

**WINCHESTER SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
NOVEMBER 18, 2021  
WINCHESTER SCHOOL LIBRARY**

Board Members Present: L. Picard, T. Perkins, L. Hildreth, J. Rokes T. Kilanski  
Administration Present: K. Dassau, T. Taylor, V. Carey, M. Hill

The meeting was called to order by Chair, L. Picard at 6:38pm.

**MINUTES:**

**L. Picard MOVED to approve the Public and Non-Public Minutes of 10/28/21, and the Public Minutes of 11/4/21 amending on Page 3, third paragraph, *Brenden Hubbard to J. Rokes*; SECONDED by: T. Perkins, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.**

**PRINCIPAL'S REPORT – V. Carey:**

- \*An assembly was held on November 12<sup>th</sup> in observance of Veterans Day. School employee Anthony Pasquarelli was honored for his service. He was a Sargent in the Army for nine years and in combat in Afghanistan. Kids made cards and put up signs. The Assembly was a reminder for the students as to why they have Veterans Day off and what the holiday represents.
- \*NHDI performance was held on Tuesday for the residency program for First through Fourth Grade Practices were held for five days, 45 minutes each day. Each grade level practiced their own dance and they all came together for a show. There was a very good turnout for the performance.

**BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT – T. Taylor:**

- \*The next Payroll Manifest will be sent to the Board electronically.
- \*The Board reviewed the Accounts Payable Manifests and asked questions.  
T. Kilanski advised he would abstain from voting on the Manifest after conversations he has had with K. Dassau.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – K. Dassau:**

- \*Included in the Board packets was Policy DJB and Policy DJ which give the Superintendent and some Administration authority to enter into contracts up to \$5,000. This was in response to the question at the last meeting related to consultant pay for Ian Spencer.

**L. Picard MOVED to approve the Accounts Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$164,330.08; SECONDED by: T. Perkins, VOTED: 4-1 (T. Kilanski – no), MOTION PASSED.**

**L. Picard MOVED to approve the Accounts Payroll Manifest in the amount of \$56,822.36; SECONDED by: T. Perkins, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.**

**BUDGET DISCUSSION:**

T. Taylor advised the budget books will be ready next week. The Board can stop by on Monday to get them.

### **Administration and Non-CBA Employees:**

K. Dassau brought a request for a 3.5% salary increase to the Board at the last meeting. Board members requested a calculation for additional percentages, including 2.5%, 4.0% and 5.0%. Also, the Social Security Administration is suggesting a 5.9% cost of living adjustment.

K. Dassau brought information for district comparisons for Speech Language Assistant and Occupational Therapist positions. Administration is still advocating for a market adjustment for those two positions. Last year Administration and the two Specialists received zero increases. The proposal from the Board for the 2021-2022 school year was a 2.5% increase. When the School Psychologist went to Keene and we couldn't find a replacement; we had to contract for that service.

L. Picard advised that contract cost is about \$150,000 versus the salary line of \$75,000 to \$78,000. The person doesn't get that salary it is the company and the employee gets a percentage.

K. Dassau explained if we can't find someone for the Occupational Therapist, we would owe a student with an IEP, those hours.

L. Picard – We were forced to make adjustments with some critical employees leaving and we needed to replace them. Doesn't necessarily consider that the best budgeting. Thinks they should be planning for what the market is going to look like as opposed to hoping that it is what we want it to be. Need responsible budgeting.

Jen Heise asked for careful consideration of the market adjustments and an increase for other Specialists. During the pandemic they jumped right in; are supporting the School and doing a great job. If we lose them, would cost us more than money; interviewing, training, etc. It would be nice to make sure they know they are valued and appreciated.

V. Carey feels they need to be careful. It has been hard to fill positions in the past, but it is definitely not easy to replace people right now.

After discussion, **L. Hildreth MOVED to approve a market adjustment of \$5,580 annually for the Occupational Therapist and a \$10,000 market adjustment for the Speech Language Assistant annually; SECONDED by: T. Perkins, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.**

### **Non-CBU – Admin/SAU and Specialists:**

L. Hildreth asked if all positions get an increase or is it based on performance.

K. Dassau explained they all do, but advised they Board can be assured that everyone in these positions is stellar.

T. Kilanski – Regardless of what the Board decides, his thought is three vacancies are coming up; doesn't believe they should increase that line for those three positions. He feels then people would make more than others who have already been here.

L. Hildreth explained that would not necessarily be the case; could make more, could make less.

K. Dassau when interviewing for positions, they do negotiate.

L. Picard would rather be in a position to have money in there then to look for where it will come from.

T. Kilanski understands; he just has a hard time paying someone more money coming in then someone who has already been here.

K. Dassau explained that very often a Superintendent coming in would make more than the person leaving. In the past, when hiring the Facilities Director, Nurse, Business Manager we needed to negotiate as the positions were below market range.

**T. Kilanski MOVED to approve a 2.5% increase; SECONDED by J. Rokes, VOTED: 2-3 (L. Hildreth - no, L. Picard - no, T. Perkins – no) MOTION FAILED.**

**L. Hildreth MOVED to approve a 4% increase for Administration, SAU staff and Specialist Staff; SECONDED BY: T. Perkins, VOTED: 3-2 (J. Rokes - no, T. Kilanski – no) MOTION PASSED.**

There was a question asked at the last meeting regarding \$117,000. T. Taylor explained she was trying to re-categorize people for Speech Language, Guidance Counselor, Adjustment Counselor/Social Worker. She explained if the Board sees a huge decrease in the line and a big increase below it is because positions have been moved. Two Paraprofessionals have been removed. The Psychologist increase is due to the fact that it is no longer Grant-funded.

**Professional Development:**

The Professional Development Committee met and V. Carey is presenting a very early draft of a three year plan. They have made adjustments to the prior plan which was interrupted due to COVID and some adjustments were made as to what was able to be accomplished and what needed to be adjusted. They will do a Needs Assessment which will be shared with staff to see what priorities they need to be highlighting for Professional Development over the next three years. V. Carey reviewed the Plan draft with the Board.

There are a lot of Grants available to us; ESSER Two and Three along with additional opportunities.

The Proposal is not to increase that account from last year; leave at \$5,000 recognizing we might go back to in-person, but we have Grant opportunities. Other than the two lines that are contractual, there is a lot being level-funded for this budget.

**L. Picard MOVED to approve Professional Development non-CBU and Professional Development Non-Discretionary; SECONDED by: L. Hildreth, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.**

The Board took a three minute break.

**Facilities – M. Hill:**

The proposals are for salaries; all other lines are level funded.

M. Hill reviewed proposal – looking for a market adjustment. Advised he has a hardworking team; many with many years of service. Explained it is not a true market adjustment for last year or what is being proposed this year. One of our Custodians is the lowest paid in Cheshire County.

The Board reviewed Custodial wages, proposed wages and rates in surrounding districts.

L. Picard – If a person with a market adjustment retires or leaves, the base rate would go back to being just a bit of a more competitive starting salary. Clearly we have some extremely dedicated staff; some have been here many years.

M. Hill would like to retain them.

T. Kilanski asked if the pay scale has been an ongoing issue, why do they want to jump this year if all of the years they have been underpaid. He doesn't understand why there can't be a compromise. He feels a 23% increase is massive; just approved a 4% increase for everyone else. Feels they can only milk the Town so much.

K. Dassau explained the history which is similar with this group as with the Specialists. Facilities was removed from the bargaining unit two to three years ago. Every year they try to push forward. If not this, then what?

V. Carey explained prior to this, they were part of the CBA; weren't able to negotiate separately. No one negotiated in 2020 and they didn't last year because we were still coming back from a \$1.57 million dollar cut. People in those positions could leave and make more anywhere and we couldn't rehire people.

T. Taylor explained at her first walk-through of the building she was so impressed with how clean the building was. During COVID there was so much extra work. Need them to know they have value and are appreciated. It is a huge deal; costs more with revolving door.

T. Kilanski asked if the vote passes and they all get these increases will we be asking for more next year.

M. Hill explained it would be a minimal increase.

L. Picard advised they have this conversation every year; it is not new.

M. Hill explained the first increase would be to market range and then it would go up based on experience. Those with tenure need to be brought to where they should be.

L. Hildreth feels if they don't try to retain those employees we have, they can work less and make more money elsewhere. Need to reward and appreciate people for what they've done.

After discussion, **L. Hildreth MOVED to approve the Maintenance/Custodian position at \$17.00 per hour, Custodian #1 at \$20.00, Custodian #2 at \$17.00, Custodian #3 at \$15.50 and Custodian #4 at \$14.00; SECONDED by: L. Picard, with a Friendly Amendment and Second to change #2 to \$17.25, VOTED: 4-1 (J. Rokes – no), MOTION PASSED.**

T. Taylor discussed KHS tuition and the Board asked questions. She explained Regular Ed tuition is down to \$15,637 and Special Ed down to \$29,872. They are anticipating 122 Regular Ed students and 42 Special Ed students. The increase from FY22-23 would be just over \$26,000.

L. Picard explained they have buffered the number in the past for students who might be moving in; but in the past few years they shifted to using the numbers we know and recognizing that number could go up or down. That hasn't adversely impacted our budget to date.

**L. Picard MOVED to approve the line item for Keene High School Tuition for Regular Ed and Special Ed in the amount of \$3,162,338; SECONDED BY: T. Perkins, after questions and discussion, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.**

T. Taylor will use the concern/comment from J. Rokes as a take away to fix the comparison and clean it up or leave it out altogether.

### **Special Education and Out-of-District:**

V. Carey reminded the Board with regard to this account, as it involves a very small number of students, there are limited questions they can answer. The information received is basically what can be provided. The Board reviewed and asked questions.

T. Taylor – Looking at about a 5% increase overall, so they took FY22 and added 5% increase for FY23.

K. Dassau - The rates are not established until April.

**L. Picard MOVED to approve the amount of \$887,283.48; SECONDED by: J. Rokes, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.**

### **Warrant Articles:**

L. Picard reviewed the Warrant Articles. Explained it is the same process for the Warrant that is typically used, but they are not ready to approve it. Article Three is a contract and it has been ratified.

At the December 2<sup>nd</sup> Board Meeting T. Taylor will have the budget in completed form for Board approval. L. Picard thinks they can have Article Two ready with the budget.

The Board received a copy of the Amortization Schedule for the bond. The \$350,000 left will be paid in the 2023/2024 school year.

Capital Reserve – Matt Hill reviewed roof and HVAC system. Redoing gym floor this year. Put bid out for fence; will be done by June, 2022. Walk in refrigerator in the Middle School – new one is needed. Field renovations 2022-2023. Tractor and garage in 2024 to maintain fields. Proposing \$125,000 on Warrant Article until 2023/24 when the bond is removed and then bumping it up to \$150,000.

J. Rokes asked about bumping up the delivery of the walk-in.  
That is not possible due to availability of products.

**J. Rokes MOVED to keep Article Seven at \$125,000; SECONDED by L. Hildreth, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.**

J. Rokes asked if now that the salaries for the Business office, SAU and Specialists have been voted on, will they be working on their budgets?

L. Picard – Yes.

T. Taylor explained most lines were level funded; areas discussed were salaries and lines with questions.

J. Rokes thought there would be discussion throughout the budget.

L. Picard explained in the past year there were pretty significant changes due to the cut the year before, a lot is being level-funded for this budget.

J. Rokes asked questions regarding the budget so he will be prepared to answer questions of the Budget Committee:

Staff Development: T. T. Taylor explained that is for any Staff Development being done by the SAU/Administration.

K. Dassau explained they purchase a ticket for workshops given by the NH School Administrators Association. There are many to choose from; i.e., training on new safety laws, training on homelessness and Superintendent training. That line covers about eight people.

J. Rokes asked about postage:

T. Taylor explained there is a lot of documentation and various mailings sent out. If students go to other schools, need to mail all transcripts.

L. Picard – Now people are meeting in person; more documents cannot be sent electronically.

The Board reviewed Administration Salaries.

J. Rokes asked about the Tech Assistant.

V. Carey explained that position manages individual devices, does all updates, uploads software, manages student accounts, manages the tech desk, sets up mics for meeting, etc.

J. Rokes asked what currently is not in the budget.

T. Taylor advised the bond and interest is plugged into the data base. It should show \$175,000 for FY21/22 and \$175,000 for FY22/23. So she has to find out why they are not displaying. The same thing with the transfer of Grants. We have a \$500,000 placer and again, it is plugged in – she can see it on the screen, but it didn't print out.

J. Rokes asked about the transfer of grants.

T. Taylor explained for all of the grants allocated to us the State requires a record for liability. If something happened and we spent those funds and for some reason we didn't get reimbursed, we would

be liable. Last year in Food Service we had to put in another \$18,000 even though we had a placer, to make the Food Service Program whole. It is pretty much a wash, but it is required.

V. Carey explained the amount that is raised from taxes comes after you have offset the amount with the revenues. So the amount that the Town raises is never the full budget. If you spent money and didn't get reimbursed, the Town would be responsible for returning money because they voted to use it and it didn't get allocated.

### **CITIZENS' COMMENTS:**

Amy Hill asked if anyone was aware of the bounty on the teachers. NH DOE put a reporting process on their website; if any teachers are being discriminatory it goes to the Dept. of Human Rights and then it goes to the DOE. There is a group of people offering money to catch teachers. She wanted to know what the Board has in mind to support the teachers.

K. Dassau advised the Board is not prepared to take a vote and answer your question. Can do searches on line – the information is out there. There is an Article from Carl Ladd. The Board has a non-discrimination policy.

Amy Hill asked what would happen if this happened tomorrow.

K. Dassau advised, if this is applicable, the Board has a Policy, GBG - Employee Protection.

Amy Hill asked what the process would be.

K. Dassau thinks if you brought the claim to the Board's attention then they would provide you with the indemnification that would be required. That is the first step. It is an interpretation. Thinks Administration or the School Board is going to go on the defensive. Advised he has reached out to the Board's Attorney, but hasn't heard back yet.

V. Carey explained the discussion previously and the expectation of the law is that staff are carrying out their interpretation as received from the Winchester School District. If they follow that, it will fall under the policy in place. The District has not had their questions answered by the DOE. Have continually asked and are waiting for responses back from a lot of people.

L. Picard reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule.

L. Picard advised the Selectboard did agree to hold their Deliberative Session on February 5<sup>th</sup>; the same day the School Board will hold theirs. They will be held at the gym. The Grange can do concessions. The School Board would like to start at 9:00am.

**T. Perkins MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 9:21pm; SECONDED by: J. Rokes, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Higgins  
School Board Secretary