

**WINCHESTER BUDGET/SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2021
WINCHESTER SCHOOL CAFETERIA**

Budget Committee Present: Ben Kilanski, Brenden Hubbard, Jason Spaulding, Nathan Holmy, J. Rokes – School Board Rep.

Board Members Present: Lindseigh Perkins, Tina Perkins, Lindsey Hildreth, James Rokes, Todd Kilanski – arrived at 6:42pm.

Administration Present: Ken Dassau, Theresa Taylor, Matt Hill

The meeting was called to order by Budget Chair, Brenden Hubbard and School Board Chair, Lindseigh Picard at 6:07pm.

The Budget Committee reviewed the budget lines and asked questions of the School Board/Administration.

J. Spaulding asked about budgeting for three teachers in First Grade and class sizes.

T. Taylor advised they use teachers where they need them.

N. Holmy asked if teachers have K-5 certificate; what happens if they need to go to a different level.

L. Picard advised not many ways around that. Typically movement happens in Grades One to Five.

T. Taylor – That is the benefit of a K-8 School. Her understanding is teachers can be moved around.

N. Holmy feels there is over \$865,000 padded in the budget.

T. Taylor explained just moved columns; not rounding everything.

N. Holmy MOVED to have a digital copy of the school budget e-mailed to the Committee; SECONDED by: J. Rokes, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

K. Dassau feels they may want to table discussion on the instructional section of the budget until the School Principal can be here and give the background.

SPECIAL ED:

ESL and 4% increase:

K. Dassau deferred to V. Carey. There is a specific certification required for the ESL class; class size changes every year. We need to provide service if there is one or more students. Need to maintain the person in that position. We can use them in other capacities.

B. Kilanski advised the salary line item increased each year over three years.

K. Dassau doesn't know; could be a market adjustment - can verify.

The Budget Committee asked about an 8.537% salary increase instead of 4%.

K. Dassau will research that.

L. Picard – Most likely due to step change.

K. Dassau will have an answer for next week.

B. Hubbard asked about the Medicaid revenue stream. Has it been relooked at?

K. Dassau explained we are now required to hire a person for oversight of students IEP's. Jen Heise could talk further to the income and Special Ed eligibility for a family to receive Medicaid. It was not pursued as they thought it would cost more than we would bring in.

Market Comparison for Two Positions:

L. Hildreth advised there are two valued employees, Occupational Therapist and Speech Language Assistant, making far less than they should be. There was a lot of discussion at the Board meeting. There was also two Administrative staff who received market adjustments.

L. Picard explained they have been trying to raise the Occupational Therapist and Speech Language Assistant positions for some time. Now they would be well within the market target.

K. Dassau explained these are critical shortage areas. We are lucky to have the people we have. If we don't provide the service, they would get it elsewhere and we are required to provide compensatory piece.

B. Kilanski asked about contracted services.

T. Taylor would have to look at the FYE 2021 to confirm. Advised it looks like a refund; she will get them an answer.

N. Homily asked if there was a way to see the revenue stream.

T. Taylor will include it in the next budget.

Related Services:

Line 511005 was previously zero.

T. Taylor moved that line amount. It was partially Grant funded. She will check to see if it still is.

T. Taylor will confirm.

T. Taylor explained the Social worker and Adjustment Counselor were moved along with the Reading specialist from the Guidance Salary.

Brenden Hubbard asked about teacher retirement and non-teacher retirement.

T. Taylor explained it really has to do with her cleaning things up more. There are different levels of staff included - some teacher retirement and some non-teacher retirement.

B. Kilanski asked about the Psychologist position.

T. Taylor advised it is no longer Grant funded.

Brenden Hubbard asked about Teacher Rental/ Staff Development:

Bargaining and also CBU; some are not part of the Union, but do attend workshops.

T. Taylor reviewed.

N. Homily asked for a copy of the 2018-2019 proposed and actual approved budgets.

B. Kilanski asked about Board salaries.

L. Picard - Includes \$1,000 for members and \$1,250 for the Chair.

B. Hubbard asked if \$25,000 for legal fees would be sufficient for the lawsuit.

K. Dassau explained each district pays a percentage; but the line includes a variety of legal costs.

SAU:

Superintendent Salary – J. Spaulding asked how they adjust that line if they don't know who they are hiring.

K. Dassau thinks it will look similar to when they hired the Business Manager and the Facilities Director. The Board gave Administration a range for a competitive salary.

School Administration:

B. Hubbard dues and fees severely underspent; still requesting \$650.00.

T. Taylor advised she would prefer V. Carey answered this to give the history on it.

B. Hubbard asked about teacher conferences. Do we expect to hold more this year? The line is not being spent.
T. Taylor will need to get information from V. Carey.

Maintenance Equipment:

B. Hubbard advised the line goes up and down; very specific number.

L. Picard explained when we had to cut \$1.5 million from the budget you need to find wherever you can to cut it.

K. Dassau – Every year someone asks about new chairs and we forget about the condition of them until we use them. They are basically used for the Deliberative Session and Graduation. Maybe we could replace them; not all at once, but some at a time.

M. Hill can get real numbers; it would have to be an addition to the budget. He will bring figures for next week.

N. Homily asked if it would make sense to put on a Warrant Article to replace the chairs; sounds expensive.

B. Kilanski advised he has heard from a lot of upset parents regarding staffing of First Student. He wondered if they should put the contract out-to-bid.

L. Picard explained we have a seven year contract.

T. Taylor advised the school has spent a great deal of time talking with the bus company. A lot of issues have been resolved. They are down a driver, but we are now back to four busses and we got credit for the time when the bus didn't run.

Technology:

Tech Support/Tech Assistant combined to one line. During remote learning students were one-on-one with chrome books/lap tops – needed an additional person for support, etc.

T. Taylor – Prior to COVID we were way behind on one-to-one. Explained she hesitates to reduce the line at all. Repair costs have been less because in that year and last year we got new computers. There are some computers sitting that will need to be repaired.

B. Kilanski asked for the amount spent on repairs.

T. Taylor will get that.

B. Hubbard asked if the Capital Plan is for equipment.

L. Picard – Yes, the Committee is working on a three to five year plan.

B. Hubbard asked for a more detailed explanation of Tech Support.

T. Taylor can run a report showing Tech companies - an expenditure report showing vendors and dollar amounts.

L. Picard – It can also fluctuate dependent upon the curriculum required in a given year.

B. Hubbard asked what if the \$25,000 and \$125,000 Warrant Articles don't pass.

L. Picard – The money wouldn't be there.

T. Taylor explained how the Warrant Articles are broken down and separated in the budget.

N. Homily asked about Food Service.

T. Taylor explained Food Service is outsourced, but we need to show the cost. There is no bearing on the tax rate. If the program doesn't self-support itself, we will need to pay the cost.

B. Hubbard asked about the difference in the 2021-2022 approved budget. Advised it is calculating out higher for 2020-2021.

T. Taylor will go back and look; hopes to have an answer for Tuesday.

Revenues:

B. Kilanski asked what the total in the unreserved fund is right now.

T. Taylor advised there is \$125,000 left on a positive; \$25,000 will now be put back in the Special Ed fund; \$100,425 will be used to offset taxes.

The unreserved balance is listed the – the same number, but it is under the revenues. Does that mean you anticipate spending that money?

T. Taylor explained added it in to the revenues to reflect that is \$100,000 less that we need to raise because we already have it.

B. Kilanski - So you plan on using that?

T. Taylor - The reduction, yes.

B. Kilanski advised it is included as part of the revenues – so you anticipate spending the full, unreserved fund during the school year.

T. Taylor advised we don't anticipate spending it.

B. Kilanski then can't deduct it from the amount to be raised.

L. Picard explained it was part of the revenue utilized under the DRA to offset taxation for the tax rate that we just set.

B. Kilanski asked if the full \$100,425 is used to offset the tax rate.

After discussion, T. Taylor advised it should be in the other column.

J. Rokes – Just add \$100,425 to the first line.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Theresa Sepe wondered why no teachers or staff members came to ask for books or materials.

Administration advised V. Carey will need to answer that.

Theresa Sepe asked about the paraprofessional reduction.

T. Taylor advised they are not able to find any paras so they reduced the number by two. Now we have five open positions.

Theresa Sepe – KHS tuition went down substantially.

T. Taylor – Based on new rates and reduction in number of students.

Theresa Sepe advised biggest amount in budget is based on personnel. How many non-Union employees does that include? Discussed getting to a basic standard; not sure okay with the 4% increase.

T. Taylor will give Theresa Sepe a copy of the list; 21 people.

Theresa Sepe asked if the majority of the Board was in support of the 4% increase.

L. Hildreth advised the vote was 3-2.

Theresa Sepe – Does it bring it to a good amount or still below?

L. Hildreth advised there are a few market adjustments at more than 4%.

Theresa Sepe advised when Winchester needed staff the most, they stayed with us.

L. Picard with no pay increases.

The Budget Committee asked if the increase is plus a cost of living raise.

T. Taylor – No; it is all inclusive.

N. Homly MOVED to approve the minutes from the 11/20/21 Budget meeting; SECONDED by: J. Rokes, VOTED: 4-1 (B. Kilanski – Abstained), MOTION PASSED.

B. Hubbard advised Monday will be a meeting for the Town, Tuesday will be the school and if needed, another meeting will be held on 12/16 at the Board meeting.

N. Homly MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:50pm; SECONDED by: J. Rokes, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

L. Picard MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:50pm; SECONDED by: L. Hildreth, VOTED: 5-0, MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peggy Higgins
School Board Secretary