

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

Special Meeting
November 3, 2010
7:00 p.m.

30 Greenough Road
Plaistow, New Hampshire
03865

Mrs. O'Neil called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Present: Mrs. O'Neil, Ms. Rochford, Mr. Mullen, Ms. Conte, Mr. Bouchard, Mrs. Chaput, Mr. Collins, Mrs. Lisi and Ms. Maffeo. Absent: Mr. Balanoff.

Timberlane Administration Present:

Mr. LaSalle, Superintendent,
Mr. Stokinger, Business Administrator,
Mrs. Smith, Assistant Business Administrator,
Mr. Strange, Director of Secondary Education,
Mrs. Killen, Director of Elementary Education
Mr. Fantasia, Athletic Director

Mrs. Chaput made a motion and was seconded by Mr. Bouchard to accept the minutes of October 28, 2010.

Vote: Eight in favor. One abstain Ms. Conte.

Mr. Stokinger distributed the revised budget reports, which included additional details, per request of the Budget Committee.

Mr. Fantasia was present to discuss the questions the Budget Committee members had at the previous meeting. The first topic to be addressed is the use and need of the athletic trainers and why the cost had increased so dramatically. Mr. Fantasia re-iterated what he had previously stated at the presentations. The athletic trainer company the school district has been using for many years has not increased their rates in a very long time and they had recently told Mr. Fantasia to expect a substantial increase for 2011-12. Mr. Fantasia did estimate on the high side not knowing exactly what was going to happen; or if this annual contract would be sent out to bid; what the competitive pricing would turn out to be. The current company has not provided firm pricing as of yet and Mr. Fantasia will follow up with them to get a better picture of the expected price increase. Mr. Fantasia did state the present company does a very good job and has done so, for a very long time. A trust between the trainers and the students and staff has been developed and is important to the program. This annual contract is for one trainer at the Middle School for 10 hours per week, per season and one at the High School for 20 hours per week, per season. The current company is also extremely flexible adjusting those times depending on the season and how busy the athletic facilities are. One of the committee members asked who mandates these athletic trainers be at the fields and what happens if we don't have them. Mr. Fantasia explained that it is mandated by the NH Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) so we wouldn't be allowed to compete, not to mention it is a huge liability issue not to have an athletic trainer available, with so many students participating in sports. Mrs. O'Neil

stated she understands companies need to raise their rates from time to time, but a huge jump like this is a bit extreme. They should have been asking for small increases over the years that were more reasonable and justifiable. Mr. Fantasia agreed with her and did relay that thought to the present company. Ms. Rochford asked Mr. Fantasia to explain the large increase in the athletic facilities line from 2009/10 to 2010/11. Mr. Fantasia stated this line is used exclusively for skiing and ice hockey. Both of these sports have expensive costs associated with renting facilities. The ski team, up until 2010-11 held practice at Pat's Peak and the only students who could attend, were the ones who had the ability to buy themselves a lift ticket. Mr. Fantasia felt this was not how a school athletic program should be run and made it a fully supported and funded sport just like all the other sports. He arranged for two practices per week at Pat's Peak for the entire team, including a lift ticket plus one meet per week. Also during that year 2010-11 the JV Hockey team had been renting ice time, by parents raising the funds to rent the facility. Again, Mr. Fantasia stated he felt the JV Hockey team should be supported just like the other teams, so he arranged for the JV Hockey team to practice at the Salem Ice Center and to participate with other area schools in a JV Hockey League so the students will have a "real" hockey season and a much better experience at the JV level. Mr. Fantasia stated that the students do have to supply their own equipment, but the School District picks up the costs for transportation and facilities rentals. The other account the Budget Committee members asked about was the game expense line. Mr. Fantasia explained how all the game officials, timing officials, ticket takers, police details, announcers, tournament fees etc. are paid from this account. Mr. Bouchard asked if tickets were sold for any of the athletic events. Mr. Fantasia explained some varsity events did sell tickets such as football, basketball, hockey and wrestling. The funds received were deposited into an account under the jurisdiction of the High School Principal per School Board policy. The funds are used to purchase larger ticket items for the athletic department such as wrestling mats and a golf cart for use by the Athletic Trainer to get around the fields quickly.

Mrs. Killen, Director of Elementary Education and Mr. Strange, Director of Secondary Education, were next describing their portion of the proposed budget. Mrs. Killen stated many people don't really understand what their responsibilities are, so she and Mr. Strange created a listing of all their duties which was distributed. The listing also described how these responsibilities affect the proposed budgets. Mrs. Killen applies for and manages many of the Title grants. She is also the District Homeless Liaison (which has money for some homeless services under Title I). She writes many of the grants to include curriculum development expenses. She also supervises the Principals, Assistant Principals, Curriculum Coordinators and Literary Specialists. Curriculum is what you want your students to learn. Instruction is how you want the students to be taught the curriculum. It has been a tradition in this district that the first year of any new curriculum, the costs are in the Curriculum Budget but after the first year, the costs are then transferred to the different schools and departments. The School District is also in the process of acquiring a new assessment tool, which is very similar to the NECAP tests, to see how well the students are doing learning the curriculum. This new assessment tool is online and the feedback is almost instant as opposed to the NECAP tests, which take six months to report back the results. The District also uses the "Train the Trainer" model for much of the Professional Development done in the District which is a huge savings. Another program that has been implemented by the District is RTI which is "Response to Intervention". This program identifies children who need more attention in particular subject areas whether because they are

falling behind or are ready to move forward, from where most of the class is, at any point in the curriculum. This model has had a significant positive effect on the number of students who do not need to be referred to Pupil Personnel for Special Education services. Mrs. Killen stated for a committee member who inquired, there are some families who are considered homeless because they are living with another family, the space is inadequate and it is a temporary situation. She feels more people would probably qualify for assistance (such as the free meals program) if they realized they are technically considered “homeless”. The expenses and rights of “homeless” families were discussed.

Mr. Strange stated his list was very similar to Mrs. Killen’s so he reframed from reading it in its entirety, but did discuss a few of the differences such as developing and maintaining the Para Educator professional development program through the Great Bay Community College. Overseeing the “Safe and Drug Free Program” including the grant writing. Other programs he is responsible for are, the District Mentor Program, the Youth Educational Employment Services, Inc. (YEES) which works with the “at-risk” student population, subject area NECAP testing, the Home Schooled Program, the Adult Ed and Evening Division Program as well as being the liaison for the various District Committees. A few committee members asked for more details regarding the Home Schooled Children and how they interact with the school district.

Mr. LaSalle was next to present the first draft of the entire proposed budget for 2011-2012. The first draft of the proposed budget is up \$231,557.23. However since this final number was just reached, only minutes before this meeting started, he requested the committee members keep this in mind until such time that he and his staff have had the opportunity to study it more closely. Overall the news was good in health insurance. There are 12 less enrollees this year, than a year ago, as well as the plans people have picked are now the less expensive plans. The most expensive plan has been closed to new employees and increasing the co pay has caused some people to go with their spouses insurance coverage. Overall health insurance is pretty much level from last year. Dental is up slightly. Another positive impact to the proposed budget is the teacher contract having a modest increase for next year, as well as energy costs seem to be stable as opposed to a few years ago. The bad news is, even if the budget is completely flat from this year to next, with the current state education funding formula as it is written today, Danville and Sandown will lose over \$1 million dollars each, in state aid. This loss in revenue will cause a drastic increase in their tax rates but not because of anything the school district is doing. Atkinson and Plaistow gain a small amount in the current formula. Other areas not clear are if the State of NH Retirement contribution rate of 35% stays in effect for 2011-12 as is currently written, or if the state legislature decides the state can’t afford it and then the schools will have to pick up that additional 10%, as has been the case for the past two years. The State also has a huge problem in regards to replacing the ARRA (State Stabilization) funds which were used to pay for adequacy for the last two years. It is unclear how they will fund adequacy now that the ARRA money has stopped flowing into the State. Two years ago when the adequacy formula was developed, a collar was put in place for the biennium to prevent towns from having a huge windfall or loss. The new funding formula stands to give millions more in aid to cities like Nashua and Manchester and will have a horrible impact on smaller districts like Litchfield (losing 3 million) and Derry (losing 8 million).

Mr. LaSalle stated he is currently reviewing staffing needs and enrollment projections and does anticipate coming back to the Budget Committee with a recommendation of a modest decrease in staff. Mr. LaSalle left the meeting so the committee could review the proposed budget in detail with Mr. Stokinger.

Mr. Stokinger pointed out to the committee members the reports were just printed at 5:53 pm and to please remember that we rushed to bring you a first draft, but it has not had the close scrutiny normally given to it before we present to the Budget Committee. It is a very rough first draft.

Mr. Stokinger continued to review the financial reports and answer questions as they came up such as explaining that object code 643 is new this year and is for “web based” application fees. The reason the new object code was created was to clarify the expense according to the State Accounting Guidelines and hopefully to receive E-Rate credit for these expenses.

Salary object codes for teachers were discussed. All the teachers are in object code 112 (113 for nurses). There is one teacher in an object code of 116. The administrative staff are in object code 111, while the other non affiliated staff such as custodians, Para educators and secretaries are in object codes 114,115,116 which received a step increase (1.8% approximately). Mr. LaSalle uses a salary schedule to place all personnel in a grid, which in some years is modified to include a cost of living increase and others not. Usually a step is equal to one year in experience at the district. The newest employees are normally started on step one, while the older more experienced employees have moved to a higher step. Many of the committee members felt that increases for 2011-2012 for the nonaffiliated staff is not a good idea since so many people are out of work and losing their homes. More information regarding these “salary schedules” was requested for the next meeting. It was understood that the Teachers have a contract and will receive a two step increase, per the current contract for those who are under step 14(max).

Other areas discussed were the major variances such as Sped up \$170,000 for out of district tuition. Utilities are down \$206,000, benefits are up \$332,000, and the bond payment is down \$84,000. Mr. Bouchard asked about the balance of the bond and the payoff date. Mr. Stokinger replied the current balance is \$14,400,000 of the original \$32,000,000 with a final payment scheduled for August of 2019.

Mr. Stokinger stated he will have available for the next meeting his one page summary by object code.

A Committee member asked how supplies are purchased for the District. Mr. Stokinger described the majority of the “common” school supplies is sent out to bid every spring in conjunction with Hampstead for the best possible price. Then uncommon items are purchased by each school separately.

Revenue and tax apportionment was discussed and Mr. Stokinger referred them to the annual report which contains much of the data they were asking about. Mr. Stokinger stated the official adequacy funding amounts are expected from the State on November 15, 2010 based on the current legislation.

The TTA contract having a one-time payment scheduled for this December did make it appear that the salaries are sometimes down for next year, depending upon how many people in that account are at the max step.

Mr. Mullen made a motion to post the financial reports on the SharePoint website for public viewing. Ms. Conte seconded the motion for discussion. Mr. Collins was reluctant to post this version since the administration reiterated that the proposed budget has not been completely proofread at this time. Mr. Mullen stated he was willing to give the administration a few days to complete that task, before it had to be posted. Mr. Bouchard stated he would be more comfortable if the committee was given a final of draft one before posting it.

Vote: 1 in favor of the motion, 7 opposed and 1 abstained, Ms. Conte.

Mr. Stokinger asked if he should invite any other administrators back for further discussion at the next meeting. Some members would like to talk with the PPS administrators again and others wanted more information from Mr. Hughes regarding the “equipment” at Danville and if the oldest boilers continue to be a problem or were those issues rectified? It was agreed an email from Mr. Hughes would suffice, while the PPS administrators would be invited back for the next meeting.

The future agenda dates were discussed. Wednesday November 10, 2010 and Tuesday November 23, 2010. It was also discussed that the SAU Budget Hearing is on Wednesday November 17, 2010 where the SAU proposed budget increases would be discussed in more detail including the 2% raises for all SAU staff.

Ms. Rochford made a motion and was seconded by Mrs. Lisi to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 pm.
Vote Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Smith
Recording Secretary
Approved November 10, 2010