

WINCHESTER SCHOOL BOARD
FORD BUILDING
NOVEMBER 14, 2012

Board Members Present: T. Croteau, E. Jackson, R. Horton, J. Cardinale
Board Members Absent: K. Whippie,
Administration Present: J. Lewis, P. Bigelow, W. Vaughn, D. Chamberlain

The budget work session was called to order at 6:02 pm by Chair, T. Croteau.

J. Lewis advised they could work from the bottom line; they have reduced the budget to \$11,134,773.75, by about \$200,000. He advised they are not done yet. A big part of the cost is the Keene High School tuition.

L. Schmidt reviewed the tuition portion of the budget. She will be working with Suzanne Cooper regarding Grade 13.

Keene High School Special Ed - a decrease of almost \$30,000 from last year's budget.

T. Croteau asked about the increase in tuition costs.

S. Cooper advised at Keene High School it is based on a ratio; there is no clear-cut formula.

R. Horton, E. Jackson and J. Lewis attended the tuition meeting with Keene and reviewed the procedure with the Board.

R. Horton feels Keene has the ability to do what they want for whatever cost that they want. Winchester is stuck with the contract; now what do we do with it? He advised there was an error in the calculation for the tuition this year. Was there an error last year?

R. Horton asked about a possible contact with Hinsdale to explore other alternatives and E. Jackson asked about asking other towns, not just Hinsdale.

After discussion, **R. Horton MOVED to have J. Lewis contact Hinsdale, Brattleboro and Monadnock regarding tuition options; SECONDED by: J. Cardinale, VOTED: 4-0, MOTION PASSED.**

The Board advised they like the new budget format. They think the Budget Committee will appreciate it.

J. Lewis advised the big thing for the budget was getting the tuition information. Some information has now been entered that wasn't previously.

L. Schmidt will e-mail an updated version of the budget to the Board after tonight's meeting.

L. Schmidt explained one full time position and corresponding benefits from the Custodial account have been allocated to Food Service.

J. Lewis explained there has always been a surplus in Food Service.

L. Schmidt explained the goal is to have three months of operating expenses. She is working on areas such as water/sewer, electricity and disposal as other areas to allocate to Food Service.

D. Chamberlain advised that Waste Management reduced Winchester's rate to \$573.00 plus no surcharge. Fifty percent will be allocated to Food Service.

E. Jackson advised it would be helpful when they go before the Budget Committee to have a separate sheet showing the amount being allocated to Food Service. They will also want to see revenues broken out and grants if they pay for a position or shared positions. If they go with the information there will be less questions and more trust.

Oil – T. Croteau asked if the Board could get a real number. What are we going to do with the oil?

L. Schmidt advised she will do that. She will print out a schedule.

D. Chamberlain explained they have less oil this year because they didn't fill the tanks. This is the first year they did not fill the tanks up since he's been here.

The Board feels they are constantly over-budgeting for oil. Feels if they end up with an overage, they don't need to buy the same number of gallons.

D. Chamberlain advised new pumps and thermostats have made an improvement. He explained what is in the report is what was purchased not what was used, because there was oil in there then.

T. Croteau feels they need to have wiggle room in case we have a very cold Winter. Feels we need to keep track of what is used between July 1st and June 30th. That's what we need to know.

E. Jackson advised they can't incur funds for the next year; need to return money to the taxpayers.

R. Horton feels the town and Budget Committee sees we are spending money, but that we didn't use as much oil as we bought.

E. Jackson feels they need to do their own quote for oil in July/early August next year rather than going out to bid with the town.

W. Vaughn advised they need to ask for a rack-plus price.

Transportation - The Board asked about the bus change. If using one less bus, shouldn't that be less money to Winchester?

L. Schmidt explained until the new schedule actually starts she doesn't want to change the figures. She is not sure about the actual cost.

S. Cooper explained she is looking to consolidate Special Ed students on the Tucker Transportation buses.

Technology – W. Vaughn reviewed the Technology accounts. Explained he has reduced the Software Tech line by about \$3,000; has been chipping away a little at a time. They will need to start replacing machines next year; 30 year refurbished off-lease with a three to five year warranty.

E. Jackson thinks it would be helpful to the Budget committee to have an inventory replacement schedule.

R. Horton wonders if a warrant article would be a better way to go since they now have a plan.

W. Vaughn explained he can present how many computers there are, the aging and what will be replaced.

R. Horton – That is large; they have never had that information before.

E-Rate – W. Vaughn explained the paperwork has been filed. They should be getting reimbursement somewhere around \$30,000 within the next few months. He will add an explanation to the revenues report.

W. Vaughn explained they need to budget for the full amount; what you do with the discount is up to the Winchester School District. He could file for discounts quarterly; that is not a problem. It makes more sense and will be easier.

L. Schmidt is still trying to nail down the cost for the SAU copier; she hasn't heard back yet.

T. Croteau asked L. Schmidt to put in a bold line that separates categories, i.e., Tech Director, Custodial, etc.

P. Bigelow – Can we correct the spelling of actual in the Budget report?

L. Schmidt will take care of it.

L. Schmidt will be speaking with the reps from LGC. They can discuss discounts for new bus routes and other safety measures.

E. Jackson asked if the town and school insurance plan is the same. The town is paying less with the same company.

J. Lewis feels it is worth a phone call. Currently the school is in the same plan with Hinsdale.

E. Jackson advised they should look at putting the insurance out-to-bid for negotiations next year. She feels it is something to look at.

L. Schmidt will contact the Town.

R. Horton MOVED to keep the Board salaries at zero; SECONDED by: J. Cardinale, VOTED: 4-0, MOTION PASSED.

After discussion, **R. Horton MOVED to make the Board Secretary salary \$4,100.00; SECONDED by: J. Cardinale, VOTED: 4-0, MOTION PASSED.**

Board Election Service – L. Schmidt will call Jim Tetreault for a figure.

Audit – L. Schmidt reviewed with the Board.

L. Schmidt explained that her goal is to have the 2012/2013 audit done before school starts next year. The Winchester School District is not under contract with the auditor and they could put out for a new auditor. She hopes the Board would go with the best quality bid. They are under no obligation, but they do have past experience with the current auditor and they do a good job.

E. Jackson believes you should change auditors every three to four years.

L. Schmidt advised you don't need to change the firm, but should change the senior person.

E. Jackson asked about books.

P. Bigelow received a letter from the Grade one team asking for books, all for reading, due to an increase in the number of students. The current books are in bad shape, students currently share them. Even with additional books they will continue to share. The teachers realize \$10,500 is a high cost and they are sorry to have to do it, but feel it is necessary.

Middle School Math – need appropriate calculators for graphing; they need a set of 30 plus 10 for other teachers. The cost would be \$2,700 plus books.

Additional Teacher - \$65,000 for one teacher in a lower grade.

T. Croteau asked about a foreign language teacher.

P. Bigelow advised they would love a foreign language teacher. The state knocks us down every year for not offering a foreign language. The average cost would be \$65,000 plus \$5,000 for supplies.

E. Jackson asked what the kids take at Keene High.

J. Lewis and Board members feel Chinese is the language to go with.

T. Croteau MOVED to add foreign language to the Budget at \$65,000 for salary and benefits and \$5,000 for supplies; SECONDED by: E. Jackson, VOTED: 4-0, MOTION PASSED.

P. Bigelow advised the state also knocked them down because they had no health teacher. Those were the only areas they received "demerits" in. The science teachers do cover some health subjects.

E. Jackson feels maybe they need supplemental books.

GED Tutors – Has been added to the Paraprofessional section of the budget.

S. Cooper explained there is a child, currently in pre-school, who is blind and needs brail and a specialized teacher. She would like to look at having that teacher work with another student here in Winchester. The cost would be \$65,000.

S. Cooper would rather have the student here which could also enrich other students, rather than sending the student out.

S. Cooper will keep the Board apprised. She will look at other options, but there is not a lot of wiggle room. There is an extremely low percentage of blind students; less than one percent.

R. Horton asked about catastrophic aid – are we compliant? Is the billing and the filing being done properly?

S. Cooper explained she is looking into it; working on it. Sometimes repair work takes longer. Today, it would not be true that we are compliant, but she is working on it. It is better than it was. IEP's drive it all. Feels they have to let the taxpayers know that we are getting all the monies we can and the number in the budget is the real number.

The Board advised they may need the cost of sending the student out if they can't hire one.

S. Cooper advised they have to offer the least restrictive environment.

L. Schmidt will do a comparison.

Grades Five through Eight - New Special Ed Teacher - Focus ED - R. Horton feels they are never seeing a return from Keene for the monies they receive.

R. Horton asked for a review of the Custodial line.

L. Schmidt explained originally they were looking to restore one and a half Custodian positions – took out one, leaving a half a position. They are allocating a full-time position to Food Service. They want to make a current half-time position full-time.

R. Horton asked if we could look to contract some custodial services.

P. Bigelow explained the night staff now can clean when the kids are on vacation, etc.

The Board discussed a night time cleaning company that would do exclusively cleaning and then they would need one or two custodians for painting, etc. The cleaning crews would also strip floors, etc.

R. Horton advised it is food for thought; feels they are struggling as a town.

L. Schmidt asked if the goal is to eliminate one position. Does the Board want Food Service included as is?

J. Cardinale feels they should look at both. It might be worth hiring that person as contracted as well.

R. Horton MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm; SECONDED by: J. Cardinale, VOTED: 4-0, MOTION PASSED.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Higgins