

Timberlane Regional School District Budget Committee
Atkinson, Danville, Plaistow, and Sandown

Regular Meeting
October 24, 2013

SAU 55
Plaistow, New Hampshire

Call to Order:

Chairperson Spero called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Present: Mr. Spero, Mrs. O'Neil, Mr. Francoeur, Mr. Heffernan, Mr. Weymouth, Mr. Grosky Mrs. Green, Ms. Gorman and Mr. Blair

Absent: Mrs. Rothwell.

Also present from Administration: Superintendent Dr. Earl Metzler, Business Administrator Mr. George Stokinger, Mrs. Rincon, Director of Special Education and Mrs. Rasicot, Director of Student Services.

There were also many school administrators in audience for the meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes:

Mrs. O'Neil made a motion and was seconded by Mr. Heffernan to approve the minutes of October 10, 2013. Mrs. Green requested additional information be added to the minutes. A discussion ensued regarding what is required. By a show of hands the Budget Committee Members voted not to add the additional information since all the meetings are recorded and available to the public for viewing.

Vote: Six approved the minutes as submitted. One opposed the minutes approved as submitted and one (Ms. Gorman) abstained.

Correspondence:

There were many emails received from Mrs. Caruso with questions on the proposed Budget that were received today. A brief discussion ensued regarding timing of requests before the meeting. Mr. Francoeur made a motion to add her correspondence to the next agenda for discussion. Mr. Francoeur's motion was seconded by Ms. Gorman. Vote: Six were in favor of adding the correspondences from Mrs. Caruso to the next agenda for discussion. One opposed and two abstained (Mr. Grosky & Mr. Weymouth).

Some Members stated they have not been getting the committee emails. Mr. Stokinger stated he will make sure their information is added to the distribution list. Mr. Stokinger then distributed the latest copy of the Budget Committee roster so everyone could confirm their contact information.

Dr. Metzler stated the number of requests and communications coming into the SAU office is unbelievable and that any last minute requests cannot be accommodated. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding responsiveness from the SAU offices and if requests are reasonable. Mrs. O'Neil motioned to move the question and was seconded by Mr. Heffernan. Six members

approved the motion to end the current topic of conversation and to move on. Two members abstained. (Mrs. Green and Ms. Gorman)

Administrative Report:

Mr. Stokinger reported the Timberlane Support Staff have petitioned to create a new Union and are currently in negotiations with the School District. This is important to the Budget Committee because any changes in their pay or benefits for 2014-2015 will be in a separate warrant article and not in the proposed budget. Additionally the proposed Budget is being prepared with a 3% salary increase over 2013-2014 for all non-affiliated staff. The teacher's increase is per their current contract.

Reports of Committees:

Mr. Heffernan reported on the Facilities Committee meeting he attended on October 22, 2013. He stated the Facilities meeting was entirely a lengthy discussion regarding priorities of the various projects to be proposed in the 2014-2015 budget. Additionally Mr. Heffernan wanted to take the opportunity to state that his wife is an employee of the District and he did contact the District regarding any conflict of interest. He was referred to Policy BCB which states that he must disclose the relationship to the Committee and refrain from discussing any Speech Language topics or the TTA contract.

School board Representative, Mr. Blair reported the SAU Budget meeting reduced the proposed salary increases down to 2.5% from the 3% original proposal.

New Business:

Mrs. Rincon was present to review her proposed Budget and the Special Education laws which affect the proposed Budget. She stated the school district is responsible for providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all identified children from ages 3 to 21 years old living within the District. Each child who is identified is required to have an individual education plan (IEP). The IEP is developed by a team including the sped and regular education teachers, parent, related services, psychologist, student (after 14 years old) and an administrative representative. All decisions are made by the team as to what is necessary for this child. The name of the law that governs this process is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This law has been revised in 2005, 2008 and 2011 which always shifts more requirements on to the school district.

The school district is also required to provide transition services for the identified students entering the workforce or continuing on in higher education. This has been a very successful program in Timberlane.

Another term that committee members may hear about is CHINS which stands for child in need of services. This would involve students who may be habitually absent, breaks the law, not under the control of the parent and could be court placed outside of the home. Previous legislation did not have the school district responsible for this cost, but recent changes have made this financial cost a responsibility of the school district.

Other special education expenses which are very difficult to control are for contracted services specifically related to vision and audiology at this time. These specialties are also difficult because there is a limited number who are available to provide the service and they also set their own rates.

Mrs. Rincon stated there have been recent changes to the Medicaid legislation. There has always been a discrepancy between the amount of money the District pays for an identified child and the amount of money reimbursed to us by the state. However, transportation has been recently removed from being an allowable cost for 5 days per week, to only allowable on the days when the child receives support services.

Mrs. Rincon stated that the cost per special education child vary widely and depends on each student's needs. It is possible that a severely disabled child will cost as much as 10 less severe disabled children. When trying to get a count of special education children and the costs associated per child, it is very difficult to talk in terms of generalities. The count for special education children is also fluid. It can and does change quite often. Currently there are 750 special education students (including preschool) with a total district enrollment of 3928. Of the number of special education students right now, only 2.3% are placed in out of district facilities.

A lengthy question and answer session ensued.

Mrs. Rasicot, Director of Student Services was present to discuss her Budget drivers such as the McKinney-Vento Act and Charter Schools. She reported the number of students who attend charter schools and also the number of students who need services is up. Additionally, the related service requested for the Charter School students is also up from last year. Both pieces are affecting her Budget. Additionally there are 3 more students currently being evaluated for services at Charter schools.

Homeless transportation is also up. We have some students who are temporarily living in Massachusetts. The transportation costs are split between the sending district and the receiving district. There are currently fewer than 30 homeless students in the Timberlane District identified at this time. Mrs. Rasicot answered many specific questions related to her Budget. Mrs. Rasicot and Mrs. Rincon finished their presentations and answering questions at 8:20 pm. There was a brief interruption while they and many administrators in the audience left the meeting.

Mr. Stokinger reviewed what was distributed in the agenda packets with the committee members. He included the budget calendar. He also reminded appointed members who would like to continue with their position on the Budget Committee; they must sign up to be elected in March.

Mr. Stokinger referenced the Facilities meeting and the priorities set for the next fiscal year. The building and sites account is at \$921,300 which is up from \$616,360 in 2014. Mr. Stokinger reviewed line by line the proposed projects for 2014-15 giving a brief description of each project and the need it serves. The committee had many questions and it was agreed to forward these concerns to Mr. Hughes and ask him to attend the next meeting on November 4, 2013. During

the facilities conversation, Mrs. Green made a motion to remove the generator, the concession stand walkway and the MS Sped office suite from the proposed project Budget. Mrs. O’Neil stated the walkway is a safety issue and needs to stay. A few Committee members requested that Mr. Hughes be brought back in for a question and answer session first, before any changes are made to the facilities project list. Mrs. Green withdrew her motion.

Follow-up questions to the October 10th presentations:

Mrs. Green asked about the Tripod survey cost of \$41,800 which Dr. Metzler explained is derived from a per student fee for the survey. He also explained that Mrs. Armfield would be able to give a much better description of the use and value of the Tripod Project which was developed by Harvard University. It is a valid and reliable and is scored to provide feedback to the teachers who then can self-select their professional development to address their shortcomings as their students see them. The Committee members asked for more information to be sent to them.

Mrs. Green also stated she is not in favor of the proposed I-pad purchase for the full-time kindergarten program at a cost of \$44,000.

Also she wanted to know about the policy regarding cash receipts of the music and athletic departments? Dr. Metzler stated there has been no new policy. There is an existing policy regarding where the receipts are accounted for and who has the authority to spend the funds. Mr. Stokinger clarified the gate receipts policy which states; the receipts are retained at the school and are under the jurisdictions of the Athletic Director and Principal. The private music lessons receipts do come into the general fund and is used to pay the private music lesson teacher. The Musical receipts are retained by the HS student fund which covers the costumes, sets etc. The District pays for the royalties fees. The PAC receipts are identified in the annual report and are considered a separate “for profit” organization. The PAC also pays to the District \$5000 for utilities etc. which is deposited into the general fund. Mrs. Green would like to see that policy revised and all revenue should be recorded in the general fund to provide more transparency.

Mr. Stokinger brought up for discussion the scheduled meeting for October 31, 2013. He would like it to be cancelled due to the fact that it is Halloween and many members would not be able to attend. Additionally Mr. Stokinger is not sure he will have the entire consolidated Budget ready for that meeting. Mr. Grosky made a motion to cancel the October 31, 2013 meeting and was seconded by Mr. Francoeur. Discussion ensued as to another date and or time. Mr. Grosky revised his original motion to cancel the meeting on October 31, 2013 and reschedule it for Monday November 4 at 7pm; it was seconded by Mr. Spero. Vote: Unanimous.

Other Business:

Mrs. Green requested the questions from Mrs. Caruso be addressed and added to the next agenda. A cut off period for questions to be addressed at the next meeting was discussed. Mr. Stokinger stated some questions are simple; while some questions are very complex and require an intense amount of work to answer.

Mrs. Green also requested the Budget Committee, as a group, have input as to who is added to the agenda. Mr. Spero stated he would be happy to address the entire committee before adding guests to the agenda.

Mr. Stokinger presented information in answer to questions that were emailed. There are no budget transfers in 12-13 over \$5000? Mr. Stokinger stated there were none for the past 2 or 3 years and discussed how budget transfers happen and when. Additionally Special Education is never a source for a Budget transfer out. No money is transferred between school or department to another department or school. He will occasionally let a line item go over budget but never the entire department budget.

Mr. Grosky made a motion and was seconded by Mr. Weymouth to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 p.m. Vote: Eight in favor, one against.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Smith
Recording Secretary
Approved November 4, 2013