to repair. Mr. Horns asked about the acoustical shell and what they are using now. Mr. DiBartolomeo said UNH gave the previous ones and they have become a safety issue. Mr. Horns asked what the shells were. Mr. DiBartolomeo when onto explain they project the sound out. There is too much manipulation needed to get the shells in place. Once identified as a safety hazard, they were put away. The choral risers experienced a similar problem, and once a safety issue, they were replaced.

HIGH SCHOOL (7:28pm) (00:28:23)

Mr. Woodworth, who was accompanied by Mr. O'Connell, is projecting a population of 1,201. They were close on last year's projections. The current budget is \$654,487 and proposed budget is \$665,356, an increase of \$10,868. Drivers are the need for "Performance Plus", a standardized test to prepare for the SAT's and the \$5K assists the administration to make adjustments based on test results. "Edgenuity" software licenses help with the delivery of regular classroom experience. This helps deliver education to children who may have trouble with a traditional classroom experience. The school will be celebrating a 50 year anniversary. The \$5K will support a year-long effort to recognize that. There is an alumni association beginning to plan events and the \$5k will allow us to recognize our contributors over the years.

He also identified an increase in the information access fee. This is comprised of 2 things. One is "Turn It In", which was discussed previously at the school board. The school would like to change the way the program operates for security. The other is "Destiny Textbooks" which will help manage distribution of text books so they are not lost. "Project Lead the Way" dictates additional supplies are needed. There are some decreases where there were large expenses, including the laser engraver, which do not need to be purchased again. He is seeking to continue to live up to the commitment of the School Board.

Mr. Dube asked for clarification on the SAT data response and what the money will be used for. Mr. Woodworth responded that exact supplies are an unknown. They are waiting from further data from the new SAT's and these expenditures may include, for example, an SAT prep course. Mr. Woodworth stated the need has not been 100% identified, but they will be identifying in the future. Mr. Dube asked if this is from an historic performance data. Mr. Woodworth did not indicate it was past performance. Mrs. O'Neil indicated the SAT's have changed. Mr. O'Connell indicated that the SAT's are now used instead of Smarter Balanced tests for juniors. Mr. Metzler indicated that the entire student population will be taking the SATs. The state will help fund 3 sections of the test. The writing portion will not be subsidized, but not all students will take it. We are looking forward to those results in order to move forward. Mr. Heffernan asked whether the district was paying. Dr. Metzler indicated that the state will be helping with the 3 portions and the district will pick up the writing portion. We will become a test center. We will be able to identify needs and will be able to tailor. Instructional staff is trying to prepare students for a test the staff has never taken.

Mr. Horns asked if the SAT is replacing the standardized tests. Dr. Metzler indicated that you will see grade 11 will be transitioned to the SAT's. Hope was to do this last year. The state took a bit longer to allow this to go through. Dr. Metzler indicated that certain students were not as serious about the standardized testing. Mrs. Delfino has indicated that she feels it makes sense to have this money available. The district has been good about obtaining and analyzing data. Dr. Metzler thanked Mrs. O'Neil for the observation and that we need to share and communicate with the student population what these tests mean. We are also moving toward a

more competency based testing, but also teaching rich content makes for an effective testing combination.

Mr. Heffernan asked for further questions. Hearing none, Dr. Metzler stated there have been significant challenges and we have worked hard with every department to contain costs to offset HealthTrust GMR 21.6% increase. There are some challenges and opportunities. Dr. Metzler stated Mr. Woodworth has made cuts and sacrifices to reflect that, but that the costs reflect the best delivery of material. Dr. Metzler indicated that we're trying to come in flat taking into consideration the cost increases. We have been listening to our taxpayers and worked toward a surplus. We have been working with the unions. We have been looking at open positions. We are looking to work together with the School Board to meet the challenges and opportunities. I hope you will be pleased the Tuesday before Thanksgiving.

Mr. Dube, asked, when looking at line 737, page 32, two items. Security cameras indoor/outdoor, why do they need to be replaced. The security cameras are in every year. Mr. O'Connell noted there are repairs needed on all cameras, so we are seeking to replace them for the same amount of repairs. The cameras just wear out and we would like to replace them on an ongoing cycle. Dr. Metzler stated the cameras are in common areas and not in classrooms. Mr. Woodworth stated they are in the hallways, gymnasium, the parking lots and the cafeteria. Mr. Stokinger stated they are probably 10 years old. Mr. O'Connell stated the guidance department is old and pieced together and that guidance has requested a more confidential area and new desks and chairs. They are captured as one expense. Mr. Woodworth closed his presentation at 7:51 pm.

ATHLETIC BUDGET (00:49:55)

Mr. Stokinger indicated Mr. Fantasia was not present at the meeting but any Athletic Budget questions can be brought up to him. Mr. Heffernan indicated that the Pollard and Danville elementary have cross country teams and there is no budget for transportation and that's what those expenses are.

Dr. Metzler stated they are looking to breathe life into the Advisory Committees, but the Athletic Academic Committee has identified the elementary sports transportation as an immediate need. Some information from those committees comes to Budget Committee and some go to the School Board. Other requests Dr. Metzler can direct with better utilization of resources through a variety of departments and functions, including central office. Mr. Heffernan has indicated that he is aware the minutes go to the Superintendent. Dr. Metzler stated that Cathy Belcher stays on top of the committee members and he is looking forward to the results. Dr. Metzler thanked board advisory committee members for advisory committee participation.

(00:54:16) Mr. Cantone has stated he has concerns over the money actually spent vs. budget. He feels that as part of budget rationalization, it should be explained. If money has been put into last year's budget, but not spent, and then it may be put into this year's budget and next year's budget. Mr. Cantone would like to see rationalization where you are spending over budget, but where you are budgeting more than you spent, he would like to see the justification.

Dr. Metzler responded there are a number of components. Mr. Cantone is more concerned that the budget is the result of a thoughtful process. Dr. Metzler stated that Mr. Stokinger is aware of this school of thought and that they have gone back to the budget owners that they have been aware of that during the budget process. Any irregularities in the budget over spend are identified and review. The math program was the most noteworthy. You can't just keep putting the money in every year, but you will have to buy it. Dr. Metzler suggested that Mr. Cantone is probably looking for justification of spend vs. current budget. Mr. Cantone confirmed he would like to build it into the process as to what was budgeted and what was previously spent.

Mr. Heffernan mentioned there are a number of things, including the high school gym roof leaks, where you

stand in there and water leaks in. The budget was previously frozen, so this was not done. Sandown North boiler is another that needed to be addressed. These are a few things that stick out.

(00:59:45) Mr. Cantone asked the board if they would like to see this analysis in future budget presentation. Dr. Metzler asked if there is a factor, such as 25% unspent or more to be identified. Mr. Cantone this would be a good criteria and it would be good to see this acknowledged and that the budgeted numbers are presented by design. Mr. Stokinger said a number would be good for analysis purposes. Dr. Metzler suggested 25% as the figure. Mr. Cantone agreed. Mr. Heffernan indicated he thought being in a default budget was a contributing factor this year. Dr. Metzler indicated that while students did not go without, but we were cautious about spending in order to generate surplus and lower tax rates. Mr. Cantone thought it would be more fair to the budget owners to have them prepared. Dr. Metzler indicated that he felt the budget owners were prepared and that he and Mr. Stokinger inform budget owners they need to have justification for expenses. The idea that the budgets just roll forward may be an easy thing to continue to roll forward. Mr. Stokinger confirmed this.

8:05pm **(01:04:00)** Mr. Stokinger introduced Mr. Dowd as the new Business Operations Coordinator. Various members of the Board welcomed Mr. Dowd. Dr. Metzler elaborated on the nature of the Operating role versus the formerly titled position of Assistant Business Administrator. There is an additional line at the end of the job description which indicates there are a number of different things, including those at the discretion of the Superintendent, which are part of the job. The position also maintains responsibility for food service, transportation, negotiations. He is an attorney and has an outstanding resume. We are lucky to have him.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES (01:05:00)

Mr. Heffernan requested a Motion for the Minutes of the October 22, 2015 meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Horns motioned to approve the minutes of the October 22, 2015 minutes. Mrs. Delfino seconded the Motion.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Heffernan who complimented the minutes. Mr. Dowd recognized Mrs. Belcher for her thoroughness in preparing the Minutes.

Without further discussion, Chairman Heffernan called the vote which passed (6-0-1) with Mrs. Delfino abstaining.
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CORRESPONDENCE 8:08pm (01:07:15). Mr. Heffernan indicated the response to the Pollard School playground multiple phase vs. single phase project. Ms. Auger’s response to handling Phase 2 and Phase 3 together is included in the Correspondence folder.

Dr. Metzler indicated that the School Board has historically not funded the playground projects, but would be looking to do so in the future. This is something of a philosophical question. If we are going to do this, let’s be consistent on these going forward. Dr. Metzler indicated that the Budget Committee should dialogue with the School Board on this issue going forward. Mr. Horns asked if the previous Phase 1 was paid for from donations. Mr. Heffernan indicated it was paid from fundraising. Mr. Stokinger indicated that they had in fact been paid for through fundraising and have drained their fundraising abilities. Phase 2 is what is being proposed. Mr. Heffernan indicated this was through dinners and PTA’s, etc., Mr. Dube indicated that the School Board has indicated the School Board would fund in the future, but if we’re under a Default Budget, and can’t fund it, would that prevent the PTA from accepting funds for these purposes? Mr. Stokinger clarified that the schools could accept the money, the “no means no” means the taxpayers don’t want their money being used for that, but this does not prohibit using other funds for this purpose.

Dr. Metzler gave credit to Susan Sherman and her husband for getting the Capital Improvement Committee in motion and handing it over to the Business Office. Susan Sherman has indicated that once it becomes property of the District, we need to maintain it. Sometimes that means the equipment needs to be replaced. We have had Primex looked at the equipment for age appropriateness, etc. and with the CIP, we can plan. Mrs. Delfino indicated she was pleased the School Board took on the prerogative. Playground safety is too important to be left to the volunteer groups. If the PTA's would like to contribute, there's a way. Then the equipment needs to be maintained and replaced and this is a step in the right direction. Dr. Metzler thanked Mrs. Delfino for the recognition. We are a district that is well rounded and now we have a mechanism for the ongoing improvement through the CIP. What gets budgeted and what gets put onto the Warrant is something the Budget Committee and School Board would need to come together on.

Mr. Cantone indicated when he heard about this, that the school funding of the projects would better direct who is and who maintains responsibility for keeping the equipment safe. Dr. Metzler indicated that Primex comes out to audit playgrounds. Mr. Stokinger indicated that they offer playground safety audits to help. We are responsible for the maintenance and we can't always get replacement equipment. Mr. Cantone asked how often are the playground audits? Mr. Stokinger indicated that it is as often as needed. Dr. Metzler indicated that principals will put an inquiry to Mr. Hughes, and the process begins.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT (01:20:06)

Mr. Stokinger stated no report, but he would address additional materials in the agenda packets shortly.

COMMITTEE REPORTS (01:20:18)

Mrs. O'Neil stated the PTA will be selling clothing before the holidays. She will also be attending the N.H. PTA conference on Saturday.

Mr. Heffernan updated the CIP meeting of two weeks ago. Mr. Stokinger will handle the training for staff. Mr. Stokinger indicated the Capital Improvement Plan is on the website and that we will be kicking off the process through the later winter and spring. First budget year will be budget year 2018.

Mr. Heffernan noted no School board representatives were present for comment.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS 8:23pm (1:22:24)

There was no unfinished business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS (1:22:24)

(Remaining New Business from previous move on the Agenda)

Mr. Stokinger stated that in the board package, there is a summary of the previously submitted budgets. There are some larger items for capital which are potential warrant articles. This has been posted on your website late as of today. Mr. Heffernan thought it was important to review these and that it would be important to have this reviewed for the 24th.

Mr. Dube questioned the generators being proposed. Mr. Heffernan indicated the High School is considered a "Point of Distribution". The generators would be part of a 50/50 matching grant. Mr. Dube asked about the \$50,000 'relighting' charge in the budget. Mr. Stokinger indicated that we've passed 50% failure. These are not the house lights and these are just the bulbs, not the fixtures. Mrs. Michelle O'Neil said that seats would need to be removed and a cherry picker rented. Mr. Stokinger confirmed it will be a sizable job. When the time comes, we'll look toward newer technologies. Mrs. O'Neil indicated that LED's present heat issues. Mrs.

Hammond indicated that all bulbs would be replaced. Mr. Dube asked if that was ball park or based on previous estimates. Mr. Stokinger was not sure.

Mr. Stokinger passed out the NESDEC reports from the end of last month with information on enrollment. The District doesn't use NESDEC numbers entirely, but this is one piece of data to work on setting enrollment projections.

Mrs. Hammond questioned where the Sandown North fire suppression system is. Mr. Stokinger indicated this year, fire suppression in Danville is in the plan. Sandown is put off a year. At the Deliberative Session, there was \$250,000 toward Danville. In the current Warrant, the additional funds could be allocated to complete the project. Mr. Stokinger stated that he has categorized current and future projects and we're looking at the current projects. Mr. Stokinger hoped to make things more clear.


(01:30:40) Dr. Metzler questioned whether anything else was needed at this point in the process. Mr. Heffernan stated an ongoing technology plan which would address current computers and expenses would be good. Could we address the current state of technology equipment and whether leasing would make sense. The question was initially raised by Mr. Geary. Dr. Metzler indicated that Mr. Holland would be retiring and that he did not want to see a duplication of effort by a new director. Mr. Heffernan would like to make sure there are no big budget hits in the future. Dr. Metzler stated there was an audit that showed deficiencies in the network. We need to have a technology plan, what we have and what we need. Mr. Holland should be able to confirm quickly. Mr. Heffernan agreed. Dr. Metzler indicated he would like to see a 5 year technology plan. Mr. Cantone would also like to see a plan for standardization and that someone is incorporating the same into the process. Mr. Dube asked what the refresh program looked like. Mr. Stokinger stated we typically operate on a 5 year cycle. Dr. Metzler indicated that the budget committee would need to be involved with this in the future with a new director.

Mr. Heffernan was also curious about the Behaviorist on a contract basis vs insourcing. A similar situation arose with a Speech Therapist and we need to find an additional \$90K in the budget. Mr. Cantone confirmed there is a cost savings when an employee can be used as opposed to an outside consultant.

(01:38:55) 8:40 Mr. Cantone stated that we agreed that 30% was the figure to have rationalized. Upon further consideration, 30% of \$5,000 may not be relevant. We don't need that information detail. Dr. Metzler indicated we will operate on the board's direction, but also recognized that the point of it is the thoughtfulness in the process. This will provide direction in the future. Mr. Dube asked Mr. Cantone what the percent or figure should be. Mr. Cantone said the Board should consider it. He did not want to know the details. Mr. Stokinger stated he took the budget analysis to be that we were looking at the budget differences vs. total budget. This is due to the fact that we had significant freezes on spending last year. The budget owners were told the Board may be looking at it. Dr. Metzler gave an example that if every year you budgeted \$100 but only spent \$65 year over year, then it could show there is padding on the budget.

Dr. Metzler indicated that he thought the current budget would come down to staffing and that's what we'll see on November 24. We may have cut something you don't want cut. You may ask for more. He is optimistic it will be a good exercise. Mrs. O'Neil indicated that if you look at the budget variance sheet. We've only looked at \$7M in expense. Dr. Metzler stated that on that \$7M, we're already showing cuts exceeding \$450K. That shows thoughtfulness of the process.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geoffrey Dowd", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Geoffrey Dowd
Recording Clerk

Approved by the Budget Committee on November 24, 2015.

This meeting may be watched in its entirety by logging onto <https://vimeo.com/145666987>.